

Report to Council



Date: March 30, 2026
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Richter Corridor Right-of-Way Protection
Department: Integrated Transportation

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Integrated Transportation Department dated March 30, 2026, with respect to the Richter Street Corridor Study and Protection Plan;

AND THAT Council directs staff to proceed with next steps as outlined in the report from the Integrated Transportation Department dated March 30, 2026.

Purpose:

To receive an update on the long-term vision for rapid transit on the Richter Street corridor and advance the associated implementation strategy, timing, and corridor protection approach.

Council Priority Alignment:

Transportation
Agriculture & Environment
Economic Development

Background:

Planning for higher-order transit connections between Downtown and the Pandosy Urban Centre has been identified in the City of Kelowna's [2040 Official Community Plan](#) (OCP) and [2040 Transportation Master Plan](#) (TMP) as a key strategy to support urban centre growth, expand mobility choices, and reduce reliance on driving. The OCP identifies the Pandosy–Richter corridor as a Transit Supportive Corridor (TSC), directing growth and mobility investment toward areas where higher-capacity transit can be supported over time.

At the same time, regional rapid transit planning along Highway 97, led by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT), is advancing work along Kelowna's primary east-west corridor.

Planning for higher-order transit between downtown and Pandosy would complement this work by strengthening north-south links between urban centres and helping build a more connected regional transit network.

In 2023, the City of Kelowna received up to \$31.5 million through the federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), which requires the city to permit approximately 7,000 new housing units by October 2026. One HAF initiative includes [pre-zoning select Transit Supportive Corridors \(TSC\)](#) to allow for more housing as-of-right. Council endorsed the TSC Pilot Project, and the related bylaw amendments were adopted in February 2026, advancing additional housing capacity along corridors intended to be served by frequent transit. This approach is also reflected in the recently endorsed [Housing Action Plan](#) (Action 2.6), which supports more housing and services along TSCs. As land use permissions expand along these corridors, it becomes more important to align corridor planning and future transit investment with that growth.

Council's endorsement of the [Thriving Urban Centres Future Directions Report](#) in September 2025, further reinforces the importance of improving transit connections between downtown and Pandosy as growth continues in Kelowna's Urban Centres.

To advance this policy direction, staff undertook the Richter Corridor Study to evaluate alternative north-south corridor alignments and identify the space requirements needed to support future higher-order transit as redevelopment occurs. The study examines how land use, transit investment, and corridor design can be aligned in practice, and establishes the technical foundation for corridor protection so the City can secure the space required for future transit infrastructure while supporting near-term urbanization.

Previous Council Resolutions

Resolution	Date
THAT Council endorse the Transit Supportive Corridor Pilot Project Plan as outlined in and attached to the report from the Long Range Planning and Housing Policy & Programs Departments, dated November 24, 2025;	November 24, 2025
THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Long Range Planning dated September 8, 2025, with respect to Thriving Urban Centres – Future Directions Report; AND THAT Council endorses the Thriving Urban Centres – Future Directions Report, as described in the report from Long Range Planning, dated September 8, 2025.	September 8, 2025

Discussion:

The Richter Corridor Study (the study) assessed several different transit corridor alignments between Downtown and the Pandosy Urban Centre to identify a preferred higher-order transit corridor and determine the space required to support its long-term implementation. The study was informed by planned land use and projected growth in housing and employment in the area.

To compare the alignment options in a consistent way, the study used a structured evaluation approach. The alignment options were assessed against a business-as-usual baseline across five goals: improving travel choice, improving travel time, supporting economic growth, reducing environmental impacts, and supporting livable communities. The evaluation considered land use and growth, ridership potential, transit operations, and capital cost.

The alignment options included variations that generally followed Richter Street or Pandosy Street, with different approaches through Downtown. Based on overall performance, Richter Street, from Downtown to south of the Pandosy Urban Centre, was identified as the preferred alignment (Figure 1). It provided the strongest overall balance across the study goals, with strong ridership and travel time performance, the lowest capital cost among the options evaluated, and the best fit with the City's land use and transit objectives.

Following identification of the preferred alignment, the corridor was further refined by testing multiple cross-section options, station locations, and transit running configurations. This stage explored the space needed to accommodate higher-order transit while minimizing impacts to adjacent parcels.

Projected ridership demand was assessed to help confirm the most appropriate transit technology for the corridor. Based on land use projections, ridership potential, and operational considerations, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) was identified as the preferred solution. Compared with conventional bus service, BRT better supports future corridor demand by improving travel time, reliability and increasing practical passenger capacity. BRT also supports a phased implementation approach, beginning with transit priority measures and progressing over time toward dedicated transit lanes as demand increases.

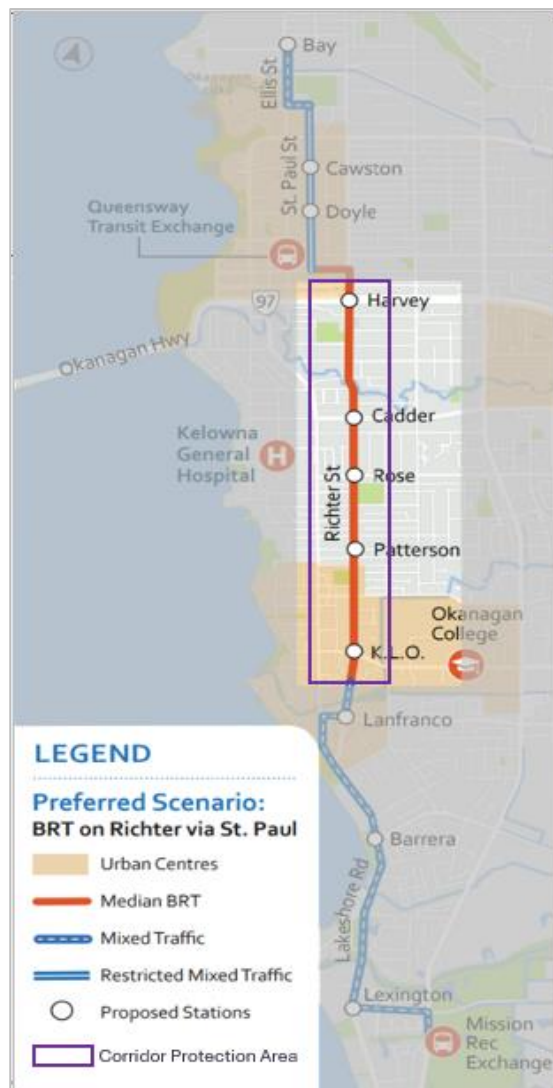


Figure 1 – Preferred Alignment

The corridor protection plan provides an initial framework for both near-term urbanization and real estate development along Richter Street between Lanfranco Road and just north of Highway 97. The plan identifies preliminary right-of-way requirements and includes cross-sections showing where constraints, station locations, and redevelopment pressures are most significant. Future protection of the right-of-way through frontage dedications at redevelopment will allow Richter Street to be enhanced incrementally over time, supporting utility relocations, pedestrian improvements, and phased transit improvements, while reducing future disruption and limiting the need for more costly land acquisition. Other segments not detailed in the corridor protection plan, including through Downtown and south of the Pandosy Urban Centre, will also continue to be refined through future technical studies and plans.

Phased Implementation Approach

Recognizing the length and complexity of the corridor, implementation is expected to occur in phases over time, as redevelopment occurs, right-of-way is assembled, utilities are upgraded, and transit demand grows (Figure 2). A phased approach allows the City to make useful near-term investments,

while protecting the space needed to support the corridor's longer-term transit vision.

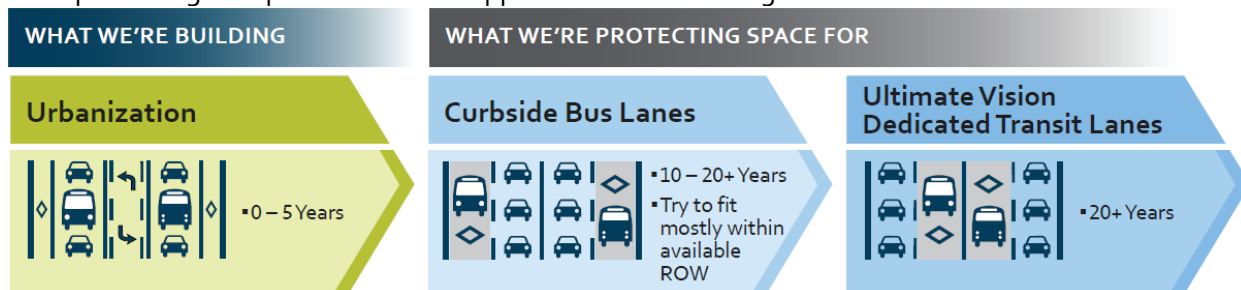


Figure 2 – Phased Approach

In the near term, the City's focus is on urbanizing segments of Richter Street through planned capital upgrades within the existing right-of-way. This includes transitioning from gravel shoulders to an urban standard with curb, gutter, sidewalks, and drainage infrastructure, coordinated with utility upgrades and relocations. A key objective of this work is to establish curbs in their ultimate location where possible, and, through preliminary design, consider how the space between them can function in the near term, for example traffic and parking, while preserving flexibility for future transit improvements.

Over the medium term, as corridor conditions evolve and additional right-of-way is secured, transit improvements can be added in stages. These may include better bus stop amenities, improved passenger space, transit signal priority at key intersections, and short sections of dedicated transit lanes where space permits. This phase improves transit reliability and travel time in targeted locations, while allowing the corridor to evolve as space becomes available, rather than waiting for full corridor build-out.

Over the longer term, the corridor is being designed to accommodate BRT, including dedicated transit lanes and more defined station areas that support reliable operations, safe pedestrian access, higher quality passenger waiting amenities and integration with adjacent redevelopment. This ultimate vision is anticipated over a 20-plus-year horizon as redevelopment occurs and ridership demand, corridor conditions, and funding support more substantial transit investment. The corridor protection plan preserves the space needed to support this future design details to be refined over time.

