THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

STAFF REPORT

To: Council **File No.:** 8620-01; ES 16009

From: Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** December 5, 2016

Subject: **5th Street Complete Streets Pilot Project – Presentation by Urban Systems and Concept Options Selection**

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present Council with a summary of the second phase of public engagement for the 5th Street Complete Streets Pilot Project and for Council to consider selecting one or more of the road cross-section options to proceed to engineering design.

CAO RECOMMENDATIONS:

That based on the December 5, 2016 staff report entitled "*5th Street Complete Streets Pilot Project – Presentation by Urban Systems and Concept Options Selection,*" Council approve option 1 and direct staff to proceed to detailed design based on the Option 4 (raised) cross section, with parking provided between Fitzgerald and Harmston, and alternating parking and raingardens provided throughout the remainder of the corridor.

Respectfully submitted,

David Allen, BES, CLGEM, SCLGM
Chief Administrative Officer

BACKGROUND:

The City of Courtenay, through the Multi-modal Transportation Strategy (2014), adopted the following vision:

> "*The City of Courtenay supports a transportation network that prioritizes connectivity and access to daily destinations and, through a balanced approach to transportation planning, provides all road users safe choices in their mode of transportation*."

At the April 4, 2016 Regular Council Meeting, Council resolved that:

> *Moved by Hillian and seconded by Wells that based on the April 4, 2016 staff report entitled "5th Street Complete Streets Pilot Project – Update and Presentation from Urban Systems Ltd," and presentation, Council approve Option 1 and direct staff to proceed with public engagement as described in this report.*

City staff and project team members from Urban Systems Ltd met with key stakeholders groups over the course of May 5 and 6, 2016 to identify interests and aspirations for the project area. Comments were collected from the following key stakeholders:

- Comox Valley Cycling Coalition
- Comox Valley Accessibility Committee
- School District #71 (Active Travel)
- Comox Valley Regional District (Transit), and Watson & Ash
- Comox Valley Conservation Strategy Community Partnership

A Public Information Session was held in the evening of Thursday May 5th, and an online public survey was available from May 5th and 31st for information and feedback. The Public Information Session was attended by approximately 60 people, and the survey received 560 responses, 408 of which were fully completed.

The priorities identified by the public through this engagement process have been used to inform the design of five surface treatment options for 5th Street between Fitzgerald Avenue and Menzies Avenue. The most common theme expressed by the public for the future look/feel of 5th Street was "greener/lush"; the top ranked priority out of a score of 7 for the use of the roadway was "walking" (6.5/7) followed by "cycling" (4.9/7) and "landscaping" (4.5/7).

Based on the May 2016 public engagement process, five surface treatment options were prepared for Council's consideration and further public engagement.

At the Oct 3, 2016 Regular Council Meeting, Council resolved that:

> *Moved by Hillian and seconded by Frisch that That Council initially endorse Option 4 with parking on both sides of 5th street in the commercial block; and*
>
> *That staff continue with the second phase of public engagement based on all presented design options.*

Staff's objective in the second phase of public engagement was to gather the public's feedback on the proposed surface treatment options. This was done by meeting with the public at the evening information session on October 26th, and through a community survey in the weeks following. In order to ensure a successful public information session, static display boards, hand out materials and the survey were developed. These materials were also posted on the City website for those who were unable to attend the information session. In addition, City staff and the consultant were available for questions and comments at each step in the engagement process. Finally, individual surveys were hand delivered to property owners directly fronting the project on 5th Street, as they would be most affected by potential upgrades to the current cross-section.

Representatives of Urban Systems Ltd will be attending the December 5th council meeting to present a summary of the most recent public engagement process and to support Council in a discussion to select one (or more) preferred options for proceeding to detailed engineering design.

DISCUSSION:

The October 26, 2016 Public Information Session was attended by approximately 40 people, with approximately 80 surveys completed (both hard copy and online). Most of the attendees (85%) found the information on the panels helpful. A summary of the survey results is attached to this report.

