

At the December 7th, meeting of Council, direction was provided to establish a downtown pedestrian zone in 2021, and a “base budget” was approved to replicate the basic service levels provided in 2020. Additionally, Council requested through Motion COU20-401 for administration to return with additional information as follows:

COU20-401 Moved by Mayor Sorensen That with respect Recommendation 2 contained in Item 4.1, Summer 2021 Downtown Pedestrian Zone, the following be adopted, as amended and after amendment: That Council: 2. Direct Administration to proceed with the specific recommended issues identified in the Attachment and return to Council with updates, as part of the 2021 Service Review, on the following additional topics:

- *Transit;*
- *Associated fees and costs; and*
- *The disincentives and incentives with respect to traffic management.*

For: (7): Mayor Sorensen, Councillor Canning, Councillor Christensen, Councillor DiManno, Councillor Olver, Councillor Poole, and Councillor Standish

MOTION CARRIED

The proposed service levels below are intended to respond to this motion and offer Council a range of new service options around a 2021 downtown pedestrian zone.

Transit

With respect to “Transit”, administration has interpreted this direction broadly and is providing Council with options for both integrating transit within the pedestrian zone, and as an incentive for visitors to use intercept lots. This is consistent with the report to Council and direction provided at the December 7th meeting, and is intended to address Roam’s concerns of reduced visibility and ridership if rerouted to Beaver Street.

Shuttle Services to Intercept Lots

Shuttle services were initially planned for and as part of the 2017 Service Review ("PARK AND RIDE LOTS & SHUTTLE SERVICE") and subsequently in the 2019 Service Review which included the delivery of a contracted service in 2020. The 2020 service was not implemented due to COVID-19, resulting in a \$62,000 reduction to the transit budget. Below are two options for reinstating this service in 2021.

Mid to Full-Size Shuttle

A mid-size (24 passenger bus) or full-size shuttle (low floor transit bus) to the train station and Fenlands intercept lots could better connect intercept lot users with the downtown area, and / or create an incentive for parking lot users who would otherwise not visit downtown to come downtown (e.g. Bow Valley Parkway cyclists). One of the challenges with a smaller 24 passenger shuttle would be occupant load restrictions associated with COVID and / or perceived lack of spacing for potential customers. A low floor transit bus would allow for better spacing and more optimal loading / unloading by virtue of multiple doors, however issues around COVID-related aversion to multi-user transit vehicles may still exist.

Anticipated costs of this service are \$62,000 based on 2020 estimates and would likely be delivered by the Bow Valley Regional Transit Services Commission (Roam Transit).

| Days of Service | Hours of Service | Hourly Cost | Total Operating / Bus |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 25 | 10 | \$ 125 | \$ 31,250 |
| 40 | 10 | \$ 125 | \$ 50,000 |

Operating Costs:

| Year | Days of Service | Hours of Service | Hourly Cost | Total Operating / Bus | Wrap | Marketing | Admin | Totals |
|------|-----------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 2018 | | | | | | | | |
| 2019 | 25 | 10 | \$ 125 | \$ 31,250 | \$ 5,000 | \$ 5,000 | \$ 2,000 | \$ 43,250 |
| 2020 | 40 | 10 | \$ 125 | \$ 50,000 | \$ 5,000 | \$ 5,000 | \$ 2,000 | \$ 62,000 |

Micro-Shuttles

Micro-shuttles such as electric golf carts have been assessed in the past, specifically as a promotion for the Bear Street reconstruction project. While obviously of a much smaller scale than a mid-size or full-size shuttle (and therefore lower people-moving capacity) they might have the benefit of attracting household-scale cohorts who are making use of the intercept parking lots and would otherwise not use a larger shuttle vehicle. Such a vehicle may require an amendment to the Town of Banff’s Traffic Bylaw.



| Weekend Micro-Shuttle Service | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 6 | Seasonal staff (7hr shifts for 24 weekend and holiday days) |
| \$18,200 | Labour Cost |
| \$11,800 | Cart Rental (x5) and Insurance |
| \$30,000 | Total Cost |

Transit inside pedestrian zone

As part of the deliberations around a 2021 pedestrian zone on Banff Avenue, Council directed administration to return at Service Review with information around including transit in the pedestrian zone. This was interpreted as allowing for local transit service within the 100, 200, and 300 block of Banff Avenue. In response, administration has worked with Roam (Bow Valley Regional Transit Services Commission) to determine operational requirements and associated costs. There are 4 key operational aspects associated with integrating transit:

1. Access controls (gates; landscape);
2. Routing conflicts;
3. Bus stops and accessibility; and
4. Vehicle-pedestrian conflict management.

Access Controls

With respect to access controls, this refers to how busses are allowed into and out of the pedestrian zone while limiting non-transit vehicles. In discussion with other communities who operate pedestrian zones, the options are to either use a gate system or signage as access control. Gates provide a more definitive access system, deterring lost vehicles and likely providing a higher level of security. They also present a risk to pedestrians when being raised and lowered, present a risk in case of failure, and are a higher capital requirement. A non-gated entry system is simpler and would use landscape and signage to create a constricted “throat” which would dissuade non-transit vehicles from entering.

Image: Example of Signage and Landscape Approach for Transit in a Pedestrian Zone



| | Gates | Signage + Landscape |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Ease of access | Moderate | High |
| Risk of unauthorized entry | Low | High |
| Security level | High | Low |
| Cost | Moderate (\$20k per gate) | Low (+/- \$5k total) |
| Risk to pedestrians | Moderate | Low |

It is administration’s recommendation that a Signage + Landscape approach be taken, with budget contingency in place for a gate system should it be needed either to address operational efficiencies or safety and security concerns.

Routing conflicts

Routing for all transit vehicles is proposed to be on one of the interior vehicle lanes with busses scheduled to avoid a head-to-head conflict and in constant radio communication. Should busses be required to pass, space would remain at the Caribou / Banff intersection to allow for this.

Bus stops and accessibility

There are 4 bus stops in the downtown, and as much as possible Roam service in the pedestrian zone would use these as service stops. However, with no ability to have the bus access the curb accessible users would need to use the bus ramp while the bus is in a ‘kneeled’ position. Temporary ramps installed for the season would be required at a cost of approximately \$2,500.

Transit-Pedestrian Conflict

With transit vehicles and pedestrians sharing the same space, a system is required to notify pedestrians when a bus is approaching and have them move out of the way. The preferred option is a simple bell operated by the transit driver, with the cost per vehicle anticipated to be \$50. For fitting out all required vehicles, a total cost of \$500 is required.

Budget Summary

The total required budget for integrating transit within the pedestrian zone is as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Access Control | \$5,000 |
| Bus Stops and Accessibility | \$2,500 |
| Transit-Pedestrian Conflict | \$500 |
| Sub-Total | \$8,000 |
| Contingency | \$40,000 |
| Total | \$48,000 |

Cycling supports

Cycling in Banff National Park in 2020 was incredibly popular, with the creation of a bike-only zone on the Bow Valley Parkway adding to the Legacy Trail and other routes to create multiple cycling experiences for users of all skill levels. This corresponded with increased cycling visits to the townsite and bicycle parking was therefore at a premium in and around the pedestrian zone.

In 2021, administration is recommending the following municipal initiatives to better support cyclists who make use of the pedestrian zone, as well as those who may be using Banff's intercept parking lots as a starting point for exploring the National Park on a bike.

Weekend Pedestrian Zone Bike Valet

A 'bike valet' service is proposed for weekends (anticipated peak cycling days) during the summer. Drawing inspiration from similar initiatives in other mountain communities, this service is intended to address the need for easy and secure bicycle parking in the pedestrian zone, particularly for expensive bikes, as well as to reduce the demand for bicycle parking within the pedestrian zone which was observed to be oversubscribed at peak times. This service uses 2 staff members manning a secure 'cage', with customers dropping off bikes in exchange for a chit. The budget model is based on a tent, secure construction fencing with scrim, and staffing for 2 persons for a 7 hour shift.



