

# REQUEST FOR DECISION

## Subject: Bear Street Shared Street – Public Feedback Results

Presented to: Council

Date: March 25, 2019

Submitted by: Darren Enns, Manager of  
Development Services

Agenda #: 8.1



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### RECOMMENDATION

Based on public feedback, council direct administration to:

1. Revise design to integrate **four to eight on-street, short-term loading** stalls year-round;
2. Develop a **seasonal approach** which removes sidewalk café seating and a limited number of bike racks between fall and spring and reallocates this space to on-street, short-term loading;
3. Explore **daily shifts** in sidewalk café seating during summer to create on-street, short-term loading during off-peak dining hours (e.g. 7 a.m. – 11 a.m.);
4. Explore allocating a total of **six stalls as accessible parking** stalls for people with disabilities within the Bear Street surface lot as well as **stalls for short-term (1 hour) parking** in the surface lot for access to professional / medical services;
5. Return with a **briefing on proposed snow and ice management** to address the unique design of Bear Street;
6. Support **Option 2** as the preferred basis for ongoing design development; and,
7. Proactively reassess design in the future based on tenancy changes or emergent transportation trends.

### BACKGROUND

#### Reason for Report

At the January 28, 2019, Governance and Finance meeting, direction was provided to administration to seek public feedback with respect to design options for the Bear Street Shared Street project:

*FIN19-21 Moved by Councillor DiManno that the governance and finance committee direct administration to seek public feedback on proposed Design Option 1 A Shared Space with Banff Refreshing Standards and proposed Design Option 2 Banff Refreshing with Shared Space Principles for the 200 Block of Bear Street.*  
*CARRIED*

In response, administration conducted a series of open houses on February 28, March 1, and March 2 at the Bear Street Mall. The open houses ran from 12 to 5 p.m. on the first two days and from 9 to 12 a.m. on the third day. The events were advertised through a variety of means, including postcards at local businesses, newspaper and social media ads, and on-street signage. Information boards and a model were provided in order to explain key design elements and project scope and process (See Appendix A - Open House Public Display Material).



Comments were either recorded by town representatives or submitted directly by the public, using a question guide on parking, outdoor seating, and other design elements. Administration estimates that attendance was between 200 and 250 over the three days, and approximately 150 questionnaire responses were received (see raw data from these questionnaires attached as Appendix B – Compiled Public Feedback).

### Summary of Issues

Over the course of the three days, the overarching key theme which emerged was on-street parking and loading. While the range of feedback on this topic ran the gamut from “don’t take any parking away” to “remove all car traffic and parking”, there was a general desire to see a pragmatic approach to increased loading and parking, and how this might be addressed throughout the year.

#### *Parking / Loading*

To date, Council has guided administration on parking and loading as part of the Bear Street redesign through motions COU18-158 and COU18-159:

*COU18-158 Moved by Councillor DiManno that council direct administration to include two on-street handicapped parking stalls in the design of the Bear Street Woonerff.*

CARRIED

*COU18-159: that council direct administration to include zero on-street 15-minute parking/ loading stalls in the design of the Bear Street Woonerff.*

CARRIED

*Standish and Christensen opposed  
(Poole absent due to declared conflict)*

Public feedback received during the open houses raised a number of issues with respect to on-street loading and parking. These included:

- An existing tenancy mix which was well served by short-term loading (e.g. convenience retail; pharmacies; coffee shops);
- Specialized loading needs associated with current tenancies (e.g. ski and equipment rentals; medical services); and,
- The magnitude of parking stall change between the trial period (approximately 21 on-street stalls) and the permanent build.

Acknowledging that the goals of establishing a pedestrian-friendly downtown stem from the 1990s Downtown Enhancement Concept Plan, the 2012 Transportation Master Plan, and other public policy, administration recommends that Council provide direction to integrate between four and eight on-street, short-term loading stalls year-round. On-street loading of a 15-minute duration would allow for errands and other similar activities while discouraging lengthier stays better suited for the Bear Street parkade, on-site parkades, and longer-term parking locations.

### *Seasonality / Daily Shifts*

A secondary but related issue which was raised was that of “seasonality”, or put simply the idea that summer and winter could have different designs. For reference, the “fixed” elements of the Banff Refreshing standards are the rundlestone landscape pods and street lights. Moveable elements are items such as seating (public and private) and bike racks. At this time, no direction has been provided regarding any seasonal changes, however administration is recommending that council pursue a seasonal shift in street operations to allow for increased winter on-street loading as well as snow storage and removal. If implemented, this approach could yield between eight and 12 on-street loading stalls during the winter months.



