



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 5460-07

From: City Manager (CAO)

Date: November 27, 2024

Subject: Dove Creek Road Closure Request – Access Restriction

PURPOSE:

To present Council with the results of the analysis and consultation with respect to the request to limit public vehicle access to Dove Creek Road and to seek council direction on the proposed road closure - restricted access option.

BACKGROUND:

The property owner and resident of the private property that has access off Dove Creek Place have expressed concerns regarding the ongoing misuse of the road, ditched and adjacent multi-use pathways of Dove Creek Place. Over 60 complaints by the resident have been logged with the local RCMP within a six-month period, involving motor vehicle infractions, illegal dumping, harassment of livestock, and other criminal-related activities. The property owner and resident have made a delegation requesting that Council consider the installation of barricades, aimed to block public vehicle access to the cul-de-sac segment of the public roadway, located at the west end of Dove Creek Place.

At the May 8th, 2024 Council Meeting, Council resolved:

“THAT Council refer the request from Ronda Posegate and Tristain Koehler to place barricades that would block the entrance to the cul-de-sac at the end of Dove Creek Place to staff for consideration, and;

THAT Council direct staff to report back on the feasibility of implementing the request.”

DISCUSSION:

In response to direction by Council, Morrison Hershfield, now Stantec (MHnS), was retained by the City to review the feasibility of restricting public vehicle access to Dove Creek Place. The review identified several challenges surrounding the barricade approach to a partial road closure or the cul-de-sac segment only, including the development of a non-compliant road design standard, resulting in limited vehicle turning movements, restrictive access to emergency services, utility services and the Comox Valley Regional District, i.e. Exhibition Grounds, as well as reducing public access to trails and recreational facilities.

The City’s Subdivision and Development Servicing (SDS) Bylaw 2919, section 5.9 Roads, states ‘The maximum road length for a cul-de-sac, as measured from the edge of the intersecting through road to the centre of the cul-de-sac bulb, is 300m’, meaning a turnaround shall be provided in a form acceptable to the City, and may be located on private property if protected by a right-of-way and covenant registered in favour of the City.

In an attempt to adequately address these concerns while continuing to meet the City’s regulatory requirements and also the spirit of local resident’s request, a concept design was developed for council’s review and consideration. The solution involves the installation of a municipal gate to restrict public vehicular

access beyond the first Exhibition Grounds entrance, while maintaining active transportation (AT) and equestrian access through a multi-use pathway (MUP) along the corridor.

In short, the provided concept design aims to facilitate the restriction of public vehicular access to Dove Creek Place by the installation of a standard municipal gate, thus maintaining Utility, CVRD, and Municipal maintenance and Emergency Service access. The gate is recommended to be installed, past the first entrance to the existing Exhibition Grounds, at approximately the 125m mark of the roadway, thus maintaining compliance with the City's SDS bylaw. Additionally, staff are recommending the addition of bi-directional multi-use path (MUP) be constructed through the extent of the remaining corridor aiming to enhance Active Transportation (AT) and equestrian access within the corridor. Lastly, CVRD would be provided access to the extent of the road network to provide field access during events or during routine maintenance activities, etc.

It is understood that the developed solution will have an impact on private land owners' driveway access, however, through discussions with the private land owner, they have agreed in principle, to assume all costs associated with the movement and reconstruction of their private driveway to suit this proposed concept design.

LOCATION DESCRIPTION

Dove Creek Road is a two-lane rural road, approximately ~375 metres in length, located on the western boundary of the City, connecting to nearby residential properties, agricultural lands, and public amenities. The road serves as a key access route for the Exhibition Grounds and provides a connection to several trailheads and recreation areas, including access to the Tsolum River.

Classified as a local road, Dove Creek Place experiences low vehicle traffic volumes, primarily related to local residents, recreational users, and agricultural operations. Its rural construction standards include open ditches, and it lacks pedestrian infrastructure, which adds to the challenges of managing mixed uses. The road is also adjacent to sensitive environmental areas, including fish habitats in the roadside ditches.

The road's proximity to the Exhibition Grounds and trail networks increases its significance, particularly during event seasons when vehicle traffic and pedestrian activity peak. Balancing public access to these facilities with the need to address ongoing nuisance issues has been a key consideration in the development of the proposed solution.

