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City of Kelowna

MEMORANDUM

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DATE: January 17, 2001 FILE: 8330-20  
TO: City Manager  
FROM: Transportation Manager  
RE: PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN  
REPORT PREPARED BY SIGNE K. BAGH

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Pedestrian Master Plan be endorsed to provide direction for creating a pedestrian-friendly environment, in support of the City of Kelowna's Transportation Demand Management objectives;

AND THAT the pedestrian component of the City of Kelowna Transportation Plan be replaced with the Executive Summary of the Pedestrian Master Plan;

AND THAT the recommendations of the Pedestrian Master Plan be given consideration in the drafting of the Official Community Plan;

AND THAT future review of the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw take into consideration the recommendations of the Pedestrian Master Plan and give high priority to improving pedestrian facilities;

AND FURTHER THAT future review of the 10-Year Capital Plan give consideration to increasing the annual budget for pedestrian facilities to \$750,000.

**BACKGROUND**

Although walking is the oldest and most basic form of transportation, this travel mode does not currently play a major role in Kelowna. (At present, only 5% of City residents' work trips are undertaken on foot.)

There is significant potential for increasing walking trips in urbanized parts of the community. Local evidence suggests that when the presence of sidewalks is combined with mixed land uses (such as in our downtown area), pedestrian trips account for as much as 13% of all commuter travel. This is much higher than in urban areas with fewer sidewalks (the comparable figure for Rutland is only 6%).

Much of Kelowna has been developed without sidewalks. This may not have been much of an issue in the past when vehicle volumes were low and much of our community was rural. With growing traffic and increased density, the need for sidewalks becomes more significant. It is therefore not surprising that residents are expressing increasing dissatisfaction with existing infrastructure.

In response to evolving needs, the City's Transportation Plan and Official Community Plan both call for enhancing our pedestrian environment (sidewalks, crossing facilities, lighting etc.).

Improving our pedestrian environment will enhance residents' quality of life and provide an important transportation option. Improving the pedestrian environment will also bring benefits associated with reducing vehicle traffic.

## PROCESS

In response to the above-noted needs, Council provided funds for the preparation of a Pedestrian Master Plan. School District #23 agreed to pay a portion of the study costs to ensure detailed identification of school-related pedestrian issues which may not otherwise have been covered. Early in 2000, Hamilton Associates were commissioned to provide consulting services.

A comprehensive consultation process provided numerous opportunities for public input:

- Letters were sent to 44 stakeholder groups (including neighbourhood, business, and community associations, as well as representatives of various government agencies). Identified stakeholders were informed that the study was underway and that they were welcome to provide input. Those who indicated an interest in participating were sent updates and workshop invitations.
- Ongoing discussions were held with School District 23 staff and Parent Advisory Councils.
- Sessions were held with the Urban Centre Implementation Committee. This Committee reviewed the prioritization system (May 16, 2000) and the plan recommendations (October 12, 2000). After reviewing the Pedestrian Master Plan, the Urban Centre Implementation Committee, on November 9, 2000, passed the following resolution: "Moved that the Urban Centre Implementation Committee endorses those Pedestrian Master Plan recommendations which are intended to foster enhanced pedestrian environments within the City's four Urban Centres. Carried."
- Workshops were held with stakeholder groups (May and October 2000).
- A public Open House was held on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000.
- A public Workshop Session was held on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

Those providing input generally indicated support for the Pedestrian Master Plan. Comments from the public primarily centred on sidewalk projects of specific interest and on the general need for an enhanced pedestrian environment.

Further to the public input opportunities noted above, the public has also had an opportunity to express their sidewalk views through various opinion surveys conducted last year.

- In comparing the results of the 2000 Citizen Opinion Survey to those of previous years, it is clear that local pressure for a better sidewalk system has been steadily mounting ("sidewalk availability" decreased from a satisfaction level of 2.7/4.0 in 1998 to 2.5/4.0 in 2000).
- Kelowna residents want to walk and they are doing so more frequently. A 2000 regional survey on transportation-related issues found that among those polled, 21% had, over the course of that year, increased the amount they walked (only 7% indicated they had decreased their walking activity). Residents are also expressing a further willingness to increase their walking trips. This is especially encouraging in light of our regional objectives of decreasing vehicle trips. Forty-seven percent of those polled indicated they would be willing to forego at least two vehicle trips per week in favour of walking. Over three-quarters of residents indicated that if they were making

decisions for local government and wanted to reduce automobile reliance, they would add more sidewalks.

## **PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN APPROACH**

The intent of the Pedestrian Master Plan is to provide decision-makers with the information necessary to maximize the number and safety of walking trips by ensuring that future investments are allocated in a manner that will most cost-effectively improve the quality of the pedestrian environment and increase pedestrian safety.

