

DATE OF MEETING SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

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SUBJECT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT 2024 INTAKE

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide the Finance and Audit Committee with information on potential projects for the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant 2024 intake and obtain a Council resolution supporting applications for two projects.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct staff to submit two applications under the 2024 intake of the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program as follows:

- 1) Submit an application for ‘Crosswalk Upgrades that Improve Active Transportation’, with confirmation that the municipal share of funding of \$487,289 is available and supported, confirmation that the project is a municipal priority, and that the project is “shovel ready” and intended to be complete within the required timeline.
- 2) Submit an application for “Third Street Active Transportation Improvements’, with confirmation that the municipal share of funding of \$459,000 is available and supported, confirmation that the project is a municipal priority, and that the project is “shovel ready” and intended to be complete within the required timeline.

BACKGROUND

The focus of the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant program is to build a cleaner and greener future for British Columbians by investing in infrastructure that supports safe, human-powered modes of active transportation for daily commuting to school, recreation, work, socializing and errands. This includes; walking, cycling, using a wheelchair or other mobility device, rolling and other modes that are winter focused or water based.

This program offers funding up to 50% of eligible project costs to a maximum of \$500,000. For the purposes of this grant program, Community Works funding is considered to be part of a local government’s general revenue and not third party funding, so Community Works funding can be used as a municipal contribution to the project.

Two applications may be submitted and the application deadline is 2024-OCT-31. A Council resolution is required authorizing the project and confirming that the City’s funding share is secured.

Projects with a cost under \$1 million must be completed by March 2026, and projects over \$1 million complete by March 2027.

Eligible projects include:

1. Active Transportation Infrastructure
2. End-of-trip facilities and amenities (must complement the current active transportation infrastructure).

To be eligible proposed projects must be part of an Active Transportation Network Plan, Cycling Network Plan, Active Transportation Policy or referenced in an Official Community Plan.

Preferred project criteria include:

1. Improved community connectivity (network continuity, connections to destinations, linages/multi-modal integration, etc.).
2. Improved safety (intersection improvements, lighting, separation from motor vehicles etc.).
3. Improved economic activity (local resources, tourism enhancements).
4. Improved physical and mental health, improved air quality, and reduced greenhouse gases (encourages active transportation, incorporation environmental innovation and best practices).

DISCUSSION

Staff propose two projects for consideration that could fulfill the eligibility requirements of the grant program.

1) Crosswalk Upgrades that Improve Active Transportation Routes

Staff have listed a bundle of seven projects for consideration under the current funding stream. These projects are similar in nature and are improvements to active transportation connections within or to urban centers. The locations are listed below:

Description	2024 Approved Budget
1 Townsite @ Holly: Bump-outs and rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) for multi-use path	\$ 143,148.00
2 Wallace @ Wentworth – Pedestrian crossing improvements	\$ 50,000.00
3 Albert @ Selby – Pedestrian crossing improvements	\$ 241,250.00
4 Albert @ Dunsmuir - Pedestrian crossing improvements	\$ 241,250.00
5 Dufferin @ Grant - Raised pedestrian crossing	\$ 100,000.00
6 Dover @ Applecross – Rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) for existing crosswalk	\$ 80,730.00
7 400 Block Campbell St – Raised school crossing	\$ 118,200.00
Total	\$ 974,578.00

It has been confirmed with the Province of BC that under the grant program, the City of Nanaimo is allowed to apply for a variety of “like” upgrades as part of a bundled project.

Further details on the proposed project bundle are outlined below:

Townsite @ Holly:

- This crosswalk connects the E&N Trail across Townsite Road and is part of a primary active transportation corridor identified in the City Plan. It has a wide crossing distance, active transportation connectivity, and a 50 km/h speed limit. Based on these factors, a rectangular rapid flashing beacon along with curb bump-outs has been recommended and supported by Council.

Wallace @ Wentworth:

- Installation of a raised crosswalk will help to manage vehicle speeds and curb extensions will shorten pedestrian crossing distances.