Figure 1. illustrates the study location and the proposed solution, a detailed design can be found in the attachments.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

While the proposed restriction of access to Dove Creek Place aims to address nuisance issues such as illegal dumping and harassment of livestock, it introduces several operational and safety challenges. These considerations must be carefully evaluated to balance the needs of local residents, public access, and essential services. The following outlines the potential impacts of the closure/access restriction, as identified in the review conducted by Morrison Hershfield:

- **Emergency Service Access:** One of the primary concerns with the road closure is the impact on emergency vehicle access. Without a designated turnaround area beyond the proposed gate, emergency vehicles, including fire trucks and ambulances, would struggle to manoeuvre effectively. A swept path analysis (see Fig.2) conducted by MH showed that large vehicles, such as fire trucks, would not have sufficient space to turn around within the City's right-of-way. Using private property for such manoeuvres is both impractical and non-compliant with City bylaws. This could lead to delays in emergency response times, which is a significant safety concern.



- **Public Access to Recreation Areas:** Dove Creek Place serves as a vital access route to popular recreational areas, including the Tsolum River and nearby trails. Restricting vehicular access could significantly impact the public’s ability to conveniently reach these destinations, particularly during peak seasons. The CVRD, in their staff report, “Accessing the Tsolum River for Swimming-Nov 29, 2019” highlighted the importance of this access point for recreational activities such as swimming. Without vehicle access, many users, especially those with limited mobility or carrying recreational equipment, may find it challenging to utilize these spaces. This could result in a decline in public engagement with these natural amenities, potentially reducing the recreational value of the area. Seasonal access or alternative parking solutions would need to be considered to mitigate these impacts.
- **Utility and Service Access:** The road also serves as a key access route for utility providers, such as BC Hydro and TELUS, who need regular access to maintain their infrastructure along Dove Creek Place. Any disruption to this access could hinder essential services. Although the proposed design includes allowances for utility access, proper coordination will be critical to ensure that services are not interrupted.

- **Traffic and Parking Congestion:** Events at the nearby Exhibition Grounds can significantly increase traffic and parking demand in the area. Restricting vehicular access beyond the gate could push parking onto adjacent roads, potentially creating congestion and safety hazards. During peak event times, the surrounding road network may struggle to accommodate the increased demand, leading to spill over effects on neighbouring residential streets.
- **Non-compliance with Road Standards:** The road segment west of the proposed gate would no longer meet the City's Subdivision and Development Services Bylaw No. 2919, which mandates a compliant turnaround area. Without a proper turnaround, larger vehicles, such as municipal trucks and RVs, would face challenges completing safe manoeuvres. The Swept path analysis showed that large vehicles, especially during peak seasons when parking is heavy, would have to rely on private driveways for turning around, which is both inefficient and non-compliant.

PROPOSED ACCESS RESTRICTION

After careful consideration of all the challenges, a practical and balanced approach was finalized to address the concerns raised. The initially requested road closure near the cul-de-sac just after the driveway of 3120 Dove Creek Road, has been proposed to shift eastward. The proposed access restriction is now located immediately west of the driveway of the Regional District's property (4875 Headquarters Road). This adjustment ensures seamless access to the CVRD's Exhibition Grounds while incorporating a driveway relocation, which will be covered entirely by the private landowner. The approach is designed to meet the needs of residents, maintain essential services, and support public access to recreational areas. Refer to **Attachment 1** for more details.

Key aspects of the conceptual plan include:

- **Municipal Gate Installation:** A municipal gate will be erected to restrict public vehicular access beyond the Exhibition Grounds entrance. Emergency Services, utility, CVRD, and municipal vehicles will have access through the gate.
- **Driveway Relocation:** The private driveway at 3120 Dove Creek Road will be relocated to align with the CVRD's access road, with all costs covered by the property owner.
- **Bi-directional Multi-Use Pathway (MUP):** A 3-meter-wide MUP will be constructed on the north side of Dove Creek Road, extending from the cul-de-sac to Headquarters Road. This pathway will maintain access for active transportation (AT) users and equestrian riders, ensuring connectivity along the corridor.
- **Physical Separation Buffer:** A 0.5-meter buffer will be incorporated between the MUP and the roadway, providing a physical barrier to separate pedestrians and cyclists from vehicular traffic, enhancing safety.
- **Roadway Width:** West of the gate, Dove Creek Road will be 5.5 meters wide, allowing for two-way traffic flow for authorized vehicles, including those related to utilities, municipal services, and events at the Exhibition Grounds.
- **Seasonal Access:** To support public access to recreational areas i.e. the Tsolum River, staff in consultation with CVRD staff considered the potential for a Peak Seasonal or Park Operating Hours

(dawn-to-dusk) agreement for the opening of the gate. The cost associated with a seasonal or park operating hours could be managed through a joint operating agreement.

- **Parking:** Additional parking could be accommodated on the south side of Dove Creek Place in the section between Headquarters Road and the Exhibition Grounds entrance in the already existing extended gravel shoulder area.

This solution balances the need to restrict or limit public vehicle access to prevent misuse while maintaining essential services and public access to recreational areas. It also ensures compliance with road safety standards and the City's bylaws.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Traffic calming policy developments are proposed to include a logical framework that addresses which measures are considered acceptable and when they are applicable for installation on City streets.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The proposed Dove Creek Road closure and multi-use pathway (MUP) construction will require operational funding from the City to cover the design and construction of the proposed Active transportation improvements, including ongoing maintenance of these assets. While the exact cost will vary depending on the final design, it is estimated that the project will cost between \$40,000 - \$50,000, based on a class 'C' cost estimate. The costs associated with a municipal gate and sign installation are relatively minor, ranging from \$ 6,000 – 8,000 and can be accommodated in the City operational budgets.

It is important to note that the relocation of the private driveway, as required by the proposed design, will be fully funded by the private landowner, and no additional costs related to this component will be incurred by the City.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

The addition or adjustment of traffic control devices are part of Operations Services core duties. City staff will be required to allocate time to process, analyse, design, review, implement and maintain the new infrastructure. This may place additional demands on staff resources and potentially impact other projects. Clear and consistent communication with the public throughout this process is crucial. Information should be regularly shared through the City's website, group emails, and community centre notices. Neighbourhood associations can assist in keeping residents informed and engaged from the initial request to project completion.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

Under Council Strategic Priorities 2023-2026, Streets and Transportation (Page 7);

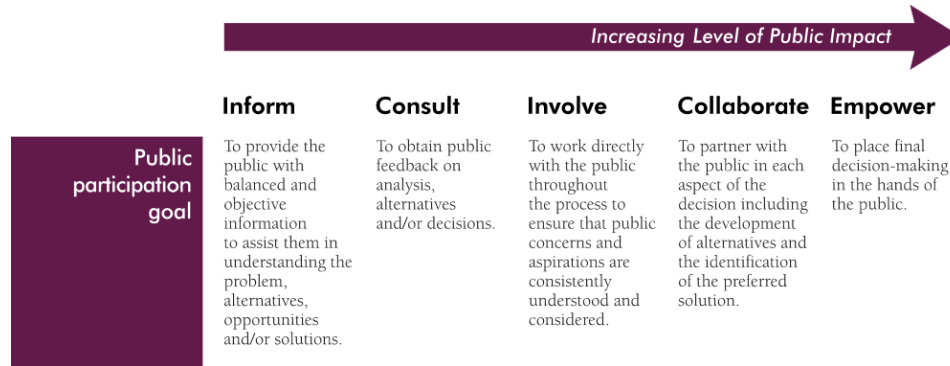
This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Streets and Transportation - Develop traffic calming plans, related policies, and specific implementation when and where, speed limits, school zones, cycling education/awareness
- Streets and Transportation - Implementation of traffic calming plans

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 receive the Dove Creek Road Closure Request report and direct staff to proceed with the implementation of the proposed Access Restriction - Limited Use solution within its annual operational budgets, and;
THAT staff be directed to include the Active Transportation improvements in the City's 2025 Cycling Network Plan implementation plan, and;
FURTHER THAT the Director of Operational Service be authorized to develop and execute an Operating Agreement between the Comox Valley Regional District and the City of Courtenay to permit seasonal access to the road.
2. THAT Council receive the Dove Creek Road Closure Request report and direct staff to proceed with the implementation of the proposed Access Restriction - Limited Use solution only.
3. THAT Council receive this report for information and take no further action.
4. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Dove Creek Road Access Restriction/Traffic Calming Concept.

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