Another option to consider is daily sharing of the street during the summer months. This approach would simply allocate sidewalk café area space based on time of day. An example would be a coffee shop operating from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. may have sidewalk café seating re-allocated to loading or parking from 4 p.m. to midnight. The inverse would apply for a restaurant that operates from noon onward, which would allow for morning loading or parking. Adopting such an approach would ensure that the street is used to its maximum utility 24 hours a day. Administration is recommending that the detailed design process pursue options around daily loading use.

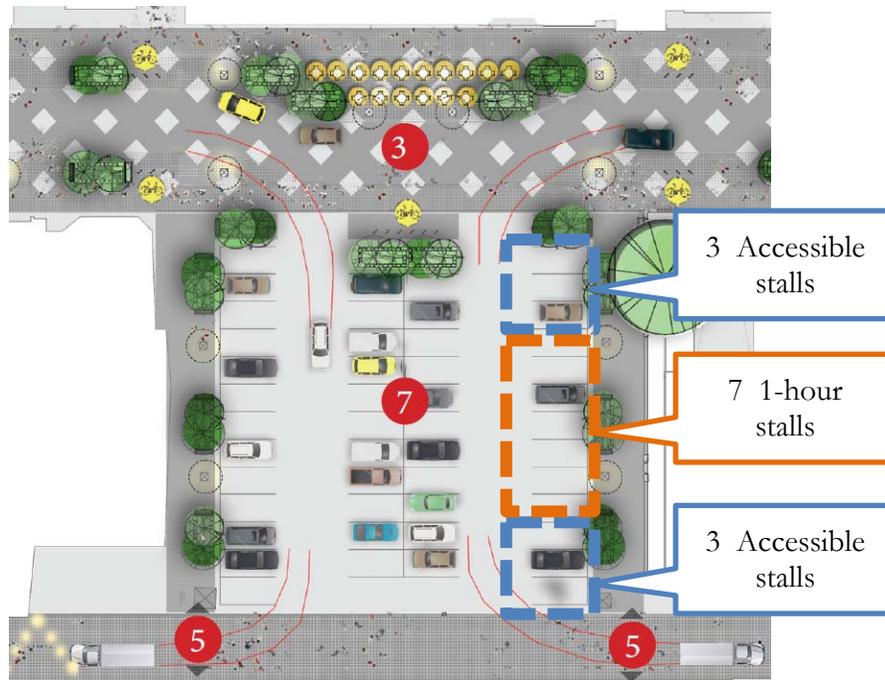
### *Vulnerable User Loading / Parking*

One of the key pieces of public feedback focussed on users of existing Bear Street medical services including doctors, physiotherapists, and pharmacies. While it is challenging to plan a multi-decade capital project around an existing tenant base, council may want to address some of these stated needs through both new loading areas as mentioned above, as well as administrative changes within the Bear Street surface lot.

The existing surface lot contains 52 parking stalls, of which two are accessible stalls. The proposed lot contains 48 stalls, however through the detailed design process it is believed that this number can be increased back to the original 52 stall count. Throughout the open house period there were numerous

discussions around how the current administration of this lot (3-hour parking – no returns within 4 hours) could be revised to accommodate medical appointments and errands.

Administration is recommending that an enhanced short-term and accessible parking program be applied in the Bear Street surface lot, which would allow for six accessible stalls (up from the current two in-lot, accessible stalls) as well as seven 1-hour stalls. The former would accommodate accessible placard holders, while the latter would ensure a high turnover of these seven stalls, thereby increasing stall availability for appointments. It should be noted that the reconfiguration of the surface lot is currently not budgeted, and that these changes would have to occur in a temporary format unless a revised budget was to include the lot in the project scope.



User-pay parking has been used in other communities as a method to increase parking stall turnover by incentivising the use of sub-prime parking for longer stays (such as employee parking) and keeping prime parking available for shorter term stays (such as errands/appointments). Previous studies have indicated low occupancy (below 50%) in private parkades and off-street stalls on Bear Street at peak periods when the public parking is 100% occupied. User-pay parking may help to encourage the use of parkade stalls for either short term or longer term use by building tenants. Administration will be bringing a separate report on parking management strategies for council to consider in April.

