



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: February 9, 2021
Submitted by: Engineering and Operations Department – Infrastructure Engineering Services Division
Subject: Business Input Regarding Proposed Traffic Calming Pilot Project on Spring Street

Purpose

To report back to Council with the findings from the input gathered from commercial businesses in Moody Center whose customer access could possibly be affected adversely and request Council support to proceed with the implementation of the traffic-calming pilot project on Spring Street.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT the pilot project for a traffic pattern change on Spring Street between Douglas Street and Grant Street be implemented as approved by Council on June 23, 2020;

AND THAT the permanent measures be implemented for a traffic pattern change on Spring Street between Grant Street and Moody Street as approved by Council on June 23, 2020;

AND THAT staff adjust the location of the temporary barriers as necessary to address issues and opportunities that are identified during the pilot;

AND THAT staff monitor the results of the pilot project traffic pattern change on Spring Street and report back to Council with the results prior to adopting it as a permanent change as recommended in the report dated February 9, 2021 from the Engineering and Operations Department – Infrastructure Engineering Services Division regarding Business Input Regarding Proposed Traffic Calming Pilot Project on Spring Street.

Background

Upon notifying the residents, businesses and general public of the upcoming implementation of the approved pilot traffic pattern changes on Spring Street, Council received concerns from several businesses that the changes may have unintended, adverse impacts on customer access to their business and/or parking convenience.

On October 8, 2020, Councillor Hunter Madsen presented a report requesting that staff gather business feedback and report back to Council with options prior to implementation of the pilot project and the following resolution was passed:

CW20/088

THAT staff be directed to provide a project summary to and gather input from nearby commercial businesses in Moody Centre whose customer access to their businesses could possibly be affected adversely, and report back to Council with its findings and recommendations for Council consideration, before moving forward with implementation of the traffic-calming pilot test proposed for Spring Street previously approved by Council, as recommended in the report dated September 22, 2020 from Councillor Hunter Madsen, regarding Recommendation to Gather Business Input Regarding Proposed Traffic-Calming Pilot Test on Spring Street.

This report addresses the above resolution of Council and seeks authorization for staff to proceed with the implementation of the pilot traffic pattern changes. On December 16, 2020, staff held two information meetings with businesses to gather feedback and report back to Council as outlined in the discussion below.

Discussion

In response to public concerns regarding “rat-running”, traffic volumes, speeding, safety, and confrontations on Spring Street, staff prepared a traffic calming strategy as outlined in the Spring Street Traffic Pattern Change Council Report dated May 1, 2020 and approved by Council for implementation on June 23, 2020 (**Attachment 1**).

Prior to implementation, businesses operating in or near the Spring Street corridor submitted correspondence to Council (**Attachment 2**) and staff (**Attachment 3**), voicing concerns that the proposed re-routing of rush-hour traffic away from Spring Street may have unintended, adverse impacts on customer access to their business and/or parking convenience.

In response, Council directed that staff temporarily slow the implementation of the Spring Street pilot project in order to gather input from concerned businesses and report back to Council with the results and any mitigations that staff might suggest, for consideration prior to implementation of the pilot project.

Staff hand delivered invitations to approximately 80 businesses along Spring Street to invite them to attend either a morning or evening Zoom presentation. Nine businesses responded and six businesses attended the zoom presentations held on December 16. The presentation covered the future vision, existing infrastructure, previous traffic calming initiatives, and the pilot traffic pattern change, and then opened the meeting to discussion.

During the open discussion, the participants’ comments (**Attachment 4**) focused on the impacts of the traffic pattern change, suggestions to modify the plan, as well as general feedback.

Potential concerns and benefits of the turning restrictions that were identified by the businesses included:

- Limiting Spring Street commercial corridor movements by reducing the available access routes, preventing deliveries and pick-up/drop-off in the eastbound direction, as well as preventing customers and employees from driving between the businesses via Spring Street.
- Peak hour traffic coincides with the peak business time for some businesses. Reduction of ability for customers to detour back along Spring Street avoiding Clarke Street or St. Johns Street could have financial impacts on a business, especially considering the current challenges of COVID-19.
- Customer safety will be improved for businesses that involve pick-up and drop-off services by reducing the number of conflicts while parking or walking on Spring Street during peak hour traffic.

Suggestions by the businesses to amend the traffic pattern change included:

- Maintaining the through movements along Spring Street by strategically restricting southbound turns from Clarke Street.
- Improving the circulation of traffic by opening the Queens Street Plaza to provide additional locations for traffic to access businesses on each block, reducing the number of cars travelling along Spring Street.
- Implementing a gentler approach prior to going with the full closures. For example, restricting turning movements only during the peak hour when the traffic volumes peak.
- Currently, speed humps are established between Douglas Street and Kyle Street; add additional speed humps and extend the implementation to Mary Street.

