What We Heard: Railway Avenue

April 2023

Background

Railway Avenue is a key transportation corridor, which is due for underground utility upgrades. Anytime we are doing major underground work, it makes sense to combine updates to surface work at the same time.

When doing updates to our transportation network, our planning process is based on the Integrated Transportation Plan (ITP). The ITP outlines a long-term plan for Canmore's transportation network and was developed with input from citizens.

The ITP aims to:

- Apply a functional and recognizable street design that accommodates all modes of travel: driving, walking, cycling and public transit.
- Design spaces that accommodate people.

Approach

We conducted public engagement from January 23 – February 10, 2023. The purpose of the engagement was to gather feedback from the public on how the proposed concept designs for Railway Avenue Central would impact travel experiences when driving, walking, cycling and using transit.

Tactics:

- Online Survey
  - ✓ *Result: We received a total of 378 submissions to this survey. See Attachment 1 for full results.*
- Community Open House.
  - ✓ *Result: Solicited input on designs and answered questions on specifics. Community Open House had roughly 90 people in attendance. See Attachment 2 for full list of questions discussed at the Open House.*

Key Themes and Impact on Design

<u>General Disagreement with Direction</u>

A common theme heard throughout engagement was general disagreement with the direction of transportation planning. There were numerous reasons why disagreement was noted, including:

- Congestion, as a result of
  - fewer lanes
  - intersection changes / signals
  - transit operations
  - turning movements;
- Left turn access (into and out of driveways and Elevation Place);
- Solid continuous median;
- Snow removal and storage.

The project team has incorporated changes into the concept design which address concerns raised. Lane configurations and intersection geometry is being modelled along with signal phasing design to ensure

current and future volumes can be accommodated. Turn bays were added and lengthened at the Main Street and 10 Street intersections. Bus pullouts or bays were added at Transit stops. Left turns at all current driveway locations are accommodated and queuing space for left turning vehicles is provided at most driveway accesses. A solid continuous central median has been removed. The design has been reviewed multiple times with the Streets and Roads Team, including with the front line crew, in an effort to address snow clearing concerns and to provide ample storage.

General Agreement with Direction

Another common theme heard throughout engagement was general agreement with the direction of transportation planning. There were numerous reasons why agreement was noted, including:

- Consideration for all modes of travel;
- Active transportation network connectivity;
- Concern regarding modal user conflict points.

The project team has incorporated changes into the concept design which incorporate feedback received. Higher level network connectivity has been reviewed and bi-directional cycle facilities were extended. Connections to existing active facilities at TIP20, Spring Creek, Main Street and the multi-use path along the CP Rail Tracks have been reviewed. The Elevation Place mid-block Crossing was realigned to reduce the crossing distance. The intersections at Main and 10 Street are intended to be near fully protected once signal phasing design is finalized

All Themes

The full listing of the key themes of engagement feedback with comments on design impact is included:

Theme	Design impact / Action
Accommodation of other modes	Review overall active network connectivity Safety at intersections (protected priority) Safety at crossings (all users) User separation / buffer space
Seasonality of active modes	Snow and ice control Adequate snow storage Review design with Streets & Roads (including crew / frontline) Peak volumes are summer, mode shift needs are largely seasonal
Alternate routes for active	Review overall active network connectivity Alternate routes are constrained, railway is a strong desire line (esp for visitors)
Existing active infrastructure is fine	Connectivity is poor User conflicts are many Safety priority
Congestion general	Modelling on current and future volumes
Congestion fewer lanes	Modelling on current and future volumes Peak vs average volume TIP20 volumes and signalling
Congestion network impacts (spring creek, BVT, Fairholme/17th	Refer to ITP Spring Creek monitoring

Congestion environmental impacts	Mode shift
Congestion turn movements	Signal phasing and modelling Extended turn bays Bus bays / pullouts Left turn space / median CAD turning movements
Congestion parking / intercept parking	Expansion of parking at EP is under consideration Work with BVT and other accommodation providers to encourage alternative modes
Congestion emergency impacts	Concept to be reviewed with Emerg / Fire during early prelim design Design follows standard Fire access requirements Past feedback is included
Confusing design	Similar to TIP20, lessons learned
CP rail crossing merge	Merge length and lane configuration is under review
Grading issues / ponding	Excessive crowning along portions of Railway to be addressed at prelim design Stormwater design
Landscaping generally and in medians	Landscaping to be considered at detailed design, maintenance is a key factor Minimal landscaping in medians
Mountable medians	Majority of medians are mountable Mostly no central median except for safety (intersections, crossings, etc.)
Signals near or far side	Signal placement will be confirmed at detailed design, current intent is for near side similar to TIP20 (with lessons learned)
Snow removal	Detailed reviews with Streets & Roads including front line crew Snow storage is priority in design Adequate positive drainage (ice) Operational lessons learned incorporated in design to ensure effective and efficient clearing
Transit operations congestion	Bus bays / pullouts are provided Consideration for future planned routes Modelling on current and future volumes
Transit operations user conflicts	Placement of active facilities wrt bus stops
Truck access	Turning movements have been modelled Large vehicle delivery and pickup routing and paths considered Business engagement

Conclusions

We gathered a lot of valuable feedback throughout this process, which enabled the project team to consider many different issues and update the design accordingly to ensure it is serving the concerns identified.

We recognize the polarizing views on transportation that the first phase of Railway Avenue created in the community. Those views, both negative and positive are reflected in what we have heard in this phase of engagement. We want to ensure you that we heard everything and whether you agree with the direction or not, our ultimate-goal is to ensure feedback received improves this and future transportation projects.

The project team recognizes the feedback and is appreciative how challenging the conversation around what change in the future of transportation in Canmore looks like. This level of conversation is best reserved for an earlier stage in the planning process, the creation and any future updates to the Integrated Transportation Plan – which guides the direction of what transportation planning looks like.