

To: Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** December 20, 2021
From: Allen Xu, Manager of Engineering Planning and Assets
Subject: 7th Avenue Greenway Project - Phase One Grand Street to Fraser River
Heritage Park

Recommendation(s)

That Council support the 7th Avenue Greenway Project - Phase One Grand Street to Fraser River Heritage Park project proceeding to the next phases of finalizing the design for tender and construction.

Purpose

To obtain Council's acceptance of the design options and major design elements for 7th Avenue Greenway Project - Phase One and approval to proceed with finalizing the design for future procurement and construction.

As the design is being finalized for tender and construction, Staff will continue to undertake a focused engagement with directly affected residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

Background

The Council's Strategic Plan aims to create a safe, liveable and complete community for all citizens of Mission. Through the planning, design and construction of the 7th Avenue Greenway Project, it will provide a 6.5 km active transportation corridor connecting the east and west of Mission, for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy while accessing major education, recreation, commercial facilities and amenities. The greenway project is being designed and developed as part of the City's strong commitment to continuously improving roadway safety for our citizens and making it easier for people of all ages and abilities to drive, walk, wheel or cycle.

Phase one of the 7th Avenue Greenway Project is a 1.6 km section from Grand Street to Fraser River Heritage Park. Staff has conducted extensive public and stakeholder engagement while evaluating various design options and conceptual designs throughout 2021.

On September 23, 2021, Engineering staff hosted a site tour of the 7th Avenue Greenway to introduce and review the design concept and options with the Council and visit other active transportation facilities in the City of Maple Ridge and City of Surrey. Staff has conducted additional analysis and updated the design while engaging a focused group of stakeholders, based on feedback heard during the tour and experience shared by other municipalities.

City staff applied for a grant intake for the Provincial Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program. The Province recently announced that the City of Mission was successful and will receive a grant of \$500,000. The conditional grant agreement that was recently signed by the City and the Province requires that the City's share of funding be approved by the end of 2021 and construction of the Phase One project be completed in two years.

Three staff reports have been presented at previous meetings in 2021 to inform Council on public engagement, projects design and grant application.

Design options and drawings for the 7th Avenue Greenaway Project - Phase One were prepared based on feedback from Council and recent engagement activities with a focused group of stakeholders including residents, businesses, and other stakeholders such as the Fire Department, Parks, Recreation and Culture Department as well as BC Transit.

Discussion and Analysis

Preferred Design Option and Project Phasing

The project has completed extensive community consultation in 2021 including surveys, engagement Mission webpages, virtual and in-person open houses, as well as individual meetings with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. Recently, the second round of project engagement included:

- Social media posts;
- Mission engagement website updates and survey;
- Stakeholder outreach: engagement letter sent to 24 stakeholders with 26 follow-up calls;
- Stakeholder meetings with the school, cycling coalition, business association, Fire Department and businesses along the route;
- An in-person open house on July 11th;
- A virtual open house on July 15th; and
- The online survey portion of the Mission engagement which has had 130 visitors and 102 completed surveys

A summary of recent engagement activities is included in Appendix B. Staff also recently conducted focused engagement and discussions with the solid waste collection contractor, businesses along the route as well as many internal stakeholders.

Based on the engagement result, over 65% of the responses favour the 3 m bi-directional protected design option on the north side. The design is therefore developed using this preferred option within the existing curbs for the majority of the corridor.

7th Avenue Greenway Project – Phase One starts from Fraser River Heritage Park and ends at Grand Street. Anything west of the Grand Street will be included in future phases. The phasing of this project has considered many factors including size of project, maximization of grant opportunities, land acquisitions requirements, and other factors such as regulatory permits and future development activities such as the construction of the new Mission Senior Secondary School west of Grand Street.