General comments provided by the businesses included:

- Some businesses do not see this project is an important goal for the City.
- Spring Street traffic pattern aligns with the peak hour patterns of the surrounding roads and the volume is a reflection the traffic congestion experienced on the major routes. An assertion that reducing the capacity of St Johns Street could help direct the regional vehicles to other routes like Highway 1 and reduce the overall volume of traffic on St. Johns Street and surrounding streets.
- Business owners' personal observations of the traffic volumes on Spring Street varied. Some felt that they had not witnessed the high traffic volumes found during traffic counts and that a single traffic count is not enough to ascertain traffic characteristics.
- Questions regarding the number of public complaints raised regarding traffic issues on Spring Street.
- Questions related to future plans to provide sidewalks along Spring Street.

In addition to the business consultation process, Council received a delegation from Saint John the Apostle Anglican Church in support of the eastbound restrictions at Douglas Street and Elgin Street to improve safety in the residential area of Spring Street and reduce the impacts to the business deliveries east of Moody Street.

Based on the feedback received through this process, Staff reviewed several alternatives to the previously proposed Spring Street traffic pattern change:

Speed Humps

Speed humps would be the least invasive approach to try to reduce the peak hour traffic volumes and speed. Speed humps rely on reducing driver comfort and reducing corridor speeds to maintain the flow of traffic on the major road. Based on traffic monitoring, the existing humps have not acted as an effective deterrent during peak hours between Douglas Street and Kyle Street.

Additional speed humps are not recommended due to the following reason:

- Limited effectiveness for reducing peak traffic volumes, which is the main purpose of this initiative.

Rush Hour Turn Restrictions

Rush hour restrictions would create the same turning restrictions as the pilot project, however, the restrictions would only be in effect during rush hour when “rat-running” is an issue. Rush hour regulations would allow access to Spring Street when the traffic volumes are low and the corridor is being used primarily by businesses and residents. Such a change can only be implemented via signage and requires ongoing police enforcement to be effective.

Rush hour regulations are not recommended for the following reasons:

- Requires ongoing enforcement to be effective; and
- Does not resolve the access concerns during peak business hours.

Phased Pilot

A two-phased approach to implementing the turn restrictions is possible. After the first phase is implemented, staff would monitor traffic volumes and speeds to assess if further changes are required to achieve a target peak traffic volume. The first phase shown in Figure 1 separates the corridor into two smaller sections: Douglas Street to Kyle Street and Kyle Street to Moody Street. Turning restrictions would be implemented at Douglas, Kyle, and Moody Streets, allowing through traffic to travel a maximum of two blocks before returning to the arterial road.



Figure 1: Phase One of a Potential Two Phase Approach

After monitoring, if necessary, the second phase shown in Figure 2 would be implemented to match the previously recommended Spring Street traffic pattern change pilot.



Figure 2: Phase Two of a Potential Two Phase Approach

Benefits of the phased approach include:

- Allows businesses an opportunity to adjust to the traffic pattern changes in increments; and
- Offers more access flexibility during roll-out of phase.

Challenges with the phased approach include:

- May continue to be influenced by rat-running until phase 2 is implemented;
- Driver adaptation and possible confusion during the multiple changes to traffic patterns; and
- Safety benefits may only be realized over a longer period of time.

The two-phase approach is recommended as an option for Council consideration.

At this time, the staff recommendation is to continue with the originally approved pilot project in order to achieve the full traffic safety and active transportation comfort and accessibility goals of the project.

Upon implementation of the selected option, staff will monitor the pilot project and make adjustments as necessary. In addition to monitoring traffic volumes and speeds, staff will seek feedback from the residents and businesses and report back to Council after the one-year trial period.

Other Option(s)

THAT the pilot project for a traffic pattern change on Spring Street between Douglas Street and Grant Street be implemented in a two-phased approach as outlined in the report dated February 9, 2021 from the Engineering and Operations Department – Infrastructure Engineering Services regarding Business Input Regarding Proposed Traffic Calming Pilot Project on Spring Street.

Financial Implications

Funding for the implementation of the project has previously been approved by Council.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Staff will seek feedback from residents, business owners/operators, and other road users about the pilot traffic pattern changes, and present this feedback to Council, prior to implementation of permanent infrastructure on Spring Street.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

Improving public safety and functionality of the City's road network aligns with Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan priority of Community Evolution, specifically to provide people with a variety of options to move through and around Port Moody safely and efficiently.

Attachment(s)

1. Spring Street Traffic Pattern Change Council Report dated May 1, 2020.
2. Business Correspondence to Council.
3. Business Correspondence to staff.
4. Open Discussion Notes.

Report Author

Stephen Judd, P.Eng.

Manager of Infrastructure Engineering Services

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Business Input Regarding Proposed Traffic Calming Pilot Test on Spring Street Pilot.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Attachment 1 - Spring Street Traffic Pattern Change Council Report dated May 1, 2020.pdf- Attachment 2 - Business Correspondence to Council.pdf- Attachment 3 - Business Correspondence to Staff.pdf- Attachment 4 - Open Discussion Notes.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Mar 1, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Jeff Moi, General Manager of Engineering and Operations - Feb 25, 2021 - 8:55 AM

Dorothy Shermer, Corporate Officer - Feb 25, 2021 - 10:05 AM

Rosemary Lodge, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Feb 26, 2021 - 12:54 PM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Feb 28, 2021 - 9:48 PM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - Mar 1, 2021 - 4:25 PM