## **SUMMARY OF PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN CONTENT**

The Pedestrian Master Plan recommends actions that can be taken to enhance Kelowna's pedestrian environment. The recommendations are focussed in three areas: policies, projects and budgets.

### Policy Recommendations

To achieve the objective of increasing walking trips and thus move towards the City's TDM objectives, the Pedestrian Master Plan provides the following recommendations:

1. Require sidewalks along both sides of all roads, with exceptions where low pedestrian demand is expected. (The Pedestrian Master Plan provides more detail on page 7. At present, the City requires sidewalks on both sides of arterial roads, and on at least one side of collector roads. The City does not require sidewalks along local roads. Not one of ten municipalities surveyed had standards as low as Kelowna's);
2. Adjust requirements for minimum clear sidewalk width according to the surrounding land use, with wider sidewalks required where the pedestrian demand is higher;
3. Review the provision of boulevards between roads and sidewalks to promote safety and to improve the walking environment;
4. Develop consistency in providing pedestrian crossing facilities within the current guidelines;
5. Assign priority to pedestrians at signalized intersections where pedestrian volumes are high; (This is understood to mean that we would work towards ensuring convenient pedestrian crossing opportunities and strive for improvements wherever possible).
6. Review the design elements of sidewalk ramps to facilitate mobility for wheelchairs and motorized carts; and,
7. Increase funding for sidewalk projects;
8. Ensure that property owners understand and carry out their responsibility for clearing snow from adjacent sidewalks; and
9. Review existing design standards to specifically consider the needs of pedestrians.

### Project Recommendations

In light of growing interest in sidewalks and an inability to complete all requests within any year, it was deemed desirable to develop a systematic prioritization method. The details of the ranking system that was developed are noted in the Pedestrian Master Plan. The recommended ranking is based on a highly successful method used in Portland, Oregon.

Hamilton Associates, in consultation with community stakeholders, adapted Portland's method to suit local conditions. In general terms, the highest points were awarded where project completion would generate the greatest number of pedestrian trips and where not proceeding with the project would place pedestrians at greatest peril.

Using this system, the consultants ranked all arterial and collector road sidewalk projects (the scope of the project did not allow for ranking of local roads). Map 3.1 of the Pedestrian Master Plan illustrates the results of the ranking.

It is suggested that the point ranking system be used as the basis for selecting annual tax-funded projects. In addition to the point scoring, it is suggested that the following factors be considered in selecting sidewalk projects in any given year:

- DCC funding status
  - If a DCC road will shortly be rebuilt with sidewalks then it may not be cost-effective to build the sidewalks in advance.
- Right-of-way availability
- Relationship to other civic infrastructure projects
- Relationship to City initiatives and objectives
  - Access to transit, educational and recreation facilities etc.
- Availability of developer contributions
  - If a developer is constructing a portion of sidewalk as a frontage improvement, it may make sense for the City to complete the job by adding sidewalks to connect to an existing facility.
- Existence of an alternate route
  - Projects that would be adding a first sidewalk to a road may take priority over those that would be creating a road's second sidewalk.
- Community input

Although the Pedestrian Master Plan only ranked arterial and collector roads, local roads play an important role in improving the pedestrian environment. It is therefore suggested that local roads be funded from the Sidewalk Network Budget where such projects are justified on the basis of the criteria noted in the Pedestrian Master Plan and the above-noted additional considerations.

The approach noted in this report should allow for a fair and consistent sidewalk project selection process while at the same time maximizing public benefit as cost-effectively as possible.

### Budget Recommendations

Some sidewalk projects will be completed through frontage improvements financed through redevelopment activity. All other projects will need to be financed either through Development Cost Charges (DCCs) or general taxation.

The Pedestrian Master Plan estimates the total cost of providing sidewalks on both sides of all collector and arterial roads at \$57 million. In reality, DCC funding will allow for completion of some of the projects listed in the Pedestrian Master Plan and the total cost to taxpayers will therefore be reduced. Costs will, on the other hand, be increased if sidewalks are to be built on any local roads (not included in estimates) and if land acquisition/utility relocation costs are incurred (also not included in estimates).

With current annual sidewalk budgets of \$500,000 it would probably take over 100 years to construct sidewalks along our major roads. Given the community's strong desire for sidewalks and the city's objective of significantly increasing pedestrian trips, consultant recommendations

include boosting annual sidewalk budgets to at least \$750,000/year. (The figure recommended by Hamilton Associates represents a 50% increase from current budgets.)

## **SUMMARY**

Adoption of the recommendations of the January 17, 2001 report from the Works and Utilities Department would assist in fulfilling community desires for an enhanced sidewalk network and would help increase pedestrian trips.

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Ron Westlake, P. Eng.  
Transportation Manager

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John Vos, P. Eng.  
Director, Works and Utilities

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Attachment