

Report to Council



Date: March 13, 2023
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Central Okanagan Integrated Transportation Strategy - Final Report (Provincial Delegation)
Department: Integrated Transportation

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Integrated Transportation, dated March 13, 2023, with regards to the Final Report for the province’s Central Okanagan Integrated Transportation Strategy (Provincial Delegation).

Purpose:

The province will present key findings and recommendations from the Central Okanagan Integrated Transportation Strategy (CO-ITS).

Background:

The BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) launched the [Central Okanagan Integrated Transportation Strategy \(CO-ITS\)](#) in early 2021. CO-ITS is the next phase of the Central Okanagan Planning Study (COPS) and the next step in the development of an integrated plan to improve the primary highway corridor through the Central Okanagan.

The Strategy builds upon recent transportation plans and studies conducted in the region, including the Central Okanagan’s first [Regional Transportation Plan](#) (endorsed by all six of the Central Okanagan governments in late Nov/Dec 2020). It has also been informed by the Okanagan Gateway Transportation Study (2020) and the Highway 97 Lake Country Planning Study (2020).

The province has engaged City of Kelowna staff throughout the development of CO-ITS. Kelowna staff members have served on the CO-ITS Technical Advisory Committee, and the province has also held multiple cross-departmental workshops with City staff to review and provide feedback at key milestones.

Discussion:

The CO-ITS draft findings and recommendations are summarized in the attached presentation and will be presented to Council by MoTI.

The presentation highlights several key recommendations that are consistent with provincial policy and the [CleanBC Roadmap to 2030](#) - which identifies provincial targets for reducing distance driven and a shift to sustainable mode of transportation. The presentation also highlights recommendations that are

aligned with City policy and adopted plans, including the 2040 Official Community Plan (OCP), 2040 Transportation Master Plan (TMP), and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Key highlights include:

- Recommending a functional classification system for the highway that recognizes the various urban, semi-urban and rural land use contexts that Highway 97 traverses through Kelowna and the region. This aligns with similar approaches in the 2040 OCP and TMP and will help ensure the surrounding land use context is appropriately considered in highway planning and design.
- Recommendations for several roadway improvements, such as Commonwealth Road, the Clement Ave Extension, and road improvements near the Kelowna International Airport. These projects are also recommended in Kelowna's plans and will help improve the safe and efficient movement of both people and goods.
- Recommendations to improve the people moving capacity of the highway corridor by building transit ridership, making transit more efficient and convenient, and improving access to transit through mobility hubs. Example projects include consideration of an eastbound bus-only lane on the WR Bennett Bridge, and median transit lanes along the highway in Kelowna (which is consistent with recommendations in the RTP and TMP).
- Recommendations that support improvements to active transportation infrastructure, such as the Bertram multi-use overpass, and completion of the Okanagan Rail Trail north of the Kelowna International Airport. These projects are consistent with Kelowna's plans and will improve active transportation connections both across and parallel to the highway.

As an integrated strategy, CO-ITS includes recommendations that will be led and supported by various organizations, including the province and Central Okanagan governments.

Conclusion:

Helping move more people and goods throughout our City can be challenging in the face of population growth. It can be even more challenging to improve mobility while also aligning with CleanBC's sustainable transportation targets. Both CO-ITS and the City's plans take an approach that aims to balance these objectives.

The City has been looking to the province for many years to understand its priorities for improvements along the highway corridor. While it has taken time, the approach taken by the province has been to allow Central Okanagan governments to complete their own Regional Transportation Plan before completing provincial planning work. The result is a provincial strategy for the highway that incorporates feedback from Central Okanagan governments, including the City of Kelowna, and will help us advance and implement our own plans.

The completion of CO-ITS marks a major milestone many years in the making. With provincial and municipal priorities in place and aligned, the path forward to fund, design and build the critical transportation infrastructure needed to support our growing community is now in place and next steps can be advanced.

Internal Circulation:

Communications
Infrastructure
Planning & Development Services

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy:

TMP Policy 3.1 - Work towards higher capacity transit on Harvey Avenue by building up existing bus service, directing new residents and jobs near stops, and collaborating with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

TMP Policy 6.1 – Work with the Province to strengthen Harvey Avenue as a multi-modal transportation corridor that can safely and efficiently move people and goods as the region grows. Seek to integrate Harvey into the surrounding transportation network, with strong bicycle and pedestrian connections to transit, as well as parallel roads to help take local vehicle trips off the highway.

OCP Policy 5.2.1. Transit Supportive Corridor Densities.

Encourage development that works toward a long term population density of between 50 – 100 people per hectare within 200 metres of each corridor to achieve densities that support improved transit service and local services and amenities. Discourage underdevelopment of properties along Transit Supportive Corridors.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Communications Comments:

Existing Policy:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Submitted by: M. VanZerr, Strategic Transportation Planning Manager

Approved for inclusion: M. Logan, Infrastructure General Manager

Attachment 1 - Central Okanagan Integrated Transportation Strategy - Presentation

cc: Divisional Director, Corporate Strategic Services
Divisional Director, Planning & Development Services