Corridor Protection Approach

Protecting space for future transit infrastructure along Richter Street will require balancing long-term corridor needs with minimizing impacts to existing properties. The corridor protection approach is intended to preserve the space needed for future multi-modal improvements using practical planning and regulatory tools that can work incrementally in conjunction with intensification desired by the TSC policies now in place.

Council's endorsement of the TSC Pilot Project and related pre-zoning is expected to increase housing. Larger redevelopment sites and lot consolidation have the potential to more efficiently accommodate both new development and future corridor space needs, particularly in locations where additional width may be required for stations or other corridor functions.

A range of corridor protection tools may be used to support this approach, including localized design refinements, site specific relaxations, lot assembly through redevelopment, road dedications or road reserves secured through development processes and via updates to Bylaw 7900.

Together, these measures provide greater clarity on long-term corridor requirements and allow right-of-way to be assembled incrementally over time, primarily through redevelopment.

Where redevelopment-based tools are not sufficient, additional site-specific measures may be considered, including setback protection, further design refinement, negotiated solutions, or targeted acquisition where required. Overall, the intent will be to protect the corridor efficiently and transparently, with emphasis on working through redevelopment first and limiting direct acquisition to situations where other tools are not sufficient by the point in time we invest in BRT upgrades.

Next Steps:

Following Council's receipt of this report, staff will continue advancing work on the Richter Street corridor. Key next steps (Figure 3) include urbanization design, formalizing corridor cross-sections, communicating corridor requirements, and coordinating future transit service improvements.



Figure 3 – Next Steps

In the immediate term, staff are advancing preliminary and detailed design for urbanization along Richter Street to ensure curb placement and supporting infrastructure align with the future corridor layout. In addition, staff will bring forward updates to City Bylaw 7900 to formalize corridor cross-sections and provide greater clarity on right-of-way requirements, alongside communication with property owners and developers along the corridor.

Additional technical work will also be required to refine corridor segments not covered in the corridor protection plan, including portions north of Highway 97 and south of Lanfranco Road. Work on Highway 97 will also continue to support broader transit network planning and east west connectivity.

Conclusion:

The Richter Corridor Study identifies Richter Street as the preferred corridor for future higher-order transit between Downtown and the Pandosy Urban Centre. As growth continues in these Urban Centres and along key corridors, protecting space will help ensure the City can respond over time as transit demand, service levels, and funding conditions evolve. The study also helps guide near-term urbanization work, so that early investments support the corridor's long-term function and reduce the need for more costly retrofits in the future.

This work aligns with the Transit Supportive Corridor Pilot Project, regional transit planning for Highway 97, the OCP and TMP policy direction. It also helps define Richter Street's role within the broader future transportation network, as a north-south transit spine that complements nearby corridors serving walking, cycling, local access, goods movement and general traffic. Together, these efforts create a coordinated framework to support growth, strengthen connections between Urban Centres, and expand travel options over time.

With clearly defined corridor protection, redevelopment can proceed in a way that enables the City's ability to deliver future transit to support planned growth. Were this not to occur, future transit improvements would become more complex, disruptive, and costly. Developing a strategy to protect the corridor now does not commit the City to building the full transit corridor today. It helps ensure future investments remain possible, practical, and more affordable in support of the City's long range plan.

Internal Circulation:

Long Range Planning Department
 Development Engineering Department
 Development Planning Department
 Housing Policy and Programs Department
 Climate Action & Environment Department
 Real Estate Services Department
 Utility Services

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy:

TMP Policy 3.2 – Focus increases in transit service along Transit Supportive Corridors to support growth and build transit ridership.

TMP Policy 3.4 – Apply transit priority measures along Transit Supportive Corridors, where appropriate.

TMP Policy 6.3 – Invest in transit and the primary bike network to increase the number of people that can travel on the City's road network.

OCP Policy 5.2.1- High density is essential to support improved transit service and local amenities. The OCP discourages underdevelopment of properties along TSCs.

OCP Policy 5.2.5 – New development along TSCs should take vehicular access from laneways or secondary streets, limiting direct driveway access onto the corridor to maintain safety and functionality.

OCP Objective 4.1 - Strengthen the Urban Centres as Kelowna's primary hubs of activity.

Consultation and Engagement:

As next steps advance, staff will communicate with property owners and developers along the corridor regarding the long-term corridor concept, right-of-way requirements, and related bylaw updates, as appropriate.

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

There are no financial implications in proceeding with the immediate next steps as outlined in this report. Financial implications associated with future corridor protection will be outlined in the subsequent report to Council laying out the City's acquisition strategy and recommended bylaw changes.

Submitted by: N. Carswell, Strategic Transportation Planning Manager
 A. Mustafa, Planner Specialist

Approved for inclusion: M. Logan, General Manager, Infrastructure