Preferred Elements

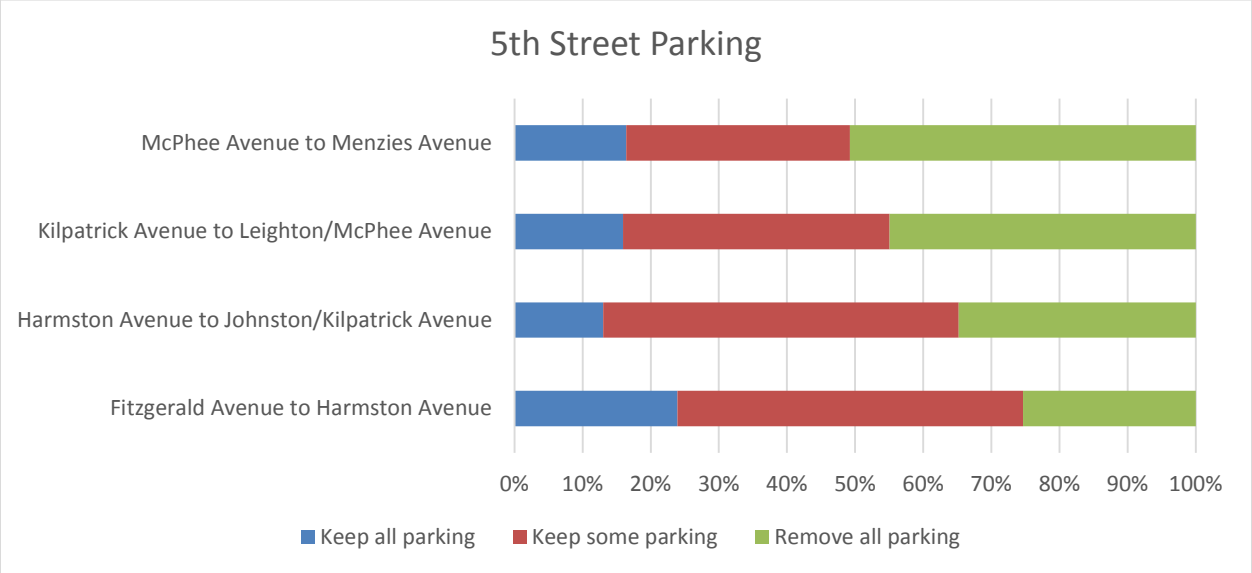
A total of 6 cross-section options were provided, with two versions of Option 4 (separated bike lane) being shown, one with a raised bike lane option. In all options, respondents liked the approach with respect to wide sidewalks and dedicated bike lanes, with additional preference to the rain gardens.

Respondents were asked to indicate which road cross-section option they prefer for the future of 5th Street based on the concepts provided on the display panels. In total, six options were presented. Based on the comments provided, Option 4 (raised) had the most responses. The following table provides the breakdown on respondents preferred options and a summary of each option has been provided below.

Option 1	3
Option 2	5
Option 3	5
Option 4	10
Option 4 (raised)	28
Option 5	10

Parking

Respondents were then asked to provide their preferences for parking along 5th Street including priority of parking by section of 5th Street. The below table breaks out respondents' responses for each section of 5th Street and whether they want to retain, remove or keep some parking along that segment of 5th Street.



The responses are consistent with staff's previous observation and analysis of the corridor, in that parking is most important within the first block of 5th Street (Fitzgerald to Harmston), with parking becoming less of an issue proceeding further along 5th Street towards Menzies Avenue. The preferred cross-section at the Information Session, Option 4 (raised), does allow the potential flexibility to provide parking along the entire stretch as well as interspersed parking and rain gardens.

Trade-offs

Due to the width of the current road right-of-way (approximately 18 to 19 metres) and existing conditions (e.g. hydro poles, driveways, vegetation), each of the cross-section options presented brings with it a number of trade-offs, as discussed with Council and the community. Some of these include: parking, buffering for bike lanes, vegetation, and sidewalk width. A complete street tries to balance all modes of travel in the safest manner possible, whilst allowing space for other components such as trees, rainwater management and street furniture.

Based on the feedback from the October 3rd discussion with Council, the October 26th Public Information Session, and public survey, staff believe that the Option 4 (raised) cross-section provides the most balanced approach for the complete streets pilot project. This option provides a separated bike path which is raised to match the sidewalk, providing more efficient operations and maintenance. One of the trade-offs will be the lack of a buffer between the parked cars and the bike lane (i.e. a "dooring zone"), although the raised cycle lane and appropriate signage and community education will help to mitigate potential conflicts.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

On February 12, 2016 the City of Courtenay was awarded $3.253 million in funding to construct a Complete Streets Pilot Project on a section of 5th Street. This funding is from the Strategic Priorities fund under the Federal Gas Tax Fund. This grant provides 100% funding for all eligible costs related to the infrastructure project. The grant requires that the project be completed by the end of 2018.

At this conceptual level of design, the options presented in this report are variations on the same components of infrastructure and therefore their relative costs are similar. Variations to the cost will occur with buffered bike lanes (i.e. more paint); extent of raingardens (i.e. planting requirements) or "enhanced" sidewalks where more concrete is necessary. Staff will work with whichever option Council selects to manage the project budget within the funding provided.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

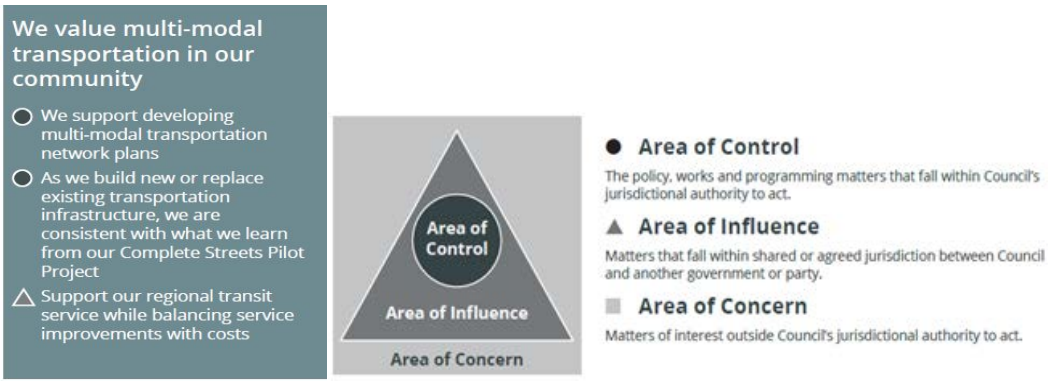
This project is part of Staff's 2016 work plan, and as such the project work is already accounted for.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

This project will result in the renewal of infrastructure assets including 530 metres of road, sidewalk, drainage system, sewer system and watermain. Condition assessments and a risk analysis workshop have been completed with Urban Systems and City representatives from Engineering and Public Works Departments for the underground utilities. This process has determined that the existing underground assets are near their end of life and/or have capacity constraints necessitating replacement. The existing sidewalk infrastructure has remaining life, however it does not meet current City standards; the asphalt road surface is several years old and considered in satisfactory condition.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

The Complete Streets Pilot Project is a Council priority and supports the 2016-2018 Strategic Priority. Specifically, "*As we build new or replace existing transportation infrastructure, we are consistent with what we learn from our Complete Streets Pilot Project*".



OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REFERENCE:

1. The Downtown

Maintain a pedestrian orientation in downtown and integrated transportation planning (i.e., taking all modes of movement into account). (pg. 11)

Work with School District 71 to encourage more walking and biking to school, through proper siting and planning of new facilities, provision of necessary facilities on school sites, and through educational efforts. (pg 13)

Transportation

5.2 Goals

2. Development of a transportation system that provides choices for different modes of travel including vehicle, transit, pedestrian, cycling and people with mobility impairments. (pg. 59)

5.3 Policies

7. The City will continue to pursue the development of a continuous, integrated bicycle network in order to promote and encourage cycling as a commuting alternative to the automobile and as a means of active recreation. (pg. 60)

REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY REFERENCE:

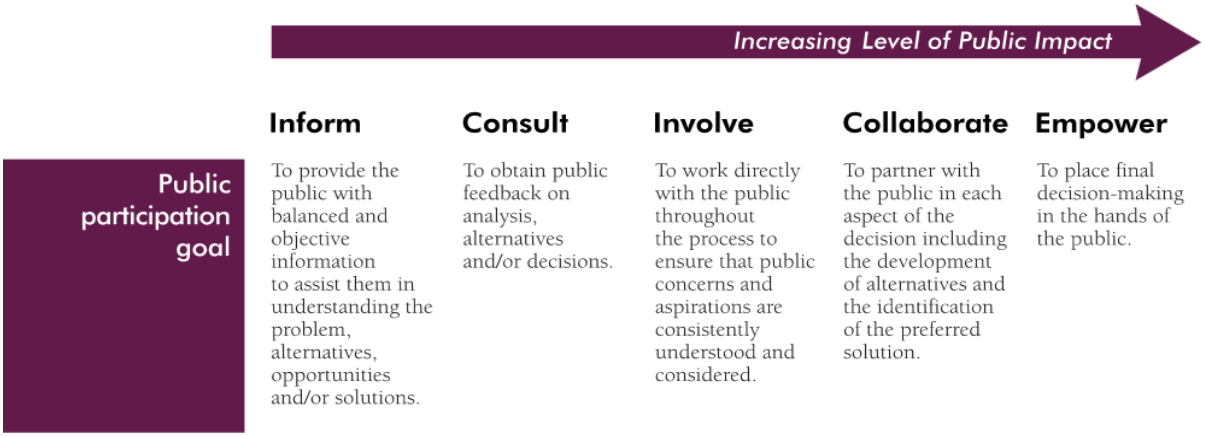
Goal 4 – Transportation (pg. 49, 50)

Objective 4-B: Improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to increase the use of active transportation options.

Targets: 20% bicycle and pedestrian commuters by 2030

CITIZEN/PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff held a public information session and provided an online survey for the public to comment on the design options for the Complete Street Pilot Project. Staff has consulted 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



OPTIONS:

Option 1: That Council direct staff to proceed to detailed design based on the Option 4 (raised) cross section, with parking provided between Fitzgerald and Harmston, and alternating parking and raingarden provided throughout the remainder of the corridor. **(Recommended)**

Option 2: That Council direct staff to proceed to detailed design based on an alternate proposed cross-section of their choosing.

Prepared by:

L Hatch

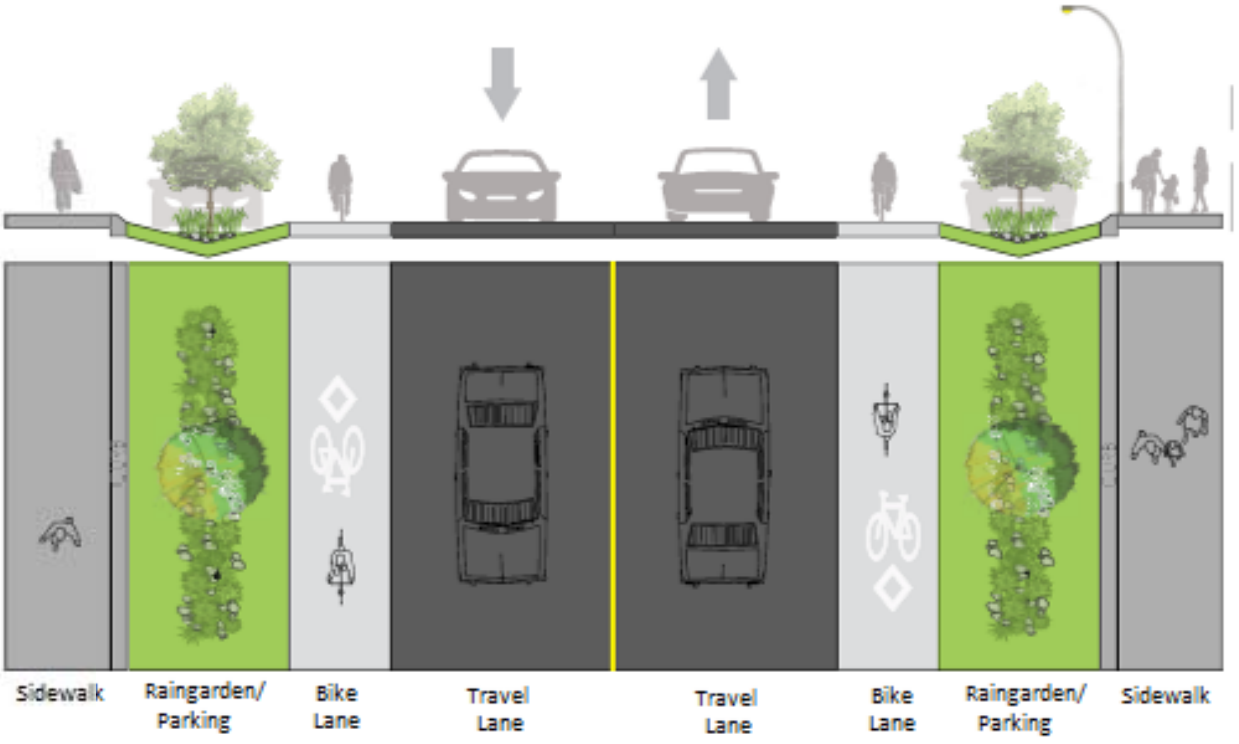
Lesley Hatch, P.Eng.,
Director of Engineering Services

Attachments:

1. Summary of October/November 2016 Survey (separate hand-out)
2. Drawings of Options 1 through 5 and 4 (Raised)

5th Street Complete Streets Pilot Project

Option 1 Design Concept



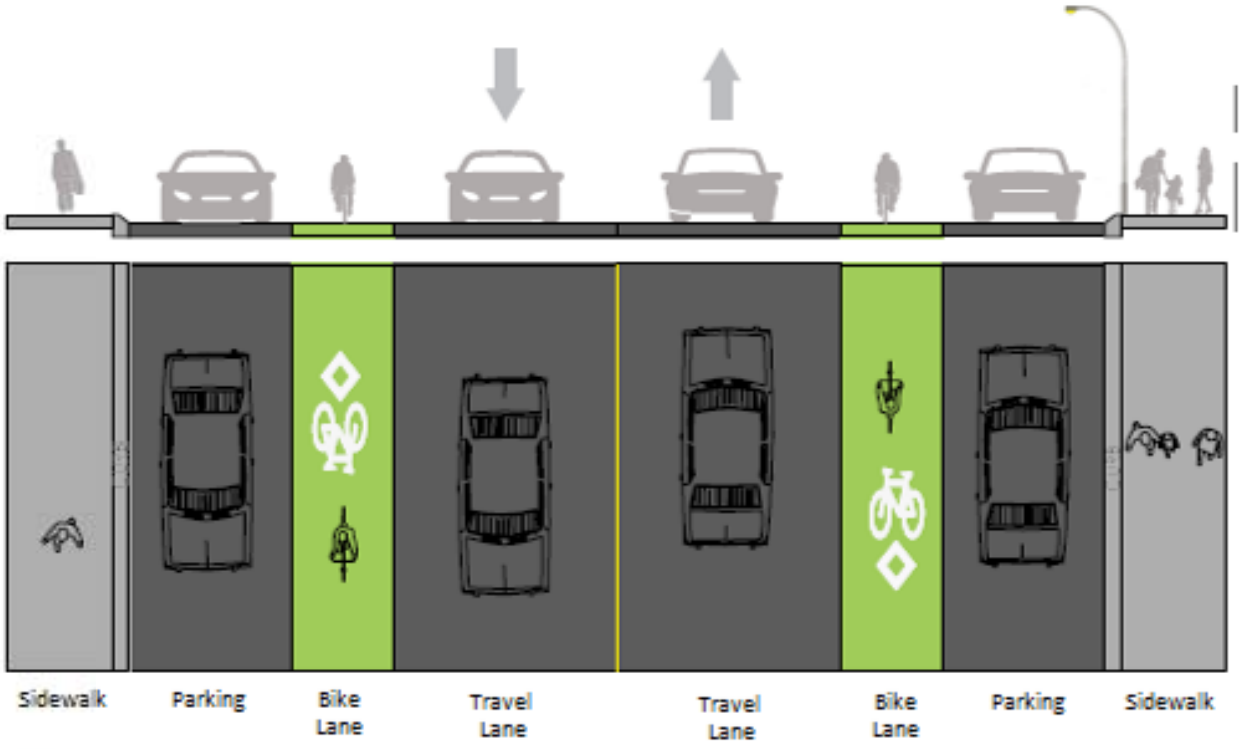
SAMPLE PHOTO (NOT EXACTLY AS SHOWN)

