

PREPARED FOR: Council
FROM: Stephen Rennick, Deputy Director Engineering and Public Works
MEETING DATE: February 26, 2024
SUBJECT: McNeill Traffic Calming Phase 2 Update

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT the report titled “McNeill Traffic Calming Phase 2 Update”, authored by Stephen Rennick, Deputy Director of Engineering and Public Works, dated February 26, 2024 be received.

And that Council consider the following staff recommendation(s):

THAT Staff continue the detailed design and Class B estimate for Phase 2 of the McNeill Avenue traffic calming project using Option B which widens the road by relocating the curb on the north side of the road, to add a buffered bike lane.

Alternatively, staff await another direction from Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

At the October 10, 2023 Council meeting, Council authorized a grant application for Phase 1 of the McNeill Avenue traffic calming project, to deliver traffic calming features between Victoria Avenue and Transit Road.

At that same meeting Staff presented a Class D cost estimate for a Phase 2 design that widened the road by pushing the curb to the north between Falkland Road and Foul Bay Road. This cost estimate had been directed by Council at the July 24, 2023 Council Meeting.

At the October 10 meeting, Council directed that Staff update the cost estimate for Phase 2 to Class B and consider alternative options such as sidewalk widening. As both options would have to have been fully designed to achieve a Class B estimate, Staff have been evaluating both options more fully in order to bring back our recommendation on which to pursue. After reviewing considerations for sidewalk widening, staff do not recommend this model.

This report seeks Council direction between the options for Phase 2 of the project. This will enable Staff to focus on one detailed design and develop a Class B estimate.

BACKGROUND/HISTORIC CONTEXT

Staff initially discussed design concepts for McNeill Avenue Traffic Calming at Committee of the Whole on June 20, 2022. Staff's recommended option at the time had been a light touch, achieving traffic calming through movable traffic islands and paint.

At the July 24, 2023 Council meeting, Staff presented a detailed design for the corridor that delivered a light touch as per the concepts from the prior year's Committee of the Whole. At that meeting Council directed that Staff include options to replace the movable traffic islands with landscaped boulevards. Staff was also directed to return with a cost estimate for widening the road to deliver a separated bike lane on the uphill portion between Falkland Road and Foul Bay Road (Phase 2).

At the October 10, 2023 Council meeting, Staff presented a revised design for the corridor with the landscaped boulevards that Council had directed. Staff also presented a Class D cost estimate of approximately \$850,000 to \$1,000,000 for road widening works in Phase 2. At that meeting, Council directed that Staff return with an updated cost estimate that considered an alternate option of sidewalk widening.

THAT staff prepare revised Class B cost estimate for Phase 2 works for consideration in the 2024 budget and that designs include consideration for road and sidewalk widening. (2023-511)

ANALYSIS

As was initially presented at the June 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting, McNeill Avenue is a narrow collector road, and it is challenging to provide amenities to all road users within the approximately 8.4 metres of road surface.

Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan has several policies in the Transportation chapter that are being referenced in this report:

T3. Apply transportation design and servicing standards based on universal design to enable people of all mobility levels to use sidewalks, bike routes and transit. Prioritize improvements in locations with higher concentrations of young children, seniors and people with disabilities, and places where residents go to access essential goods and services.

T4. Incorporate techniques and controls in road design to ensure safe and non-congested roadways, while facilitating ease of movement for pedestrians, vehicles and bicycles, e.g., roundabouts/traffic circles, pedestrian crossings, signals. Monitor these to ensure effectiveness over time.

T9. Support and encourage the development of Oak Bay's pedestrian and cycling networks as part of an interconnected multi-modal transportation system within Oak Bay and to adjacent jurisdictions, consistent with the District's Active Transportation Plan.

In accordance with these policies, Staff had initially delivered two options for Phase 2 of McNeill Avenue. Since, Staff were asked by Council to consider a third option of widening the sidewalk to provide a Multi use path for pedestrians and cyclists on the north side of the road. Each option improves on the existing by providing additional

facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Each option comes at the expense of some (or all) of the on-street parking along the road. For clarity, all three options are outlined below.

Phase 2, Option A

Option A is the original option from the June 2022 Committee of the Whole report. It provides a 3.35 m wide shared driving/cycling lane on the south side of the road, a 3.35 m wide driving lane on the north side of the road, and a 1.7 to 1.9 m wide buffered bike lane on the north side of the road. There would be no on-street parking permitted between Victoria Avenue and Foul Bay Road in the Option A scenario.

The advantage of Option A is that it has a considerably lower cost than Option B or C. Option A only requires the use of paint and signage along the road, along with some concrete bulges at the intersections. Those concrete bulges would also be constructed in Option B and C, so for cost comparison purposes Option A could be said to cost approximately \$10,000 for line painting.

The disadvantage of Option A is that on-street parking would be moved to side streets such as Falkland Road or Runnymede Place, which themselves do not have significant width or capacity to absorb additional street parked vehicles. Option A would also likely result in temporary obstructions to the bike lane by delivery vehicles or garbage trucks.

