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Transportation Report to
SPC on Transportation and Transit
2014 November 05

HILLHURST LANEWAY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Administration has conducted a review of the long-term design for an existing lane that is situated west of 10 Street NW, between 3 Avenue NW and Kensington Road. The long-term improvements focus on enhancements that can be done within the existing public space and, as well as, take into consideration assumptions for future medium-density mixed use development on the east side of the lane and the potential for laneway housing on the west side of the lane. The recommended long-term improvements (Attachment 1 and 2) include providing a sidewalk and intermittent vehicle lay-bys on the east side of the lane, as well as re-paving the lane and adding lighting to the existing overhead power poles. These improvements will create a public realm that makes the existing laneway more functional, safe and attractive, thereby providing a better interface between the uses on both sides of the lane.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SPC on Transportation and Transit recommends that Council:

1. Direct Administration to discontinue any short term improvement plans for the laneway; and
2. Approve the long-term Recommended Design (Attachments 1 and 2) for the laneway, which provides separate pedestrian accommodation via a sidewalk on the east side, as well as retains two-way traffic operation with the implementation of lay-bys on the east side.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2013 May 6, Council, through a Motion Arising for CPC2013-036, directed Administration to "investigate opportunities for enhancing the laneway condition and interface of the north-south lane situated west of 10 St NW (from 3 Avenue south towards Kensington Road), and report back through the SPC on Transportation and Transit no later than 2013 December.

On 2013 December 13, Administration recommended that the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit recommend that Council:

1. Direct Administration to construct the short term improvements in Spring 2014.
2. Direct Administration to continue to develop long term improvement plans that build on the short term improvements, and engage City departments and other stakeholders.
3. Direct Administration to report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit with recommendations for the long term improvements no later than November 2014.

BACKGROUND

The existing laneway situated west of 10 Street NW, between 3 Avenue NW and Kensington Road is 4.57 metres wide, approximately 272 metres long, provides two-way traffic flow, and has a posted speed limit of 15 km/h. At its north end the lane intersects with 3 Avenue NW, and at its south end the lane intersects with another 4.57 metre-wide east-west lane that connects 10 Street NW to 10A Street NW. The existing laneway surface is asphalt, and there is currently no street lighting within the lane. There are a number of overhead utilities, and a 300mm concrete storm water line underneath the lane with one grated manhole in the centre. The east leg of the intersecting (east-west) lane provides one-way travel eastbound, while the west leg provides two-way travel.

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Currently, the laneway has low-density residential uses on the west side and commercial uses on the east side. Rear garage, parking, loading, and waste and recycling collection access are provided from the laneway. The existing commercial uses on the east side of the lane will ultimately be re-developed with medium-density mixed uses, and there is also the potential for developing laneway housing on the west side of the lane. Current traffic volumes in this laneway are approximately 500 vpd and are expected to increase to approximately 1,500 vpd at full development.

There is a limited amount of available public space within the existing 4.57 metre right-of-way. Existing overhead and underground utilities and access to adjacent residential and multifamily/commercial properties leaves little opportunity to re-allocate space or relocate utilities within the lane. The existing power poles are an Enmax asset and carry many utility lines. The cost to bury the utility lines is anticipated to be quite significant and, therefore, this was not considered in the long-term options as no readily available source of funding exists.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

On 2014 May 24 Administration hosted a workshop with the area stakeholders including the ward Councillor, and the residents and business owners who directly back onto the laneway. The session focussed on three main issues: laneway housing, re-development of existing commercial buildings, and the short-term improvements/long-term vision for the lane. The residents expressed concerns regarding the short-term lane improvements as they thought repaving the lane would encourage higher traffic volumes and speeds. The residents suggested not implementing the short-term improvements until better-defined long-term plans are prepared. Using the existing power poles to attach lower wattage LED lighting was also not well-received by the residents due to potential light trespass. Based on that feedback, and in concurrence with the ward Councillor, Administration recommends discontinuing short term laneway improvements.

The stakeholder feedback from the workshop was summarized in a document, Laneway Housing Stakeholder Feedback Summary (Attachment 3), and indicated pedestrian accommodation and urban character as the priority items. The residents were concerned about safety, specifically with the imminent densification of the commercial uses in the future. The current exercise, therefore, focused on developing a long-term improvement plan.

Based on the workshop feedback the following five initial long-term design concepts were developed:

- **Option 1:** Lay-bys on the east side of the laneway to allow for southbound passing traffic
- **Option 2:** Lay-bys on the west side of the laneway to allow for northbound passing traffic
- **Option 3:** One-way northbound traffic operation, with a sidewalk on the east side of the laneway
- **Option 4:** Lay-bys on both sides of the laneway to allow for passing traffic in both directions
- **Option 5:** Lay-bys on the east side of the laneway to allow for southbound passing traffic and a sidewalk on the east side of the laneway

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These options were evaluated using criteria developed on the basis of feedback received from the stakeholders' workshop. The evaluation criteria included active modes connectivity, safety, constructability, vehicle accessibility, functionality for larger vehicles, traffic impact, and public realm improvements.

Option 5 turned out to be the Recommended Design (Attachments 1 and 2), which maintains two-way traffic operation through the provision of intermittent lay-bys on the east side. The laneway cross-section also includes a sidewalk on the east side that narrows the available pavement width for the motorists, thereby discouraging speeding in the lane. A low-profile rolled curb offers a transition between the drive lane and the sidewalk while still allowing for larger commercial and waste and recycling collection vehicles to traverse the lane if required.

Administration has and will continue to work with current/future applicants on the east side of the lane to secure public access easements over the rear of their properties to ensure that the design options for the lane will function in conjunction with their developments.

The recommended laneway improvements will be built once plans for the full re-development of the east side of the lane have been established. This guarantees that the appropriate public access easements have been obtained and that the lay-by locations are designed accordingly.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

In 2014 May Administration hosted a workshop for local residents and business owners who directly back onto the laneway. The intent of the workshop was to gain an idea of the residents' vision of future laneway improvements including laneway housing (on the west side of the lane) and other important design elements. The feedback summary report from the laneway housing workshop is shown in Attachment 3.

On 2014 October 7 Administration held a public information session where the long-term options and other information material regarding this project was shared with the previous workshop participants, area residents, and the community association. The intent of the public information session was to gain feedback and acceptance of the proposed laneway design.

In general, most comments received indicated support for the recommended plan and encouragement to proceed. Concerns were raised regarding additional details in terms of signage, and traffic calming measures such as speed humps or bumps and use of alternate pavement materials. These items will be addressed at the detailed design stage.

Strategic Alignment

The long-term improvements for the lane align with multiple policies in the CTP, the 2020 Sustainability Direction, and the MDP, including:

- Transportation Goal #2 to promote safety for all transportation system users (CTP 3.2).
- Transportation Goal #3 to provide affordable mobility and universal access for all (CTP 3.11).
- Transportation Goal #4 to enable public transit, walking and cycling as the preferred mobility choices for more people (CTP 3.7).

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- MDP Policy 2.2 to shape a more compact urban form by facilitating the development and intensification of the inner city community of Hillhurst-Sunnyside through improved vitality, appearance, and security of streets and public spaces.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

This report has been reviewed for alignment with The City of Calgary's Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Policy Framework. The following implications were identified (along with mitigation strategies for negative impacts):

Social: The proposed improvements have been developed to create a public realm that makes the existing laneway more functional, safe and attractive for the area residents, thereby providing a better interface between the uses on both sides of the lane. Improvements to the laneway can help reduce speeding, and promote active living by providing a shared space for pedestrians and cyclists.

Environmental: Provisions for a sidewalk along the east side of the laneway creates a safe and comfortable environment, which encourages active modes of transportation that consume less energy and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Economic (External): The long-term concept will support future commercial and residential development adjacent to the alley and within walking distance of the Sunnyside LRT station. Improvements that support increased walking, cycling, and transit mobility will help reduce auto dependency and improve economic outcomes for Calgary.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

At build out, there may be a marginal increase in operating costs.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

A planning level cost estimate for the recommended long-term improvements is \$350,000. The cost estimate includes an allowance for a low profile curb and sidewalk, lighting, and drainage catchbasins.

No funding has been identified to implement the recommended long-term improvements.

Risk Assessment

With increased congestion on the surrounding streets in the future, motorists may trespass through this laneway. The recommended design has the potential to be converted to a north-bound one-way operation to discourage shortcutting.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The recommended plan is consistent with the local residents and business owners' vision for this area. The recommended plan allows for the facilitation of area re-development and promotes active modes of transportation.

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ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Recommended Design (Technical Drawing)
2. Recommended Design (Conceptual Rendering)
3. Laneway Housing Stakeholder Feedback Summary