

Community Traffic Safety Infrastructure - Alternative Funding Opportunities

Recommendation

That the March 2, 2021, City Operations report CO00225, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the December 1, 2020, Urban Planning Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration explore alternate funding opportunities for community traffic safety infrastructure, including impacts on equity and integration with existing funding prioritization, and provide a report to Committee.

Executive Summary

The City of Edmonton's Safe Mobility Strategy 2021-2025 aims to achieve Vision Zero through safe and livable streets in Edmonton. Aligning with the City Plan's big city move "Community of Communities," the Safe Mobility Strategy contemplates community traffic safety improvements through a new program called Vision Zero Street Labs ("Street Labs"). Street Labs are low cost, low risk ways for citizens and community groups to work with the City to trial safer street designs for all through the use of temporary, adaptable materials.

A capital profile to fund the Street Labs program from the Traffic Safety Automated Enforcement Reserve will come forward for consideration in April 2021. The program will fund all standard materials required to activate community-led, City-supported projects. However, some neighbourhood project teams may wish to enhance the standard materials by independently purchasing City-approved alternatives, such as special planter boxes, street furniture, or artist-designed barriers.

In future years, neighbourhoods may choose to request that successful Street Labs projects become permanent infrastructure. While a Local Improvement tax could provide a funding source for neighbourhood enhancements, it is not appropriate for standard safety upgrades, as this would create inequitable distribution of

improvements. Alternatively, a City-funded program, which would require additional capital funding, would include a robust prioritization process to address equity concerns. Based on the roll-out of the Street Labs program, options will be further explored and could be included as a key action in future years of the Safe Mobility Strategy.

Report

The City of Edmonton's Safe Mobility Strategy 2021-2025 aims to achieve Vision Zero through safe and livable streets in Edmonton. Aligning with the City Plan's big city move "Community of Communities," the Safe Mobility Strategy prioritizes opportunities to involve Edmontonians in improving traffic safety and livability in their neighbourhoods. The Vision Zero Street Labs program ("Street Labs"), a key action of the Safe Mobility Strategy, enables community-led projects that use temporary, adaptable measures to improve the way Edmontonians live and move on residential streets. A high-level overview of the program is outlined in Attachment 1.

Street Labs are low cost, low risk ways for citizens and community groups to work with the City to trial safer street designs for all. The program will open for applications in spring 2021 and a comprehensive toolkit of resources to support project teams in developing their Street Labs plan, including example feature projects, material options, and community engagement templates, will be available.

Street Labs Enhancements

While all approved Street Labs will be provided with the materials required to implement their project, some project teams may want to enhance their plan above the basics by purchasing their own unique materials. For example, people may want to select special planter boxes, work with a tradesperson to design street furniture, or commission a local artist to create custom sculptures or to beautify barriers. Special, non-standard materials would require review and approval of Administration prior to purchase by project teams to ensure safety and reliability on street. Maintenance and storage of these materials when not in use would be the responsibility of the community project team. No special funding arrangement is required to augment approved materials; Street Labs community project teams can pay these costs directly to the vendor/artist/tradesperson with whom they choose to work.

Future Permanent Infrastructure Upgrades

Participating in the Vision Zero Street Labs program creates an opportunity for area residents to experience changes to their streets and engage with each other and the City to evaluate the success of the project. Each project may define its own metrics for success, and the Street Lab process could lead to community interest in permanently establishing infrastructure upgrades.

A Local Improvement tax could provide a funding source for certain permanent infrastructure upgrades. The cost of upgrades relative to the size of the benefitting area has a direct impact on the suitability of Local Improvement funding, and this is expected to vary widely for Street Labs projects. During the roll-out of the Vision Zero Street Labs program, Administration will review the potential application of existing Local Improvement processes and policies for active Street Labs projects.

While a Local Improvement tax could provide a funding source for neighbourhood enhancements, it is not appropriate for standard safety upgrades, as this would create inequitable distribution of improvements. Community-funded projects are, by nature, inequitable, as they rely on citizens' ability and willingness to contribute additional funding to enable the work. A City-funded program that enables a path to permanence for successful Vision Zero Street Labs, which would include a robust prioritization process to address equity concerns, could be included as a future key action of the Safe Mobility Strategy based on the roll-out of Vision Zero Street Labs.

Existing Funding and Priorities

The City of Edmonton's traffic safety priorities are informed by the Safe Mobility Strategy 2021-2025 to achieve Vision Zero through safe and livable streets in Edmonton. In order to continue to move closer to this goal, it is crucial to concentrate efforts on programs that will have the most impact and in the areas that have the most need. As outlined in the December 1, 2020 City Operations Report CO00056, Safe Mobility Strategy 2021-2025, adjusted capital profiles will be brought forward for City Council discussion in advance of the 2021 Spring Capital and Operating Budget Adjustments to support the 2021-2022 key actions, including the Street Labs program.

A future program for permanent community traffic safety infrastructure upgrades, informed by the outcomes of the Street Labs program, would constitute a new key action for the Safe Mobility Strategy. Resources would be required to support a full-fledged program, as Administration would also need to maintain capacity to action other prioritized work through the Safe Mobility Strategy. At this time, an exact impact to existing priorities is difficult to quantify without knowing how popular the Vision Zero Street Labs program will be with communities and the interest in permanent infrastructure upgrades as a result. Once these results are known, a new capital profile could be brought forward for City Council direction and consideration to resource and prioritize the work.

Enabling Equitable Processes

Various groups experience transportation safety differently, as identified and explored through the equity and crash analysis conducted as part of the Safe Mobility Strategy, outlined in Attachment 2. Ensuring that any community-raised funding strategy does not further disadvantage the ability for low income communities to achieve safe and

livable streets in their neighborhoods is an important priority in creating equitable prioritization processes.

Programs within the Safe Mobility Strategy (such as Safe Crossings and Vision Zero Street Labs) will factor in equity by prioritizing attention and action on high crash neighbourhoods (which also tend to include households with low-income) in the following key actions:

1. Proactive Safety Reviews: Address systemic inequities by conducting proactive safety reviews in the highest crash neighbourhoods that are not accessing traditional channels to initiate change, such as 311. This work will build understanding as to why crashes are happening more frequently in some neighborhoods than others and how it impacts people’s lives.
2. Prioritization Criteria: Include streets from the High Injury Network and High Crash Neighbourhoods that are disproportionately impacted by safety issues as project prioritization criteria evaluated to determine implementation priorities.

By including these key actions in the programs of the Safe Mobility Strategy, processes are being adjusted to ensure that the City of Edmonton is leading by applying a GBA+ lens and enabling equitable safety.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is a safe city.			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Achieve Vision Zero through safe and livable streets in Edmonton	Fatalities (All Road Users)	14 (2019) 19 (2018) 27 (2017) 22 (2016)	Decline to Zero (2032)
	Serious Injuries (All Road Users)	268 (2019) 319 (2018) 341 (2017) 325 (2016)	Decline to Zero (2032)
	Serious Injuries (Vulnerable Road Users)	98 (2019) 116 (2018) 113(2017) 113 (2016)	Decline to Zero (2032)

Attachments

1. Introducing Vision Zero Street Labs
2. Crash and Equity Analyses Technical Report - Safe Mobility Strategy 2021-2025

Others Reviewing this Report

- M. Persson, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- S. McCabe, Deputy City Manager, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor