



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 5420-02

From: Director of Operational Services

Date: April 23, 2025

Subject: Fitzgerald Avenue Pedestrian Network Review – Improvement Option

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present Council the results of a pedestrian network review along Fitzgerald Avenue and to seek supportive direction for the improvement of two crosswalks, located at 10th and 14th Street on Fitzgerald Ave. with the addition of rectangular rapid flashing beacons at each location and for the removing the two redundant crosswalks, located at 11th and 12th Street.

BACKGROUND:

Operational Services, through Stantec Consulting, undertook a pedestrian network review of the Fitzgerald Avenue corridor in response to multiple public inquiries concerning pedestrian safety. Concerns included limited visibility during winter months, reports of near-misses, and a tragic incident involving a dog at one of the crosswalks.

Currently, Fitzgerald Avenue features three zebra crosswalks between 8th and 14th Streets, not including those at either end of the corridor. While multiple crosswalks can enhance connectivity, they may also contribute to increased pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, reduced driver attentiveness, pedestrian complacency, and elevated maintenance costs.

This review focused on optimizing crosswalk locations to improve pedestrian safety, accessibility, and traffic operations. The key objectives were to identify high-usage crosswalks for potential upgrades and to assess whether underutilized crossings should be removed, consolidated, or relocated. The crosswalks included in the study are listed below:

- Fitzgerald Avenue at 8th Street – Signalised Intersection
- Fitzgerald Avenue at 10th Street – Zebra crosswalk
- Fitzgerald Avenue at 11th Street – Zebra Crosswalk
- Fitzgerald Avenue at 12th Street – Zebra Crosswalk
- Fitzgerald Avenue at 13th Street – none
- Fitzgerald Avenue at 14th Street – Zebra Crosswalk

DISCUSSION:

The City of Courtenay is committed to making its streets safe for all users, with a strong focus on pedestrian and active transportation safety. Encouraging active transportation aligns with our strategic priorities for healthy living, sustainability, and investment in multi-modal infrastructure.

Fitzgerald Avenue Pedestrian Network Review – Improvement Option

The study used a Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) framework to evaluate crosswalks. This MCDA framework evaluates key factors influencing pedestrian safety and accessibility. For the Fitzgerald Avenue segment in Courtenay, the criteria specifically considered include crosswalk utilization, popular routes to school, proximity to vulnerable road users (VRUs), and pedestrian collision history.

RESULTS

A comprehensive MCDA ranking, as outlined in **Table 1** of the studied crosswalk locations, provides an overall ranking of the crosswalks within the Fitzgerald Avenue corridor. Based on the findings from the analysis, several recommendations have been identified to improve pedestrian safety, optimize crosswalk efficiency, and enhance infrastructure along Fitzgerald Avenue. It is important to note that the ranking and evaluation are individually determined through the MCDA. The MCDA can lead to sections of Fitzgerald having the same ranking under framework sections, but they holistically score differently. These recommendations include the removal of redundant crosswalks, upgrading priority crosswalks with enhanced safety measures, and introducing accessibility enhancements to create a safer and more inclusive pedestrian network.

Removal of redundant crosswalks: Based on the study, the crosswalks at **11th and 12th** Streets are considered redundant. 12th Street ranked lowest in the MCDA analysis, and 11th Street did not meet crosswalk warrant criteria. Removing these crossings would reduce redundancy, improve traffic flow, and encourage the use of safer crossings at 10th and 14th Streets. 13th Street does not currently have a crosswalk, and through this exercise, traffic conditions are similar to those at nearby 11th Street. Given its proximity to both 12th Street and 14th Street (less than 100 meters), adding a crosswalk would be redundant and inefficient.

Pedestrian Activated Flashing Beacons Upgrades: The crosswalks at **10th and 14th** Streets are priority sites for safety upgrades due to higher pedestrian use and recorded collisions (2019–2023). Upgrading these crossings to Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) is recommended to improve visibility and driver compliance. RRFBs offer a cost-effective, high-visibility solution that enhances pedestrian safety, an example is demonstrated in Attachment 1.

Accessible Design: To support accessibility and equity, it is recommended to install **tactile paving** at curb ramps along the studied crosswalks. These textured surface indicators assist visually impaired pedestrians by marking crosswalk boundaries and direction. Curb ramps should also be reviewed to ensure they meet universal design standards, supporting safe access for all users, including those using wheelchairs, strollers, or mobility aids. Staff recommend the inclusion of this design standard in the City's Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw No. 2919 as a required supplementary standard for all new installation works.