If approved, administration will explore the opportunity to have the service operated by one of the local bike rental companies as a way to reduce cost / management for the municipality.

| Weekend Bike Valet Service Budget | |
|--|--|
| 2 | Staff (7hr shifts for 24 weekend and holiday days) |
| \$ 6,050 | Labour Cost |
| \$500 | Branded tent |
| \$6,550 | Total Cost |

Train Station Lot Bike Repair Station

Self-serve bicycle repair stations are used by both the Town of Banff (Central Park; Fenlands) and Parks Canada (Spray River Trail) to afford cyclists the opportunity to conduct minor repairs in a self-serve format. Providing an additional repair station at the train station intercept lot along with signage regarding the pedestrian zone (e.g. “Pump your tires and ride downtown”) may assist with encouraging visitors to park and cycle.

| Self-Serve Bike Repair | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| \$1,500 | Train Station Lot Repair Station |
| \$ 200 | Signage |
| \$1,700 | Total Cost |



Intercept Parking Lot Ambassadors

Another initiative which has been considered is the staffing of intercept parking lots with “ambassadors”, or staff members who are able to provide information and wayfinding information to visitors. The efficacy of these types of positions was tested on Bear Street in 2020 and found to be well received by visitors. Having ambassadors located within intercept parking lots could help alert visitors to congestion issues downtown, and provide wayfinding assistance where needed.

This service would likely be most effective on weekends, although admittedly this may create recruitment challenges. Combining this role with similar seasonal positions (e.g. COVID safety ambassadors) may be more effective.

| Parking Lot Ambassadors – Weekend Staff | |
|--|--|
| 4 | Staff (7hr shifts for 24 weekend and holiday days) |
| \$ 12,100.00 | Labour Cost |
| \$500 | Branded tent |
| \$12,600 | Total Cost |

Increased intercept lot diversion tactics

- Directional signage / digital signage program;
- Flagging / ambassadors at key locations; and / or
- Roundabout reconfiguration at Lynx / Railway

Comprehensive Signage Program

In 2020, signage for vehicles was provided in an extremely rapid and responsive fashion. This included:

- Digital highway signage (e.g. “Day Trips use Mt. Norquay Exit”);
- Regulatory directional signage (e.g. “No Left Turn Ahead”); and,
- Information Signage (e.g. “Free Parking Here”).

The signage program was intended to be supplemented with flaggers, although this combination didn’t always result in the most effective delivery of information to vehicle users. Administration is requesting a pedestrian zone signage budget in 2021 that will incorporate the following elements:

- Highway signage as delivered in 2020 (\$6,000);
- Information signage at key locations between Banff Avenue and intercept parking lots (\$4,000); and,
- Trialing digital signage as a new tool for delivering information to vehicles (\$6,500)

| Comprehensive Signage Program | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| \$6,000 | Highway Signage |
| \$4,000 | Information Signage |
| \$6,500 | Digital Signage |
| \$16,500 | Total Cost |

Enhanced Flagging Program

In 2020, flagging was provided at key congestion points with the primary goal of averting downstream back-ups. Flagging was also trialed as a way to encourage intercept parking use, however data collected suggests this was not as effective as hoped for.