### *Design Options*

Two different design options were presented to the public for review and comment, as well as to Council at the January 28 Governance and Finance committee. While both Options 1 and 2 have many commonalities, they differ in a few key areas:

- The central chicane in Option 1 is more pronounced than in Option 2. This alignment deflects vehicles through a wider curve but also impedes visibility down the street;
- Option 1 has a more randomized, informal paving approach whereas Option 2 has a more formal, rigid approach; and,

- Option 2 has fewer landscaping pods and seating areas than Option 1 (16 vs. 23) thereby allowing for greater flexibility of the street surface.

While there are a number of recommendations within this report which may inform the detailed design process, administration is recommending that Option 2 be used as the basis for ongoing design development.

**OPTION 2 - BANFF REFRESHING W/ SHARED SPACE PRINCIPLES - MORE REGULATED STOP AND GO MOVEMENT AT INTERSECTIONS**



*Snow and Ice Management*

Concerns about snow clearing were identified in the public feedback sessions. The issues centred on the ability to remove snow with the additional streetscape features and the removal of curb areas for snow storage. Some concerns were recorded about the paving materials and the efficiency of snow and ice control. In response, administration are proposing to return with a briefing on proposed snow and ice management to address the unique design of Bear Street.

*Financing*

A secondary issue raised was project financing, allocation of project benefits versus costs, and other financial considerations. Council has provided direction through the capital budget process, and therefore no recommendations are being put forward at this time. Council was also presented with options around sidewalk café seating fees in April of 2018 and provided guidance for administration to pursue a rate structure based around the intensity of business operation (see Bylaw 395).

*Laneway Congestion*

Another secondary issue raised was laneway congestion in the Bear / Banff commercial lane (behind Sundance Mall). The current plans illustrate an open connection between the lane and the parking lot. Some feedback expressed concern around allowing private vehicles to access the lane, with the perception being that more private vehicles would equate to more congestion for delivery trucks.

Other feedback supported this open concept as it would allow more choices for lot users in entering or exiting the lot. At this time administration intends on reviewing this issue at the detailed design phase, with a likely outcome being options that could allow for the lane to be opened or closed based on a removable barrier system.

#### *Construction Period Impacts*

A final issue which was raised by several Bear Street business operators was construction period impacts and disturbance. As with Banff Refreshing, it is expected that significant impacts will result from the construction process, which is expected to last from the early spring of 2020 to the late fall. During this period administration will work with the general contractor to ensure pedestrian access to each business is maintained, however it is likely that periodic utilities work may result in disruption to the three parkades which access off of Bear Street (e.g. Brewster Mountain Lodge; Bear Street Mall; Townhouse Building). Administration plan to work with the detailed design team, general contractor, and local businesses and property owners on a construction mitigation plan.

#### **Communication**

It is expected that ongoing communication will occur with residents, visitors, and Bear Street businesses and property owners as the project progresses. As stated, there is a keen interest with regards to construction period impacts and how these will be mitigated.

#### **Response Options**

Council may provide additional direction to administration on any aspect of this report.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

#### **Budget**

The total approved budget for the Bear Street shared space project is \$6,401,150. This includes renewal of underground water and stormwater utilities as well as surface reconstruction. A detailed design team has been recently selected, and their work will assist in further refining project costs.

#### **Banff Community Plan**

Transportation goals and objectives:

- Provide a transportation system that encourages and complements pedestrian movement and cycling.
- Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and enjoyment by creating a defined and continuous system of pathways throughout the town.

Commercial development goals

- Banff will remain competitive with other worldwide visitor destinations.

#### **Council Strategic Priorities**

This trial project would support Council's strategic priorities of:

- 1- *'Toward a Sustainable Transportation System'* – Using street design to increase the mode shift to active transportation.
- 2- *'Toward Economic Prosperity'*, by increasing the economic value derived from tourism, increasing public and private investment and re-investment in infrastructure, and showcasing Banff as a leader in hospitality and environmental practices and fostering year-round tourism and related economic activities.

- 3- *'Park and Walk - A Walkable Community'* by encouraging residents and visitors to travel more sustainably, and leave their vehicles behind and by providing additional bike parking.

**Attachments**

- Appendix A – Open House Public Display Material
- Appendix B – Compiled Public Feedback

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