



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

BRIEFING NOTE TO COUNCIL

To: Council
From: Chief Administrative Officer
Subject: 5th Street Bridge Rehabilitation Update

File No.: 5335-20 / 5400-02
Date: September 8, 2020

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this briefing note is to present the 5th Street Bridge Traffic Management Strategy as well as provide an update on the status of the project.

BACKGROUND:

The 5th Street Bridge plays an important role in the entire Comox Valley transportation network serving 20,000 vehicles, 650 pedestrians and 500 cyclists each day. Completed in 1960, the 72-metre steel truss bridge has two vehicle lanes and 1.5 metre sidewalks on both sides of the bridge.

The following Council resolutions regarding the 5th Street Bridge Project have provided direction to staff.

June 24th, 2019

That based on the June 24th, 2019 staff report “5th Street Bridge Rehabilitation Project” Council approve OPTION 2 that Council direct staff to proceed with the associated next steps to rehabilitate the 5th Street Bridge, including the upgrade of adding cantilevered multi-use pathways plus development of detailed traffic management and public engagement plans, and report back to Council no later than September 16, 2019; and

That staff simultaneously prepare a supporting draft Borrowing Bylaw for Council consideration.

Following a period of extensive community and stakeholder engagement and the refinement of project options, Council passed the following subsequent motion.

February 3rd, 2020

That Council direct staff not to include cantilevers in the final design of the 5th Street Bridge Rehabilitation Project; and,

That based on the January 27th, 2020 staff report “5th Street Bridge Rehabilitation” that Council direct staff to obtain elector approval for a loan authorization bylaw for the 5th Street Bridge Rehabilitation Project through the Alternate Approval Process.

UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS:

1. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Purpose

The Traffic Management Strategy for the Fifth Street Bridge Rehabilitation project has been prepared to identify and evaluate various traffic management scenarios and develop a recommended strategy. The goal of this strategy is to provide a safe environment for all road users during the construction phase while minimizing impacts to the public, businesses, and priority vehicles (transit, emergency services, etc.).

The recommendations are intended to be used by the City to communicate both internally and externally as well as forming the basis of the contractor's detailed Traffic Management Plan. Some items may be refined/revised, depending on contractor workplan, and available project budget.

Stakeholder Engagement November 2019

Courtenay residents and various stakeholders and organizations were engaged early in the project. Letters were sent out to over 20 stakeholders in the region inviting them to a one-on-one meeting with City staff and project consultants. One-on-one meetings were held in late 2019 with the following stakeholders:

- 1) CFB 19 Wing Comox
- 2) Cycling Coalition
- 3) BC Ambulance
- 4) Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce
- 5) The Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association (DCBIA)
- 6) BC Transit
- 7) Comox Valley Regional District
- 8) Province of British Columbia Ministry of Transportation
- 9) Courtenay Fire Department

The city received no response from the following stakeholders:

- 1) Accessibility Advisory Committee
- 2) Town of Comox
- 3) Village of Cumberland
- 4) Comox Valley Economic Development
- 5) K'omoks First Nation
- 6) RCMP

Extensive feedback was considered to understand the community's needs and identify potential mitigation options. Listed below are the most important considerations identified through stakeholder consultations, and documented in our What We Heard report which was presented to council on January 27 2020:

- Reducing congestion and maintaining access for all modes of travel, as the highest priority.
- Adjustments in travel behaviors are expected and are most likely to include taking an alternate route, planning for additional travel time, and travelling outside peak periods (limited support was shown for taking the bus and carpooling).
- Maintaining priority access for emergency services, public transit, school buses, etc. are important considerations.

- Reduced congestion on 5th Street was a priority. Traffic delays backing up 5th Street would prevent access to downtown businesses in the area. Access to businesses in downtown Courtenay needs to be maintained throughout construction and should be made a priority.

Stakeholder Engagement August 2020

The Traffic Management Strategy was released to the above list of stakeholders for a three week comment period in August 2020. The City received comments from three stakeholders during the three week comment period: Courtenay Fire Department, CVCC, and CVRD/Transit. Feedback received from stakeholders was positive for the core concepts of the Traffic Management Strategy, specifically: Single Lane Alternating Traffic flow, the proposed detour routes, and the proposed priority lanes.

Some of the other comments the City received during the comment period were:

- Can the project be delayed by a few months so that the contractor-submitted detailed Traffic Management Plan be reviewed and approved by external stakeholders?
- Can the priority lanes and other considerations noted in the Traffic Management Strategy be made mandatory in the Request for Proposal?
- Extend the priority lane on the East side further along Ryan Road.
- Education/enforcement program regarding traffic changes and detour routes.
- Increased cyclist access.
- Community goals for greenhouse gas emission targets, and traffic modal shift.
- Considerations around signal control for emergency vehicles.

The above comments are currently being reviewed, and where possible, will be included in a finalized Traffic Management Strategy.

Regarding the external stakeholder review of the contractor's Traffic Management Plan, the anticipated review time between contractor submittal and City approval is expected to be quite short, likely a few weeks. Including any further external review and potential negotiation, at this phase of the project, would likely result in impacts to the construction schedule. That being said, efforts will be made by the project team, to be as communicative as possible with key stakeholders, as project details develop.

Although possible, the question of making priority lanes and other considerations mandatory in the Request for Proposal comes with risk. Any mandatory items could potentially result in additional costs, and may prevent the contractor from providing value added proposals (innovative solutions), derived from previous project experiences.

The Traffic Management Strategy will be included in the contractor procurement process and is expected to be used as a guiding document. As noted previously, the recommendations are intended to form the basis of the contractor's detailed Traffic Management Plan. Although some items may be refined/reviced, depending on contractor workplan, and available project budget, the intent is to include the identified accommodations.

Traffic Evaluation

Results of the evaluation showed that a Single Lane Alternating Traffic pattern was the preferred option for traffic management on the bridge. This option provides a more balanced network performance at nearby bridges, as well as highways and municipal roads, and is most responsive to the concerns identified by the public and stakeholders.

General Considerations:

- Vehicles taller than 3.6 metres will not be able to use the Fifth Street Bridge, due to the planned scaffolding, and will have to use the 17th Street Bridge, Condensory Bridge, or an alternative route. This height will however allow for most vehicles and buses, and all fire trucks except for the largest one.
- Pedestrian/Cyclist travel on the bridge will be maintained in protected lanes at all times.
- Access to the Lewis Park and/or Millennium Simms Park parking lots should be maintained for park users, and as a potential park-and-ride or park-and-walk/bike location, but may have intermittent short-term interruptions.

Leaving Downtown (Eastbound Travel)

- General purpose traffic leaving downtown will be directed to access the bridge via a detour route, involving travelling northbound on Cliffe Avenue, right on 3rd Street, left into the laneway between Cliffe Avenue and Anderton Avenue, right on 1st Street and finally right onto Anderton Avenue.
- Priority vehicles (transit, emergency services, school buses, and potentially car-pool or high occupancy vehicles) can use a planned queue-jumper lane on Anderton Avenue to bypass the queue and get to the front of the line for the bridge.
- 5th Street eastbound (towards the bridge) will be closed at Cliffe Avenue except for local traffic.

Entering Downtown (Westbound Travel)

- Priority vehicles will have a dedicated priority vehicle lane on Old Island Highway from Ryan Road to the bridge.
- No other significant changes to current traffic patterns for general purpose traffic have been identified.

2. BORROWING BYLAW

With the first three readings of the bylaw on Monday April 20th, the borrowing process is now underway. The Inspector of Municipalities has already provided statutory approval on May 5th allowing this bylaw to proceed to electoral approval when necessary.

Electoral approval, in the form of an Alternate Approval Process, is scheduled to advance this fall. Council will have an opportunity to establish the number of electors and deadline prior to commencing this process.

3. DETAILED DESIGN/PROCUREMENT PACKAGE DEVELOPMENT

Detailed design is continuing to advance. Both design and procurement package are on schedule to be ready for a fall procurement process.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The project is progressing as per the below schedule. While the on-going COVID pandemic has delayed some items by a few months, overall the project is still on track to meet the original schedule for construction.

City of Courtenay Fifth Street Bridge - Summary Schedule								
	2020			2021			2022	
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
Communications and Public Consultation								
Complete Traffic Management Strategy								
Complete Design								
Borrowing Process								
Procurement								
Contractor Submittals								
Construction								
Project Close-out								

PROJECT BUDGET

Project budget is still estimated to be as per below.

Project Element	Estimated Cost
Outcome	Rehabilitated crossing with 20-year updated useful service life with full utilization of the grant and cathodic protection versus deck replacement.
Bridge Recoating & Deck Renewal	\$4.1 million
Structural and Traffic	\$2.2 million
Total	\$6.3 million
Fed/Provincial Grant	\$1.96 million
Reserves	\$0.94 million
City Borrowing Amount	\$3.4 million
Tax Implications (based on 2019 assessments and tax rates)	Average residential property \$13 per year Average commercial property \$82 per year

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Concurrence:

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Attachment (1):

Attachment 1 - Fifth Street Bridge Rehabilitation Traffic Management Strategy