The approved ‘base budget’ includes flagging services at 2020 levels, focussed on in-bound vehicles at Mt Norquay Rd / Railway Ave and Banff Ave / Elk Street, and out-bound vehicles at the Post Office and Buffalo St / Beaver St. Administration is proposing an “enhanced” flagging service for weekend peaks, where visitors would be diverted to intercept lots in a fashion similar to ski hill operations, where users are sorted and directed into appropriate parking locations. This would see flagging staff at the following locations, serving to guide visitors into intercept parking while allowing residents to pass through:

- Banff Ave / Elk Street
- Elk Street / Marten Street

- Elk Street / Squirrel Street
- Mt Norquay Road / Railway Avenue
- Railway Avenue / Elk Street (Roundabout)

With the above tactics placing a high level of focus on diverting vehicles to intercept parking lots, administration is requesting a budget placeholder in case the temporary roundabout at Railway Avenue and Elk Street required reconfiguration. While the current configuration hasn't been determined to be a contributor to congestion, a contingency budget would assist with reconfiguration if needed.

| Enhanced Flagging Program | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 6 | Seasonal Staff (24 weekend and holiday days) |
| \$17,300.00 | Labour Cost |
| \$5,000 | Railway / Elk Roundabout Redesign Contingency |
| \$22,300 | Total Cost |

Wolf Street and 300 block platforms

In 2020, Council identified Wolf Street as an opportunity to expand pedestrian amenities through the re-establishment of sidewalk seating platforms. This was delivered on the south side of the street, with the north side of the street retained for parking and loading which was displaced due to Bear Street construction. In 2021, administration is recommending reinstating seating platforms on both the south and north sides of Wolf Street, consistent with temporary initiatives delivered in previous years. This may require refurbishment / reconstruction of the temporary platforms, which are nearing the end of their service life.

In the 300 block of Banff Avenue, direction was provided by Council to return with an option for restoring a configuration in the same layout as 2020.

COU20-402 Moved by Councillor Olver That new Recommendation 3, with respect to Item 4.1, Summer 2021 Downtown Pedestrian Zone, be adopted, after amendment: That Council: 3. Direct Administration to return to Council, as part of the 2021 Service Review, with recommendations on how the west side of the 300 Block of Banff Avenue, maintaining the Transit Hub, may be utilized as it was in 2020;

For: (5): Mayor Sorensen, Councillor Canning, Councillor Christensen, Councillor Olver, and Councillor Poole

Against (2): Councillor DiManno and Councillor Standish

MOTION CARRIED

In response, Administration has reached out to both the owners of Cascade Plaza as well as Roam Transit to assess options. The restoration of 2020's layout would maintain two lanes of northbound traffic and one lane of southbound traffic, with transit vehicles retaining access to the transit hub.

