

Considered at March 17, 2021 Transportation Committee Meeting

Memorandum

To:	Transportation Committee	File #:	11-5460-03-04
CC:		Date:	March 11, 2021
From:	General Manager, Engineering & Operations		
Subject:	Automated Pedestrian Push Buttons – COVID-19		

In June 2020, in an effort to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, the City implemented automatic pedestrian pushbuttons at 17 signalized intersections in Port Moody. Explanatory stickers were added to the affected intersections and the buttons were set to be automatic between 7am and 9pm each day. A list of these intersections is provided below:

Traffic Signals With Automated Pedestrian Buttons – June 10, 2020	
Kyle @ St. Johns	Capilano @ Murray
Grant @ St. Johns	Suter Brook @ Ioco
Moody @ St. Johns	Murray @ Ioco
Hugh @ St. Johns	Newport @ Ioco
Williams @ St. Johns	Ungless @ Ioco
Buller @ St. Johns	Balmoral @ Guildford
Moray @ St. Johns	Ungless @ Guildford
Klahanie W @ Murray	Noons Creek @ Ungless
Klahanie E @ Murray	

The above intersections were selected due to location in higher pedestrian use areas. At the time of installation, daily vehicle traffic volumes were measured lower than volumes recorded in previous years due to COVID-19 related responses and restrictions. Ongoing traffic volume monitoring has suggested volumes are now returning to pre-pandemic levels.

The automated pedestrian push buttons provide benefits and disbenefits as outlined below:

Benefits	Disbenefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports COVID-19 pandemic response efforts in reducing need to use a high touch surface• Allows pedestrians to arrive at an intersection and cross, or cross multiple legs of an intersection, with generally less waiting and no need to push a button to request a signal• Improves accessibility for mobility and vision impaired pedestrians• Helps increase pedestrian priority over motor vehicles supporting MTP goals and targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduces a red light on cycles where no pedestrians are present, can result in real or perceived delays to motorists• Additional noise due to accessible pedestrian signals during automated hours• Exacerbates issues in areas where signals are not closely coordinated (ex. across CP Rail tracks on Murray Street)

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The automated pedestrian buttons were scheduled to only activate from 7am-9pm to avoid times of the day when the disbenefits would be most egregious. Staff have initiated a process to improve coordination between the Klahanie East/Murray and Capilano/Murray intersections.

With COVID-19 vaccinations now underway and as the province begins moving towards reopening efforts, it is now time to consider a transition for the automated pedestrian buttons. Staff have identified two possible options:

1. Revert the traffic signals to previous manual pedestrian button activation as COVID-19 related restrictions are eased (potentially targeting end of summer 2021 for signal reversion)
2. Adopt the automated pedestrian buttons as a permanent option for Port Moody intersections. Develop a set of decision criteria (pedestrian volumes, proximity to transit, etc.) for staff to use when implementing this feature.

Staff have received both supportive and concerned feedback regarding this initiative since implementation. Positive feedback has typically supported the health and pedestrian priority/convenience benefits, negative feedback has typically been related to unnecessary interruptions to vehicle traffic flow.

At this time, staff recommend proceeding with option 2 above via the following motion:

THAT the Transportation Committee recommend that the City adopt the automated pedestrian buttons as a permanent option for traffic signals in Port Moody and that a set of decision criteria to inform permanent implementation locations be developed.