Collectively, these recommended improvements aim to create a safer, more efficient, and inclusive pedestrian environment along Fitzgerald Avenue, aligning with the City's commitment to active transportation and community well-being. As staff reflected on both existing and future policies - such as the Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan (DVLAP) - they identified a series of recommended corridor

Fitzgerald Avenue Pedestrian Network Review – Improvement Option

improvements that incorporate key elements to enhance community services and inviting public spaces, including safe supportive infrastructure for active transportation. These improvements aim to create a pedestrian-friendly, vibrant, and sustainable urban corridor.

They will also support the successful implementation of the DVLAP by strengthening transportation networks that are accessible to all while embracing modern urban planning principles.

Table 1: *Comprehensive Ranking of the Studied Crossing Locations along Fitzgerald Avenue*

Comprehensive Ranking	Crosswalk Location	Pedestrian Utilization Ranking (30%)	Safe route to School Ranking (20%)	VRU Proximity Ranking (20%)	Pedestrian Collisions Ranking (30%)	Average Ranking
1	Fitzgerald Avenue at 14 th Street	2	1	2	1	1.5
2	Fitzgerald Avenue at 10 th Street	1	5	1	1	1.8
3	Fitzgerald Avenue at 11 th Street	3	1	3	3	2.6
4	Fitzgerald Avenue at 13 th Street	5	3	3	3	2.7
5	Fitzgerald Avenue at 12 th Street	4	4	5	3	3.9

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The estimated costs for the pedestrian safety improvements recommended in the report are approximately \$25,000. If supported, these improvements will be funded through the approved pedestrian cycling and pavement renewal capital fund. In support, staff will be applying for Road Safety grants through ICBC with cost sharing of up to 50 %, reducing the City's budget commitment to \$12,500.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

The installation of pedestrian improvements on any City street where they do not currently exist is an increased level of service and is considered an upgrade under the umbrella of asset management. Increasing the level of service can include additional capital costs to implement the service and in turn, increase annual maintenance costs to operate. Council has adopted an Asset Management Policy and Bylaw to reflect this.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

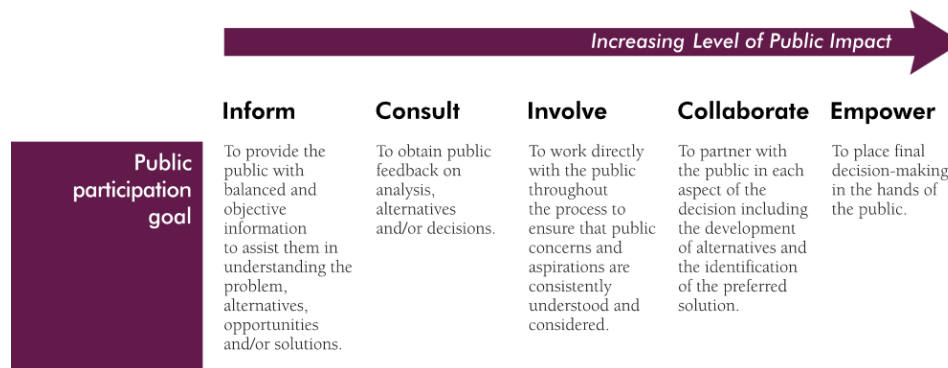
Under the Council Strategic Priorities 2023-2026, Municipal Infrastructure (Page 13);

- Complete accessibility audit of public facilities and develop implementation policy for capital improvements

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff would inform the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:

http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf



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OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council endorse the recommendations to increase pedestrian safety by directing staff to complete the installation of pedestrian activated flashing beacons at the crosswalks located on Fitzgerald Avenue at 10th Street and 14th Street and to remove the redundant crosswalks located on Fitzgerald Avenue at 11th Street and 12th Street; and
THAT Council direct staff to prepare an amendment to the City's Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw No. 2919 to include tactile paving in the Supplementary Design Standards.
2. THAT Council receive the staff report and the accompanying Fitzgerald Avenue – Crosswalk Planning and Optimization Report for information only.
3. THAT Council provide alternate direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons
2. Fitzgerald Avenue – Crosswalk Planning and Optimization Report

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Fitzgerald Avenue Pedestrian Network Review – Improvement Option

Attachment 1 - Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons



LumiWalk can be paired with any other JSF system to meet any configuration needs. From RRFB Crosswalks, to flashing signs at intersections, the offers autonomous traffic control and pedestrian safety wherever it is.