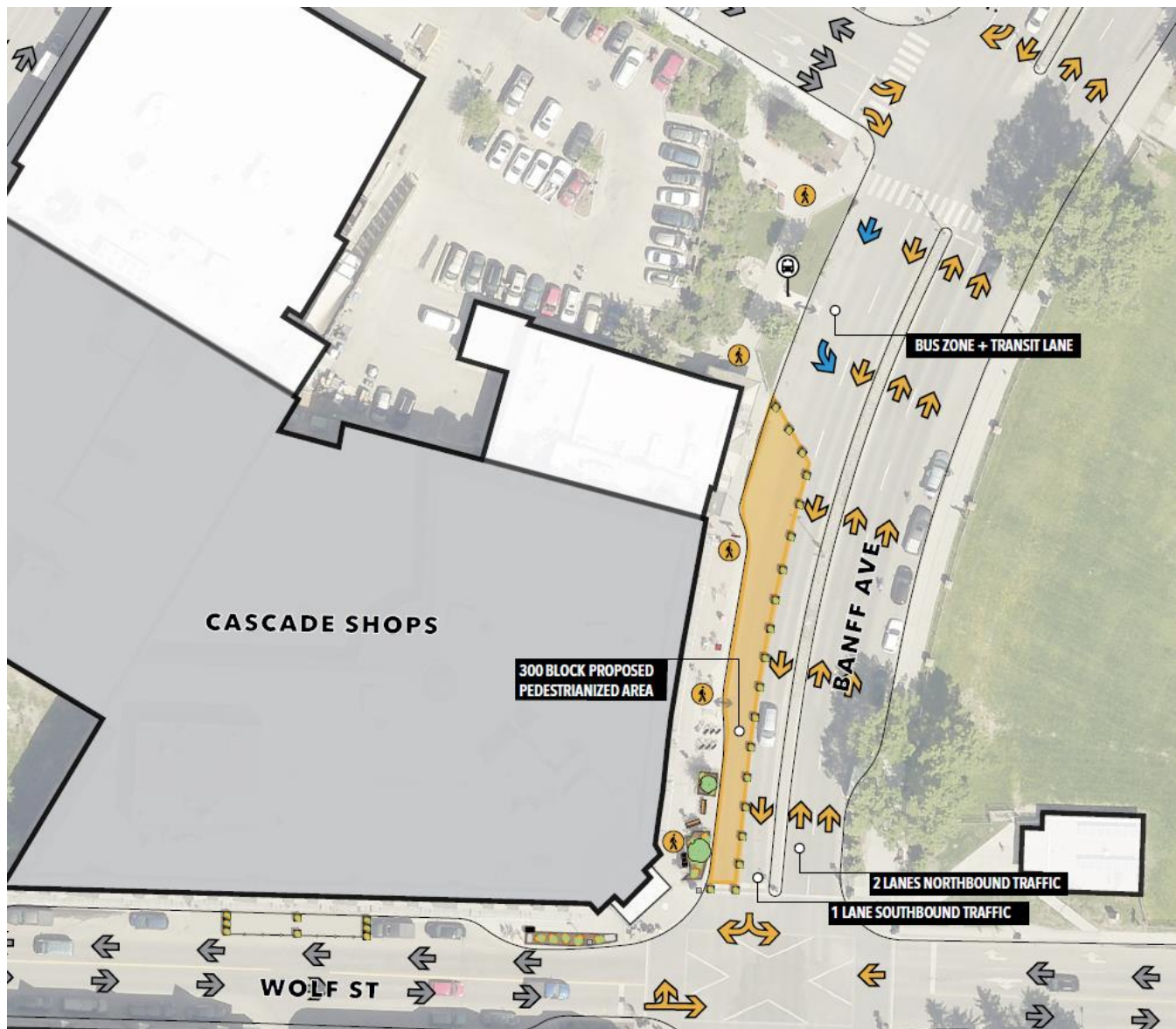


Image courtesy of Atlas Property Services Inc

An enhanced option would be to provide a raised platform environment as on Wolf Street, along with the potential addition / reconfiguration of bike parking and other public amenities (e.g. “Bike Valet” service option). The creation of additional platforms would incur a capital expense of approximately \$20,000 based on costs of similar platforms. Alternatively, no investment could be made for platforms by the Town, leaving the option available to Cascade Plaza to fund (or not).

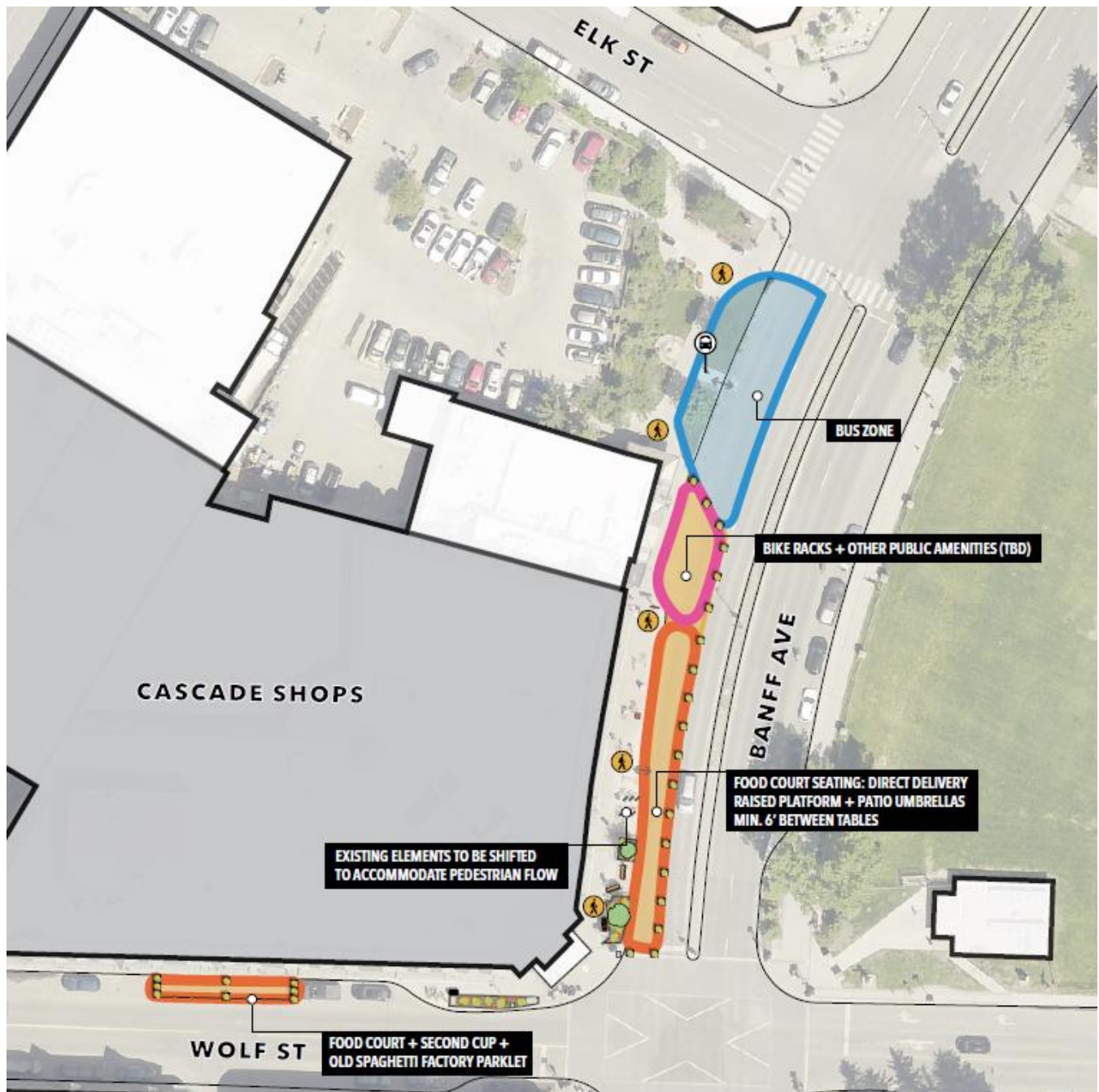


Image courtesy of Atlas Property Services Inc

| Wolf Street and 300 Block Platforms | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| \$10,000 | Refurbishment, installation, and removal of Wolf Street platforms |
| \$20,000 | Construction, installation, and removal of 300 Block platforms |
| \$30,000 | Total Cost |

Summary

The above proposed service levels are intended to offer Council the opportunity to review a range of new service options around a 2021 downtown pedestrian zone, in response to direction received at the December 7th meeting of Council. The initiatives listed are relatively independent of one another, and could be selected as menu items should Council desire. In summary they are:

| Downtown Pedestrian Zone – Enhanced Service Levels Budget Summary Table | |
|--|--|
| \$62,000 | Mid to Full-Size Shuttle Service to Intercept Lots |
| | <i>or</i> |
| \$30,000 | Micro-Shuttle Service to Intercept Lots |
| \$8,000 | Transit inside Pedestrian Zone |
| \$6,550 | Weekend Bike Valet Service |
| \$1,700 | Train Station Lot Bike Repair Station |
| \$12,600 | Intercept Parking Lot Ambassadors |
| \$16,500 | Comprehensive Signage Program |
| \$22,300 | Enhanced Flagging Program |
| \$30,000 | Wolf Street and 300 Block Platforms |
| \$40,000 | Transit Gate / Access Control Contingency |