



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

## BRIEFING NOTE

**To:** Council

**File No.:** 8620-01; 16009

**From:** Chief Administrative Officer

**Date:** July 4, 2016

**Subject:** 5<sup>th</sup> Street Complete Streets Pilot Project – Public Engagement Summary

### ISSUE:

This Briefing Note is to provide Council with a summary of the first phase of public and stakeholder engagement for the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Complete Streets Pilot Project.

### BACKGROUND:

City Council identified Complete Streets as a 'Council NOW Priority' in the 2015 Strategic Priorities. Implementing complete streets also builds on the City's 25 Year Vision for Multi-modal Transportation Strategy and subsequent Complete Streets project options' evaluation.

Council further supported multi-modal transportation in the City of Courtenay's 2016-2018 Strategic Priorities: "As we build new or replace existing transportation infrastructure, we are consistent with what we learn from our Complete Streets Pilot Project."

At the April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Regular Council Meeting, Council considered the staff's report and resolved that:

*Moved by Hillian and seconded by Wells that based on the April 4, 2016 staff report entitled "5<sup>th</sup> Street Complete Streets Pilot Project – Update and Presentation from Urban Systems Ltd," and presentation Council approve Option 1 and direct staff to proceed with public engagement as described in this report.*

### KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

Staff had several objectives to meet in the first phase of public engagement. The first was to increase the public's understanding of the Complete Streets approach and the benefits of Complete Streets to ensure there is informed dialogue throughout the process. This objective was met through discussions between staff, the consultant and the public, as well as display boards, and hand out materials that were developed for Stakeholder meetings, a Public Information Session and an online survey. These materials were also posted on the City website for those who were unable to attend the meetings or information session.

The second objective was to determine how people currently use 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Staff met this objective by asking this question in all components of the engagement process.

The last two objectives for the public engagement process were to identify priorities and aspirations for 5<sup>th</sup> Street enhancements, and to increase the public's understanding of the trade-offs of different facilities. These objectives were met by meeting directly with key stakeholders, holding an evening public

information session at the Native Sons Hall, and through the online survey for the general public. In order to ensure a successful engagement process, static display boards, interactive displays, maps, and interview questions were developed. In addition, City staff and the consultant were available for questions and comments at each step in the engagement process.

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

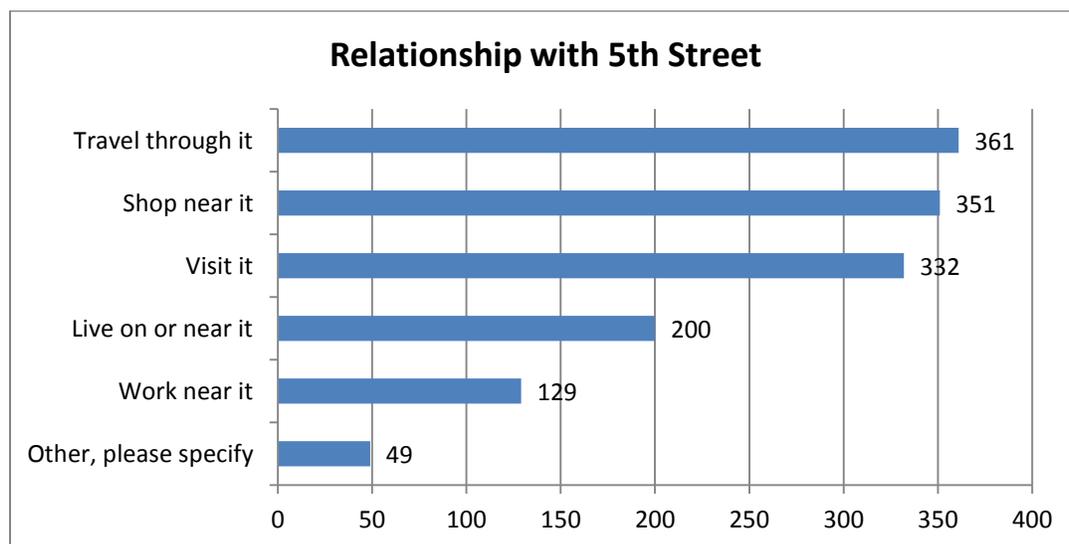
City staff and Urban Systems met with key stakeholders on May 5 and 6, 2016, to identify interests and aspirations for the study area. Comments were collected from the following key stakeholders:

- Comox Valley Cycling Coalition
- Comox Valley Accessibility Committee
- School District #71 (Active Travel)
- Comox Valley Regional District (Transit), and Watson & Ash
- Comox Valley Conservation Strategy Community Partnership

The Public Information Session was held in the evening of Thursday May 5<sup>th</sup>, and an online public survey was available between May 5<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.

The Public Information event was attended by approximately 60 people, who reviewed information boards, participated in interactive activities, and spoke to City staff and the consultants. The online survey received 560 responses, 408 of which were fully completed.

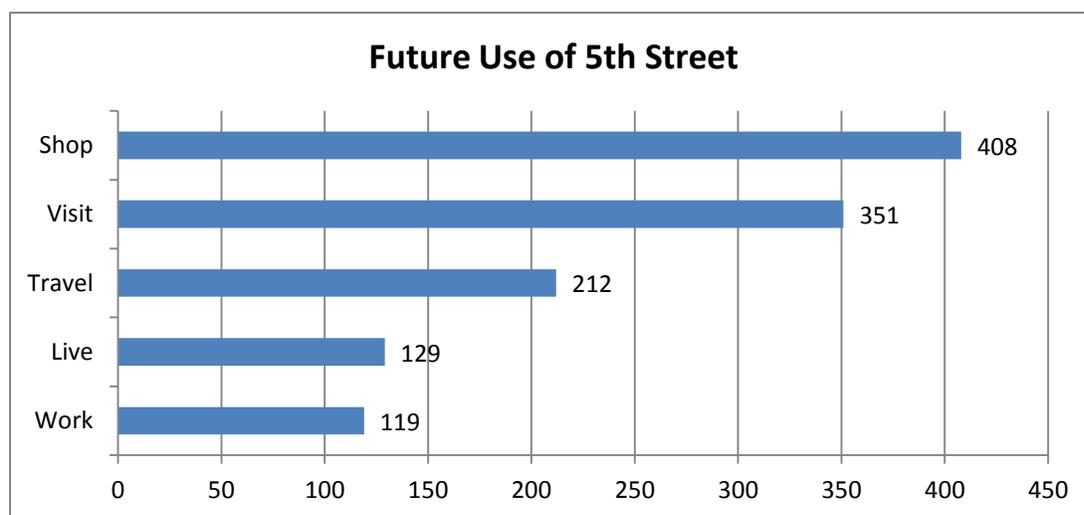
In order to determine how the public uses 5<sup>th</sup> Street, we asked respondents to outline their relationship with the street. A list of common options was provided and respondents were able to select multiple options. The table below outlines respondents' relationship to 5<sup>th</sup> Street.



Those who indicated having another relationship with 5<sup>th</sup> Street provided a variety of responses. The table below highlights prominent themes and the number of mentions associated with each.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Walk or bike along it                    | 14 |
| Own a business on or near it             | 11 |
| Socialize on it                          | 8  |
| Kids use it                              | 4  |
| Have a previous connection to it         | 4  |
| Out of context                           | 4  |
| Dine on it                               | 2  |
| Volunteer or host an event near or on it | 2  |

Respondents were then asked to indicate how they would want to use 5<sup>th</sup> Street in the future. Of the options provided, shopping, followed by visiting were the most popular uses among respondents, as shown on the table below. Respondents were able to select more than one future use for this question.