The design and cost estimates for remaining sections of 7th Avenue from Grand Street to Wren Street is planned to be completed in the first quarter of 2022. The project team will continue to engage stakeholders, e.g. the School District, in finalizing the design for 7th Avenue west of Grand Street. As identified by the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) work (in draft), the construction of the future phases of the 7th Avenue from Grand Street to Wren Street is a medium-term priority. The future phases of 7th Avenue project is not currently in the 2022-2026 capital plan. However, this project will be reviewed in 2022 once the TMP is finalized and its timeline will be reviewed together with other priorities and funding availability.

Project Benefits - Safe Streets for Everyone

Based on the 2021 Transportation Master Plan analysis, 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 had the second greatest number of collisions between 2016 to 2020. The greenway project will improve safety for all road users, including people

walking, wheeling and cycling. This has been incorporated into all aspects of the design as pedestrian safety, accessibility and comfort is a key design theme with new crosswalks, new Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB), curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, raised bicycle lanes at crosswalks and bus stop locations, street lighting improvements and improved pedestrian experience and connections. The project team wants to make this corridor a safe and accessible street for everyone.

Other benefits of the project include:

- Improves community connectivity: 7th Avenue provides a relatively flat east-west active transportation connection between community parks, recreational facilities, schools and local businesses;
- All ages and abilities design: 7th Avenue design aims to implement all ages and abilities infrastructure that enables everyone to use and benefit from the proposed infrastructure;
- 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.

Murray Street and 7th Avenue Intersection Upgrade

The full signalization of the 7th Avenue and Murray Street intersection was identified as a future project (planned for 2026) in the most recent Development Cost Charge (DCC) Bylaw 5714-2018, with an estimated cost of \$360,000. This signalized intersection upgrade work is a separate project and not currently in scope for the 7th Avenue Greenway Project - Phase One.

To take advantage of construction forces during future Phase One construction and to achieve an economy of scale, staff plan to review the feasibility and concepts of designing and constructing of a signalized intersection at Murray Street and 7th Avenue so that the signalization of this intersection could be constructed at the same time as the Phase One project is moving forward.

Additional funding, likely from DCC reserves, are going to be required for the construction of this signalized intersection due to construction cost escalations (\$360,000 was based on 2017 prices). Staff will update Council and seek appropriate project and funding approvals when the conceptual design work is completed.

On Street Parking

It is recognized that in order to upgrade 7th Avenue, street parking on the north side of the street would be impacted. The impact has been significantly reduced through analysis and careful selection of design options, as the preferred bi-directional option has the least amount of impact to the number of parking spots along 7th Avenue. On street parking on the north side are maintained along the north side of 7th Avenue between Grand Street and Welton Street with reductions of parking occurring from Welton Street and Stave Lake Street.

According to a parking utilization survey completed during both daytime and overnight time, there is relatively low parking utilization throughout the day and slightly higher utilization in the evening hours and overnight. The study shows that there's an average of 25% parking utilization rate for both sides of 7th Avenue between Stave Lake Street and Grand Street. As the proposed design maintains over 60% of the existing on street parking capacity, it is expected that the construction of the greenway is not going to significantly impact the parking availability/capacity along the route.

High parking usage areas such as the areas immediately east of Grand Street and nearby the Leisure Center/Shops will see improved number of parking by the creation of additional on street parking in this area.

Based on feedback heard during the Council tour, staff and the consultant prepared two alternative designs that create additional street parking spaces on the south side of the 7th Avenue and to maintain the same amount of parking spaces between Murray Street and Horne Street. Staff met with the Fire Department on November 1, 2021 and was informed that the Fire Department does not support on street parking by the Fire Hall along the southside of the 7th Avenue, due to negative impacts to response time and challenges that parked cars may create for fire trucks to maneuver and turn.

Curbside Collection

Staff have worked with the Manager of Environmental Services in engaging the City's curbside collection contractor. It is confirmed that there are no negative impacts to existing operations or costs of the curbside collection.

Enhancement Near the Leisure Center/Commercial Shops

Immediately east of Grand Street all existing roadway elements remain which include a 3.3 m eastbound travel lane, a 3.3 m west bound travel lane, and a 3.5 left turning lane. The functionality of the existing roadway width and safety for all roadway users are enhanced by the design that incorporates a new 3.0 m bi-directional bike lane and a new 1.8 m sidewalk. The bike lane and driving lane are proposed to be separated by a 0.6 m landscaped buffer zone.

