

To: Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** August 16, 2021
From: Allen Xu, Manager of Engineering Planning and Assets
Subject: **Active Transportation Grant Application and Funding Approval for Phase 1 of the 7th Avenue Greenway Project**

Recommendations

1. That Council support the application to the BC Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant program for \$500,000 to fund construction of Phase 1 of the 7th Avenue Greenway project; and
2. That a budget of \$1,490,913 be approved as the City's share for the project and included in the 2022 capital program.

Purpose

The purpose of this staff report is to seek Council's support to apply to the BC Active Transportation Infrastructure program for \$500,000 and Council's commitment of \$1,490,913 as the City's share for the construction of Phase 1 of the 7th Avenue Greenway project. Phase 1 is from Grand Street to Fraser River Heritage Park.

Background

On June 24, 2021, the Province announced that \$36 million will be committed to active transportation infrastructure projects over the next three years to partner with Indigenous, local and regional governments to invest in active transportation plans and infrastructure and to create more livable and sustainable communities.

Projects that are eligible for the active transportation infrastructure project need to satisfy the following criteria:

- Project is part of an active transportation network plan or equivalent
- Project can begin construction once provincial funding has been announced
- Projects will be completed by March 2023 (projects under \$1 million) or by March 2024 (projects over \$1 million) and
- Projects are open to the public

The Province cost-shares to a maximum of \$500,000 per project. Provincial cost-share portions are determined by the type and size of community applying for a grant. Percentage of eligible funding for infrastructure type of projects, by applicant's community profile, are determined as follows:

- Indigenous community or local government(s) working in partnership with an Indigenous community - 80%
- Population less than 15,000 - 70%
- Population between 15,000 to 25,000 - 60%
- Population over 25,000 - 50%

Discussion and Analysis

7th Avenue Greenway Project Grant Eligibility

Immediately after the grant program announcement on June 24th, engineering staff evaluated the department's list of current design and capital projects and consider the 7th Avenue Greenway Project to be a prime candidate for the \$500,000 grant funding opportunity. The 7th Avenue Greenway Project meets all of the following preferred criteria that the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program applies to evaluate applications:

- Improves community connectivity: 7th Avenue provides a relatively flat east-west active transportation connection between community parks, recreational facilities, schools and local businesses;
- Improves safety: 7th Avenue is one of the City's most collision-prone corridors, with four of the top 15 collision-prone intersections along the corridor. 7th Avenue at Cedar Street intersection has the second greatest number of collisions between 2016 to 2020. The greenway project will promote safety for all modes of transportation and reduced collision between vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists;
- All ages and abilities (universal) design: 7th Avenue design aims to implement all ages and abilities infrastructure that enables everyone to use and benefit from the proposed infrastructure;
- Providing economic benefits: Research has shown that an increase in safe and comfortable pedestrian and cycling infrastructure translates to more activity near local businesses and community members tend to purchase more goods that are made in-community; and
- Improves physical and mental health, improves air quality and reduces greenhouse gases.

Project Design Options, Phasing and Cost Estimate

Currently, the City is in the process of public engagement and detailed design for the 7th Avenue Greenway Project. Three conceptual design options were presented to Council and the public, including impacted stakeholders, through various meetings, open houses, and online engagements and surveys.

Among the three options that were presented, Option 2, which is the two-way protected bicycle lane, has clearly become the most preferred option based on the public survey that the project team conducted from July 5 to July 26, 2021. The survey had 102 completed results and over 130 visitors. A separate staff report details the public engagement results and the details of the preferred design options. Based on the public engagement, the project team will advance the project to detailed design phase based on the preferred two-way protected bike lane option.

Once fully built, the 7th Avenue Greenway will become a connection between the west (Wren Street) and the east (Dewdney Trunk Road) part of Mission, which is approximately a 6.5 km route to support the City residents' active transportation and recreation. Due to the size of the project, the construction of the 7th Avenue Greenway Project will need to be phased over multiple years.

The project design team has selected the section between Grand Street to Fraser River Heritage Park (approximately 1.6 km) as the first phase to construct and apply for funding. This section connects major public parks, recreational facilities, public schools and businesses along the corridor and does not require any property acquisition, so it will be "shovel ready" once the

detailed design is finalized. The section west of Grand Street will continue to be designed as future phases of the 7th Avenue Greenway Project.

A preliminary design and cost estimate were prepared for the first phase of the 7th Avenue Greenway Project, in order to apply for the \$500,000 grant funding from the Active Transportation Infrastructure Program. The total estimated cost for the first phase of the 7th Avenue Greenway Project is \$1,990,913. This includes engineering and construction as well as a 20% contingency (Class C cost estimate).

Based on the Active Transportation Grant Program funding rules, 50% of the total project costs will be cost shared by the Province with a maximum funding of \$500,000. If successful, the cost share portion by the Province for the first phase of the 7th Avenue Greenway Project will be \$500,000 and the City's share will be \$1,490,913.

Council Resolution for the Grant Application

In order to meet the application deadline (July 30, 2021), staff has prepared and submitted the required documents on July 30th to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) including the application forms, usage counts, public engagement summaries, current project design drawings and cost estimates. The application will not be considered complete by the MoTI without the City's Council endorsement of the project and its share of the project costs secured. Staff requested and were given an extension to submit the Council resolution and relevant signatures by the end of August 2021.

Council Goals/Objectives

The 7th Avenue Greenway will help to achieve Council's Safe Community goal by providing a safe travel space for Mission residents of all ages and abilities from the east to the west of Mission.

The greenway construction also contributes to Council's Livable Complete Community goal. The greenway is an amenity for the public and envisioned to provide a connective component that ties the east and west neighbourhoods together while providing a platform to connect north and south trails, stairways, and connections that enhance the overall active transportation network. It also provides hubs on intersecting pathways that can be used for cultural enhancements, art, gathering places, and other complimentary amenities like water fountains, benches, wayfinding, and lighting.

Financial Implications

If successful, the City will receive up to \$500,000 of grant funding towards the design and construction of the 7th Avenue Greenway Project. An estimated amount of \$1,490,913 will be required as the City's share for the construction. It is recommended that the project be included in the 2022 capital program budget with the City's funding coming from the Community Works (Gas Tax) reserve.

It is recognized that the project could not proceed in 2022 without the grant funding and its priority may be reconsidered if the grant application is not successful. Staff has been informed by the MoTI that funding application results will be announced in September of 2021. An update to Council will be provided once staff receives information from the MoTI.

Communication

At this time no additional communication externally is required. If the City's application is successful and the project receives grant funding, staff will work with the communications team

to develop a plan to engage and inform the public prior to finalizing design drawings and construction.

Summary and Conclusion

The 7th Avenue Greenway Project is an important east-west corridor that connects public parks, recreational facilities, schools and local businesses and provides safe and green modes of transportation for Mission residents of all ages and abilities.

The 7th Avenue Greenway Project meets all preferred criteria for the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program which provides 50% and up to \$500,000 of funding for infrastructure construction projects. Council's endorsement of phase 1 of the project and funding approval are required in order to complete the City's application to the grant program.

Report Prepared by: Allen Xu, Manager of Engineering Planning and Assets

Reviewed by: Doug Stewart, Director of Finance

Reviewed by: Tracy Kyle, Director of Engineering and Public Works

Approved for Inclusion: Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer