

## Neighbourhood Streets Policy

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Infrastructure and Planning Committee recommends that Council:

1. Approve the Neighbourhood Streets Policy.
2. Rescind TTP2002-65, C2003-01 Traffic Calming Policy.

### **RECOMMENDATION OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE, 2022 JUNE 10**

That Council:

1. Approve the Neighbourhood Streets Policy; and
2. Rescind TTP2022-65, C2003-01 Traffic Calming Policy.

### **Opposition to Recommendation:**

Against: Councillor McLean

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Calgary's Traffic Calming Policy was established in 2003, and while the Traffic Calming Policy made a difference in Calgary, a ten-year review showed many shortcomings. The new Neighbourhood Streets Policy is written to reflect the many ways Administration and community leaders enhance Neighbourhood Streets. More specifically, the new policy:
  - Goes beyond traffic calming (i.e., reducing vehicle speeding and shortcutting) to rebalance mobility and place and describes multiple streams of work including street retrofits, accessibility improvements, education, art and activation, and pilots to test new design approaches
  - Outlines how Calgarians can be involved in decision making and where they should play a leading role
  - Promotes a greater use of data to prioritize action and to act to protect vulnerable users
  - Presents the attributes of an equitable intake process to overcome past inequities of program access
- What is a Neighbourhood Street?
  - Neighbourhood Streets are those that give high priority to pedestrians. Generally, Neighbourhood Streets are roadways which directly serve residential development and those that support local amenities and businesses inside residential areas.
- What does this mean to Calgarians?
  - Calgarians value safe and inclusive Neighbourhood Streets. Public engagement revealed strong support for a policy that fully describes the range of enhancements and elements that contribute to healthy communities. Some of the priorities Calgarians shared for Neighbourhood Streets include a desire for trees, community destinations, and for The City to design for people walking and wheeling.
- Why does it matter?

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- The Neighbourhood Streets Policy describes what makes great streets in Calgary. Traditional traffic calming, i.e., slowing vehicles and reducing shortcutting, measures will remain important. However, there are many other aspects of streets that are valued by residents and contribute to Calgary's communities. Neighbourhood Streets are the heart of Calgary's communities. They are the start of trips, a gathering place, our connection to local business, and where vulnerable users have the greatest priority. When Neighbourhood Streets are designed to be inclusive and safe, they support safer and more inclusive communities.
- Council Direction:
  - A pilot version of the Neighbourhood Streets Policy was shared with Council in February 2020 and then applied on projects in eight communities across Calgary. Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: a city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods and a city that moves.

## DISCUSSION

### History:

- Starting in the 1960s, transportation professionals began a practice of building wide or 'forgiving streets'. These allowed people driving extra space to manoeuvre out of unsafe circumstances. The assumption was that people driving would still travel slowly.
- Traffic calming was later established as a practice to retrofit streets to reduce vehicle speeds and shortcutting. In most North American cities, like in Calgary, residents who felt unsafe on their streets would submit a petition. Under the program, once a community was selected, engagement and design work would commence though solutions would not be constructed until two-thirds of residents agreed on a design. The traffic program has proven inequitable in terms of access and action in support of vulnerable users.
- An additional challenge with the program has been that many residents and applicants perceive the former default speed limit as being too high to feel safe. Administration hopes that funded and actioned street changes will feel comfortable for residents at a 40 km / h operating environment.

### Today's practice:

- The City of Calgary is updating its street designs through the Design Guide for Subdivision Servicing to align with Council direction for slower residential streets.
- Additionally, new design options to retrofit streets continue to be introduced and developed in North America. Some recent examples include using temporary materials, building raised crossings, and new kinds of traffic control.
- Supporting partners that wish to host events, add community art, and other interventions, like patios, is increasingly important for Administration. Partner-led initiatives change behaviour, support local business, and build community resilience and should be supported in mobility policy.

