

PREPARED FOR: Committee of the Whole
FROM: Steve Rennick, Director of Engineering and Public Works
MEETING DATE: April 22, 2025
SUBJECT: Public Engagement Approach for Active Transportation Network

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT the report titled “Public Engagement Approach for Active Transportation Network”, authored by Steve Rennick, Director of Engineering and Public Works, dated April 22, 2025, be received.

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

THAT Staff be directed to prepare a Council Project Sign-Off for Active Transportation Network Development based on Public Engagement Option [1, 2, or 3].

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update to Council on the progress of implementing the Active Transportation Network, and seeks Council's direction on how the public will be engaged in network development.

BACKGROUND/HISTORIC CONTEXT

At the June 10, 2024 Council meeting, Staff presented a prioritized construction schedule for Council's consideration. The report identified several risks regarding the public consultation process, staffing challenges, and other project risks. One of the main risks was successfully hiring an Active Transportation Planner, which had initially been forecasted for Q3/Q4 of 2024. That recruitment process was unsuccessful, and the position was reposted in early 2025. An Active Transportation Planner has now been hired and will be starting in their role on April 22, 2025. This is later than had originally been planned and has impacted the schedule for network implementation.

There are numerous potential consultation approaches that could be used in network development, and Staff seeks Council's guidance on the approach to be used. This report outlines three potential options and includes the approximate costs and the impacts on the project timeline of each for Council's consideration.

ANALYSIS

The three options that have been developed, which will be explained more detail, are as follows:

- Option 1 - Network-Wide Engagement
- Option 2 - Engagement on Each Specific Route

Option 3 - Network-Wide Engagement and Route-Specific Engagement on Larger Routes

Option 1 - Network-Wide Engagement

Option 1 consists of a community-wide engagement on the entire Active Transportation Network. This engagement would be at the Consult level of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. The engagement promise for "Consult" is to "keep the public informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the design" (Oak Bay Public Engagement Framework, 2021)

The goal of Option 1 engagement would be to assist Council in deciding on the broader goals for network development - which routes (if any) would have separated lanes, which routes (if any) would be traffic calmed neighbourhood bikeways, etc. It would also allow Council to consider other impacts of network development such as the impact on street parking, curbside waste collection, delivery vehicles, etc.

The engagement would be conducted in 2025 in late summer/early fall. A consultant would be hired to lead the engagement at an estimated cost of \$75,000. The engagement would consist of at least one in-person information session, as well as a project website and a questionnaire. Input would be summarized in a "What We Heard" report, which would be presented to Council.

Should Option 1 be adopted, staff and consultants would reference the "What We Heard" report to draft designs for each route. Draft designs would, at the 50% stage be brought to Council for feedback and next step directions. Interested residents would have the opportunity to share their feedback directly with Council.

Option 1 is built in to the Active Transportation capital program, and is not anticipated to significantly change the timeline for network build-out from what was presented at the June 10, 2024 meeting. The only exception is the Oak Bay Avenue-Beach Drive Neighbourhood Connection, which is scheduled for 2025. This project would be delayed to 2026 to ensure that community feedback can be captured on this route as well.

Option 2 - Engagement on Each Specific Route

Option 2 consists of 9 separate engagement opportunities, one for each specific route. These engagements would be at the Consult level of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. The goal of each engagement would be to assist Council in endorsing the design of each individual route, while allowing the residents and businesses along each corridor to share their ideas and concerns in a targeted engagement.

Each engagement would be held early in the design stage. A consultant would be engaged to develop a conceptual design, and the community would be engaged at the conceptual design phase. Each engagement would consist of an in-person information session, a page on the project website, and a questionnaire. A "What We Heard report" would be presented to Council along with the detailed design at the 50% stage. This report would be accompanied by a Staff report indicating how the design complies with the "What We Heard" report, and would be subject to public comment as in Option 1.

The cost for Option 2 is approximately an additional \$25,000 for each route, or a total cost of approximately \$225,000 over 5 years. Option 2 is not anticipated to significantly impact the proposed timeline for network build out, but it would add approximately 3 months to the timeline for designing each project to accommodate additional community engagement.

Option 3 - Network-Wide Engagement and Route-Specific on larger routes

Option 3 is a hybrid of Options 1 and 2. It consists of the network-wide engagement in 2025 as described in Option 1, along with route-specific engagements on as many of the routes as Council chooses to direct. The route-specific engagements would be at the Inform level, as the community would already have been engaged at the Consult level. The engagement promise for Inform is "We will keep you informed" (Oak Bay Public Engagement Framework, 2021)

The network-wide "What We Heard" report would help in narrowing down the key concerns with the specific routes, so that the route-specific engagement can be targeted to them.

The cost for Option 3 is approximately an additional \$25,000 for each route, a total cost ranging between \$25,000 to \$225,000 over 5 years (depending on how many routes Council directs for a second round of engagement.) Option 3 is not anticipated to significantly impact the proposed timeline for network build out, but it would add approximately 3 months to the timeline for designing each project to accommodate additional community engagement.

WORKPLAN IMPACT

The three options being presented for Council's consideration can be accommodated within the Engineering and Public Works departmental workplan. The work will primarily be led by consultants, and would be coordinated by the Senior Active Transportation Planner.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The financial impacts of the three options are as follows:

Option 1 - Approximately \$75,000 in 2025, already part of the approved Active Transportation program funding.

Option 2 - Approximately \$50,000-\$75,000 each year from 2026 to 2029 for a total of \$255,000. This would be taken from the Active Transportation program, and would impact how much funding is available for project construction.

Option 3 - Approximately \$75,000 in 2025, amounts ranging between \$0 and \$75,000 each year from 2026 to 2029 as Council directs. The funding for 2026-2029 would be taken from the Active Transportation program, and would impact how much funding is available for project construction.

OPTIONS

Option #1

Council could choose to direct Staff to undertake Option 1 as presented in the report; the following motion would be in order:

THAT Staff be directed to prepare a Council Project Sign-Off for Active Transportation Network Development based on Public Engagement Option 1 as presented.

Option #2

Council could choose to direct Staff to undertake Option 2 as presented in the report; the following motion would be in order:

THAT Staff be directed to prepare a Council Project Sign-Off for Active Transportation Network Development based on Public Engagement Option 2 as presented.

Option #3

Council could choose to direct Staff to undertake Option 3 as presented in the report; the following motion would be in order:

THAT Staff be directed to prepare a Council Project Sign-Off for Active Transportation Network Development based on Public Engagement Option 3.

Alternatively, staff await another direction from Council.

IAP2 FRAMEWORK ENGAGEMENT

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

Whichever option Council selects, there will be a Consult-level engagement at some point. The community will be asked for their feedback on alternatives, and that input will be used to influence Council's decision on route design.

TIMELINE/PROCESS/NEXT STEPS

Staff will use the information from this discussion to prepare a Council Project Sign-Off for Active Transportation Network Development. Staff is aiming to have this for Council's consideration in May 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Rennick, Director of Engineering and Public Works

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

Rianna Lachance

Rianna Lachance, 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