Albert @ Selby:

- Intersection improvements to support increased bicycle and pedestrian connectivity as outlined in the pedestrian unallocated report of 2024-MAY-14.

Albert @ Dunsmuir:

- Intersection improvements to support increased bicycle and pedestrian connectivity as outlined in the pedestrian unallocated report of 2024-MAY-14.

Dufferin @ Grant:

- The addition of a raised crosswalk and a curb return on the north side of Dufferin Crescent at Grant Avenue will provide safety improvements. The crossing is currently an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on a Mobility Collector within the Hospital Secondary Urban Centre. Adding a raised crosswalk is anticipated to reduce 85th percentile speeds leading to safer roadways and better pedestrian experiences.

Dover @ Applecross:

- This intersection is currently an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on a Mobility Collector within 200m of the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre. Adding rectangular rapid flashing beacons will increase driver awareness of pedestrians and improve pedestrian comfort when using this crossing, which will serve to encourage more people to walk within the area.

400 Block Campbell Street

- This is currently an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on a Mobility Local at the edge of the Downtown Primary Urban Centre. Adding a raised crosswalk is anticipated to reduce travel speeds, provide safer roadways, and better pedestrian experiences.

2) Third Street Active Transportation Improvements

Active transportation improvements planned along Third Street include the widening of the road to allow for cycling lanes and a sidewalk. This will improve community connectivity and safety by providing separation from motor vehicles and allowing for better pedestrian experiences which will in turn increase utilization. In order to widen the road on Third Street, there are two

main project components that need to be completed and are included in 2025 of the 2025 – 2029 Draft Financial Plan, as follows:

- 1) Construction of a retaining wall on Third Street (from Watfield Ave to Pine Street) - \$279,000
- 2) Infill of the existing drainage infrastructure on Third Street (from Howard Ave to Georgia Street) to allow for the sidewalk to be constructed - \$639,000

These two project components totalling \$918,000 are crucial pieces to be able to successfully improve active transportation infrastructure by widening the road along Third Street.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Crosswalk Upgrades that Improve Active Transportation Routes

The total project costs of \$974,578 were all included in the approved 2024-2028 Financial Plan, with funding from the Community Works Fund Reserve and the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund. A successful grant application would provide funding for up to \$487,289 of project costs, reducing the required funding from reserves which could then be allocated to other projects.

Third Street Active Transportation Improvements

The total project costs of \$918,000 are included in the 2025 – 2029 Draft Financial Plan, with funding from the General Asset Management Reserve Fund and property taxation. A successful grant application would provide funding for up to \$459,000 of project costs, reducing the required funding from reserves and property taxation which could then be allocated to other projects.

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct staff to submit two applications under the 2024 intake of the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program as follows:
 1. Submit an application for 'Crosswalk Upgrades that Improve Active Transportation', with confirmation that the municipal share of funding of \$487,289 is available and supported, confirmation that the project is a municipal priority, and that the project is "shovel ready" and intended to be complete within the required timeline.
 2. Submit an application for "Third Street Active Transportation Improvements", with confirmation that the municipal share of funding of \$459,000 is available and supported, confirmation that the project is a municipal priority, and that the project is "shovel ready" and intended to be complete within the required timeline.

Advantages of this option:

- The two projects selected meet the eligibility criteria and are projects that were already included in either the approved 2024-2028 Financial Plan or the 2025-2029 Draft Financial Plan
- If the grant application is successful, more funding can be redirected towards additional projects and will reduce the strain on existing reserve funds.

Disadvantages of this option:

- There are no disadvantages noted. If the City's grant application is successful, additional funds will be available for these projects and the funding that was previously committed could be utilized in other ways.

Financial Implications:

The 2025-2029 Financial Plan would be amended to include the grant funding if the application is successful.

2. That the Finance and Audit Committee provide alternative direction for projects to be submitted as an application to the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program provides 50% funding up to \$500,000 for eligible project costs
- The City may submit two applications, and applications are due by 2024-OCT-31
- Staff propose two projects for consideration that meet the eligibility criteria for the grant program, are "shovel ready," and can meet the March 2026 construction deadline for project completion

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