### Developing the Neighbourhood Streets Policy:

The Neighbourhood Streets Policy was developed by Administration in a new and innovative way and involved:

- Evaluating the 2003 Traffic Calming Policy for its strengths and shortcomings such as inequity of application and outcomes throughout Calgary

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- Measuring internal alignment for a new kind of policy that described a much broader set of tools to enhance Calgary's Neighbourhood Streets
- Using co-design workshops to develop a draft of pilot version of the policy
- Applying the pilot policy to projects in eight diverse communities to build a library of outcomes or solutions that were needed by these communities
- Engaging with stakeholders and Calgarians on the outcomes of the pilot projects to see what was still missing from the policy
- Finalizing the Neighbourhood Streets Policy using feedback from stakeholders and the public including strengthening mention of certain priorities like accessibility, trees and nature, maintenance and the public realm, and enforcement and the law.

Implementing the Neighbourhood Streets policy will require:

- Intake process: hearing from Calgarians is critical to learn about problem locations and supplement data-based ways of learning about the street enhancements that are most needed. Intake options will continue to exist through 311, engagement on future projects, and other options are being reviewed. The status of the intake work is described in Attachment 4.
- Prioritization and growing design options: enhancing Neighbourhood Streets with improved infrastructure should be needs-based and equitable. Continuing to apply proven solutions and test new ideas will reveal the solutions that are most cost effective for different community types.
- A culture of experimentation: Calgary communities were built in different ways and at different times. Collaborating to solve measured and perceived resident problems will mean applying some existing solutions and some that will be new. Testing, iterating, and evaluating will help enhance active mode networks.
- Funding: funding to enhance Neighbourhood Streets does not currently meet community demand, particularly in certain areas like vehicle speeding and building missing sidewalks.
- Evaluation: best practices are evolving quickly in North America and evaluation in new interventions will help answer which design decisions work best and belong in Calgary communities. Specifications and design practices will be updated as practices are shown to be effective.

Implementation timeline:

- Resourcing for Neighbourhood Streets work will influence the pace of how quickly the goals of this policy are met.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

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Calgarians engaged on a pilot version of the Neighbourhood Streets Policy through projects in eight communities and via online engagement in December 2021. The online engagement presented the outcomes of the pilot projects as a representation of the policy. Calgarians and key stakeholders were asked to describe what was still missing from the policy and what matters most when it comes to streets that are supportive of safe mobility choices and resilient communities. Administration used this input to influence the recommended policy.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Social**

Safe and inclusive Neighbourhood Streets build healthy communities and help everyone meet their daily needs.

#### **Environmental**

This policy will support Calgarians in choosing active travel options that are safe and inclusive, especially at the community level. This will lead to fewer emissions, more transit trips, and more resiliency through more shaded and permeable land.

#### **Economic**

Local businesses benefit when communities are accessible by several travel options.

#### **Service and Financial Implications**

##### **No anticipated financial impact**

Calgary's base budget includes funding for Neighbourhood Streets.

Many programs and activities that deliver on the vision of the Neighbourhood Streets Policy are funded through existing budgets. Additional asks for some elements including to establish a street lab program, and to establish a missing sidewalks program, will be made through the 2023 – 2026 request to Council in fall 2022. Administration continues to explore affordable ways to enhance Neighbourhood Streets like using temporary materials and offering permission space to community leaders to help deliver greater impact at reduced costs.

### **RISK**

The Neighbourhood Streets Policy lays the foundation for how Administration and partners will work together to enhance Calgary's community streets. This work, particularly street retrofits to lower vehicle speeds, remains over-subscribed and under-funded. A new policy and companion intake process may create new demand and additional frustration by applicants. To help minimize this risk, the new intake process will be designed with transparency and data-driven decision making, based on funding, to lend to more equitable and understandable outcomes.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Traffic Calming Policy
2. Neighbourhood Streets Policy
3. Neighbourhood Streets Policy Guide
4. Intake Process: Status, Needs and Insights
5. Letters of Support

Transportation Report to  
Infrastructure and Planning Committee  
2022 June 10

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IP2022-0546  
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### 6. Public Submission

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Doug Morgan	Transportation	Approve
Stuart Dalgleish	Planning and Development	Approve
Michael Thompson	Infrastructure Services	Consult