Phase 2, Option B

Option B is the option that was presented to Council at the October 2023 meeting. It widens the road by approximately 2.0 m by relocating the sidewalk on the north side of the road. It delivers an approximately 4.3 m wide shared driving/cycling lane on the south side of the road, an approximately 4.4 m wide driving lane on the north side of the road, and a 1.7 to 1.9 m wide buffered bike lane on the north side of the road. On-street parking would be retained but restricted to one side of the street.

The advantage of Option B is that it lessens the impact on the side streets, as the retained parking spaces should be adequate for the level of utilization that the on-street parking actually receives. It also would better fit in with existing properties in terms of grades than option C.

The disadvantage of Option B is that it has a much higher capital cost than Option A (of approximately \$850,000 to \$1,000,000,) and higher operating costs (it was estimated to add an additional \$15,000 to annual funding associated with its increased lifecycle costs). It would also have significant issues for the homeowners on the north side of the street, whose driveways would need to be regraded, and whose landscaping would need to be removed and replaced by concrete sidewalk.

Phase 2, Option C - Widened Sidewalk/Multi-User Pathway

Council had requested that an option for widening the sidewalk into a multi-use pathway be considered. Staff considered widening the existing 1.65 m sidewalk to create a 4.0 m wide multi-use pathway (which is the standard width for a multi-use pathway.) The class D estimate is similar to Phase 2, Option B. This option was investigated but following

traffic design consultant advise Staff is advising against further exploring this option for the following reasons:

- While the cost and complexity of the multi-use pathway is not significantly different from Phase 2, Option B of widening the road, it requires more aggressive regrading of the driveways and removing more landscaping.
- It potentially places cyclists in conflict with pedestrians, which is not desirable.
- It would lead to homeowners needing to cross 4 m of pathway to enter or exit their driveways.
- It would pose challenges for garbage collection, leaf pickup, and garden waste collection.
- The transition at both the start and end of the multi-use pathway would create conflict zones.
- The transition at Foul Bay Road would be difficult as the multi-use pathway would have to cut back to line up with Richardson Street and the turn to the southbound Foul Bay Road bike lane.
- There is the potential for cyclists to be attracted to ride the multi-use path in both directions leading to a conflict situation and the need for cross over to the south side of McNeill Avenue to continue traveling east.

The multi-use pathway option was thus not further developed into a concept as Staff did not feel it was appropriate in this location.

For both Options B and C, Utility upgrades will have to take place prior to the surface construction as is the case with Phase 1.

Staff Recommendation

Staff's recommendation to Council is to select Phase 2, Option B. This results in widening the asphalt surface of McNeill Avenue by approximately 2.0 m, to a total of 10.4 m. Given that McNeill is identified in the OCP as a Collector road, and given that Oak Bay's bylaw standard for Collector roads is 9 to 11 m, it is appropriate to widen McNeill Avenue in this area to bring it up to the Bylaw standard. Option B also limits the impact of the changes on side roads such as Runnymede Avenue and Falkland Road, which do not have curb and gutter and likely cannot absorb significant extra street parking. Once the design is completed a Class B estimate will be developed.

OPTIONS

Option 1: Staff be directed to continue detailed design using Option B for Phase 2 that adds a buffered bike lane by widening the road and relocating the curb and sidewalk on the north side of the road.

Option 2: Staff be directed to continue detailed design using Option A for Phase 2 to add a buffered bike lane within the existing pavement width.

Option 3: Staff be directed to continue detailed design using Option C for Phase 2 to add a multi-use pathway to the north of the existing sidewalk and maintaining the existing road width.

Option 4: Another option as directed by Council.

COUNCIL PRIORITY SUPPORTED

Transportation

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Should Council direct Staff to proceed with detailed design as per the recommended option, the additional construction costs of \$850,000 to \$1,000,000 will most likely be borne in 2025. There are numerous budget sources for these funds, including Road Rehabilitation, Active Transportation, and the capital Sidewalk Improvement Program that Council will deliberate in the 2024-2028 Financial Plan. Staff would also seek to defray these additional costs through grant programs, such as the BC Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant program.

IAP2 FRAMEWORK ENGAGEMENT

☒ **INFORM** ☐ **CONSULT** ☐ **INVOLVE** ☐ **COLLABORATE**

TIMELINE/PROCESS/NEXT STEPS

Should Council direct Staff to proceed with detailed design as per the recommended option, detailed design will take place in 2024 with an aim to begin construction in late 2024 to mid 2025. However, if the grant application is made, we would likely not hear if we are successful until March 2025, so construction could not begin until after that date and after the underground utility upgrades are complete.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Rennick, Deputy Director Engineering and Public Works

With respect to the Financial Impact described in this report, I concur with the staff recommendation.

Christopher Paine

Christopher Paine, Director of Financial Services

Reviewed and approved by the Director of Corporate Services.

Dianna Plouffe

Dianna Plouffe, Director of Corporate Services

I have read and consider staff's recommendation to be supportable for Council's consideration.

Selina Williams

Selina Williams, Chief Administrative Officer