On street parking will be improved in this area with the creation of additional parking on the northside of the roadway, which requires a small strip of land (< 1m wide) from existing park property as well as relocating/replacement of existing park fences.

In front of the commercial shops, the design will replace existing aged infrastructure with a new wide (2.7 m) sidewalk, a 3 m bi-directional bike lane as well as new paved parking stalls and sitting/landscaped areas. The design will maintain the existing number of parking spots while looking for opportunities to promote active transportation for both pedestrians and cyclists and create a space for Mission residents and visitors to shop and enjoy.

The existing crosswalk will be moved westward slightly to a new curb extension which will effectively reduce crossing distance and make it safer for pedestrians to cross the street to shop or visit facilities and amenities in the area.

Project Funding and Grant Opportunity

The updated Phase One project cost estimate remains at approximately two million dollars. The project is included in the recently approved five-year capital plan for 2022 which is funded from \$500,000 from the provincial Active Transportation Grant and 1.5 million from the City.

Staff are closely monitoring other grant funding opportunities. Earlier in 2021, the federal government announced that they are providing \$400 million over five years to help build new pathways, bike lanes, trails and other active transportation infrastructures. Based on staff's preliminary research of funding eligibility and application guidelines, the 7th Avenue Greenway project will be an eligible project for such funding opportunities.

The federal government provides up to 60% of the funding required for eligible projects. If successful, up to 100% of the total construction costs (\$2 million dollars) of the 7th Avenue Greenway - Phase One project can be funded entirely by various levels of government. Alternatively, applications can be made to this program for future phases of the 7th Avenue greenway project or other priority projects of the City. At this time, the federal government has

not announced the intake opening dates; however, it is anticipated that they will open the intake sometime in 2022.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to engage directly with affected residents, businesses and other stakeholders while finalizing the design and plans for tender and construction in 2022, for the 7th Avenue Greenway Project - Phase One from Heritage Park to Grand Street.

The design for future phases of 7th Avenue west of Grand Street will be prepared with an aim to finalize in the Spring of 2022. Staff will prepare a report then to update Council. The construction of future phases of 7th Avenue is currently not in the five-year capital plan.

Council Goals/Objectives

The 7th Avenue Greenway - Phase One 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 complementary amenities like water fountains, benches, wayfinding, and lighting.

Financial Implications

The City has received grant funding of \$500,000 towards the design and construction of the 7th Avenue Greenway Project - Phase One. Approximately \$1.5 million will be required as the City's share for the construction; funding is provided from the Community Works (Gas Tax) reserve.

The project funds and plans were included in the 2022 - 2026 five-year capital plans for implementation in 2022, which was approved by Council at its December 6, 2021 meeting.

Staff will monitor future grant funding opportunities and apply for grants as they are announced. If successful, any future grant will reduce City's contribution.

Once the infrastructure is built, additional operating and maintenance budget will be required for items such as maintaining the landscaped median, garbage collection and street sweeping.

Communication

Engineering staff plan to continuously engage affected residents, businesses and major stakeholders on an as needed basis throughout the next phases of this project of design finalization and construction.

Engineering staff will work with the Communications Division to update the engage Mission website with recent project updates and design drawings in January of 2022.

Summary and Conclusion

The design options and major design components for 7th Avenue Greenway Project - Phase One has recently being completed.

Staff recommends that Council support the 7th Avenue Greenway Project - Phase One project to proceed to the next phases of finalizing the design for tender and construction.

Report Prepared by: Allen Xu, Manager of Engineering Planning and Assets
Reviewed by: Tracy Kyle, Director of Engineering and Public Works
Approved for Inclusion: Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments

Attachment A: Preliminary Design Drawings for 7th Avenue Greenway Project - Phase One
Attachment B: Summary of Round Two Public Engagement