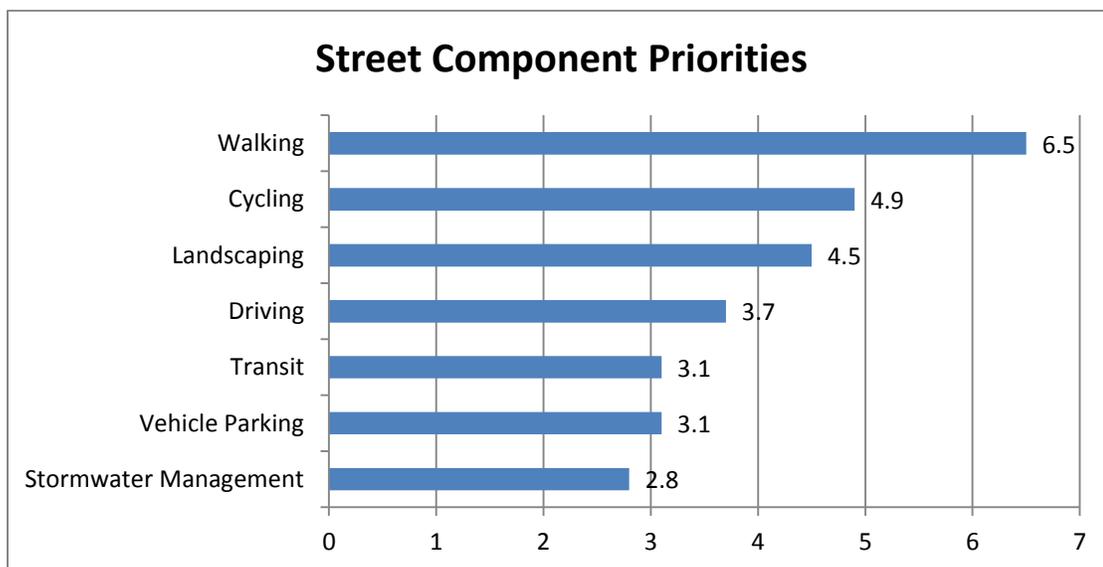
Participants were also asked to describe what they like about 5<sup>th</sup> Street, as well as what their vision for 5<sup>th</sup> Street is moving into the future. Generally, the public enjoy the atmosphere along 5<sup>th</sup> Street, the ability to support local businesses and the walkability of 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The most common themes for the public's preferred look and feel for 5<sup>th</sup> Street are:

- Greener/lush
- Attractive
- Welcoming/inviting
- Pedestrian friendly
- Safe

When considering the function of 5<sup>th</sup> Street, respondents' top themes were:

- Variety of shops, cafes and restaurants
- Pedestrian friendly
- Accessible
- Community hub and gathering space
- Inclusive for all modes and all ages of abilities

Stakeholders, public information session attendees and survey respondents also had the opportunity to rank the importance of different street components, including walking, cycling, driving, vehicle parking, landscaping, transit and stormwater management. Responses were weighted on a 7-point scale, with walking ranked the highest, followed by cycling and landscaping, as indicated in the table below.



At the public information session and during the stakeholder meetings, participants were invited to design their own ideal road cross section for 5<sup>th</sup> Street. This activity involved placing different street components onto a representative road width. All components were to scale, requiring participants to make trade-offs as to what they wanted to include on the street.

Three different groups of participants completed the exercise: the public at the information session, key stakeholders, and members of Council. In total there were 40 cross sections completed: 26 at the public information session, 13 by the key stakeholders, and 1 by Council.

A review of the completed cross sections demonstrated the following preferences:

- Enhanced width sidewalks,

- Protected/separated bicycle lanes (separated from vehicle traffic by bollards, landscaping or vehicle parking),
- 2-way vehicle traffic, and,
- Landscaping on both sides.

There was also support for a centre landscaped median and alternating boulevards with parking or street furniture, including bus shelters.

Moving forward, the priorities identified by the public through this engagement process will be used to inform the design of three surface treatment options for 5<sup>th</sup> Street between Fitzgerald Avenue and Menzies Avenue. Once the options have been developed they will be brought forward to Council for Council's consideration. Upon Council's approval of the options, a second phase of public engagement will take place.

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