OPTION 1:

- Two vehicle travel lanes
- Dedicated bike lanes
- Parking on both sides alternating with rain gardens

5th Street Complete Streets Pilot Project

Option 2 Design Concept



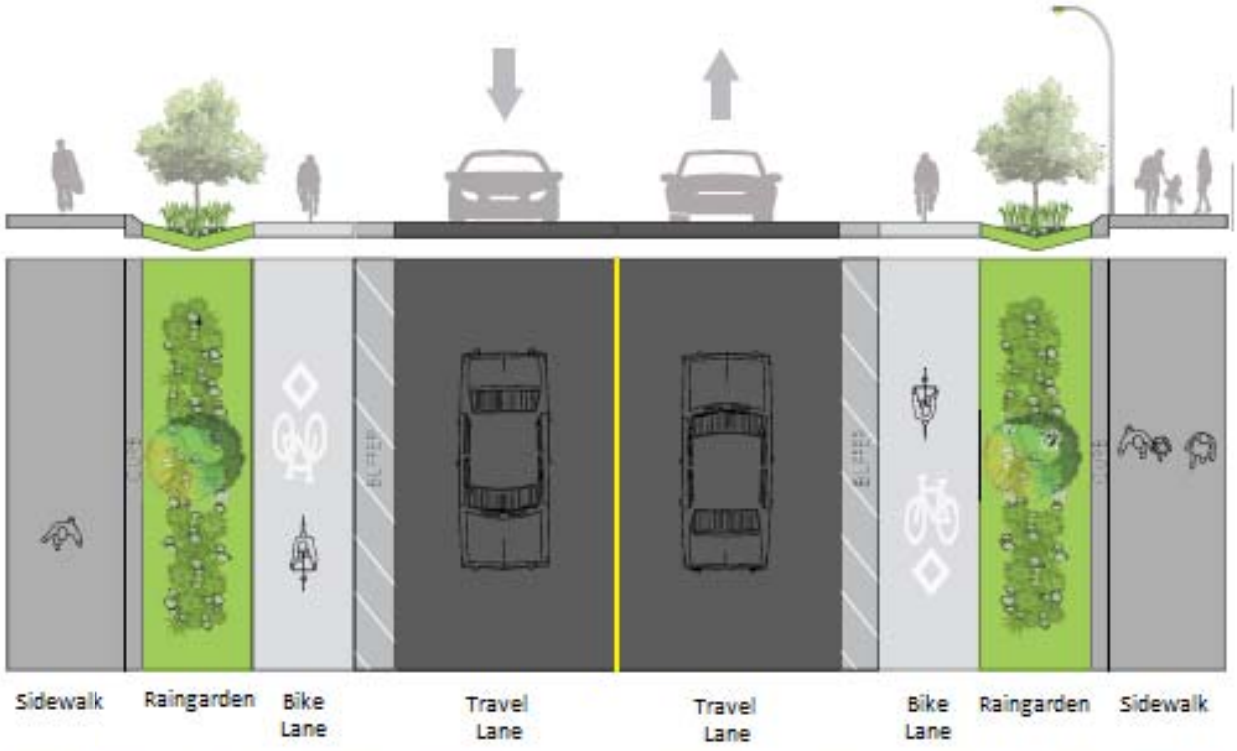
SAMPLE PHOTO (NOT EXACTLY AS SHOWN)

OPTION 2:

- Similar to Option 1, but incorporates parking through the entire section (i.e. no alternating raingarden & no boulevard)
- Could be utilized where the public and Council deems parking to be an important service (i.e. fronting commercial properties in the block between Fitzgerald and Harmston - there are approximately 15 to 20 parking stalls on each side of the road on this block)

5th Street Complete Streets Pilot Project

Option 3 Design Concept

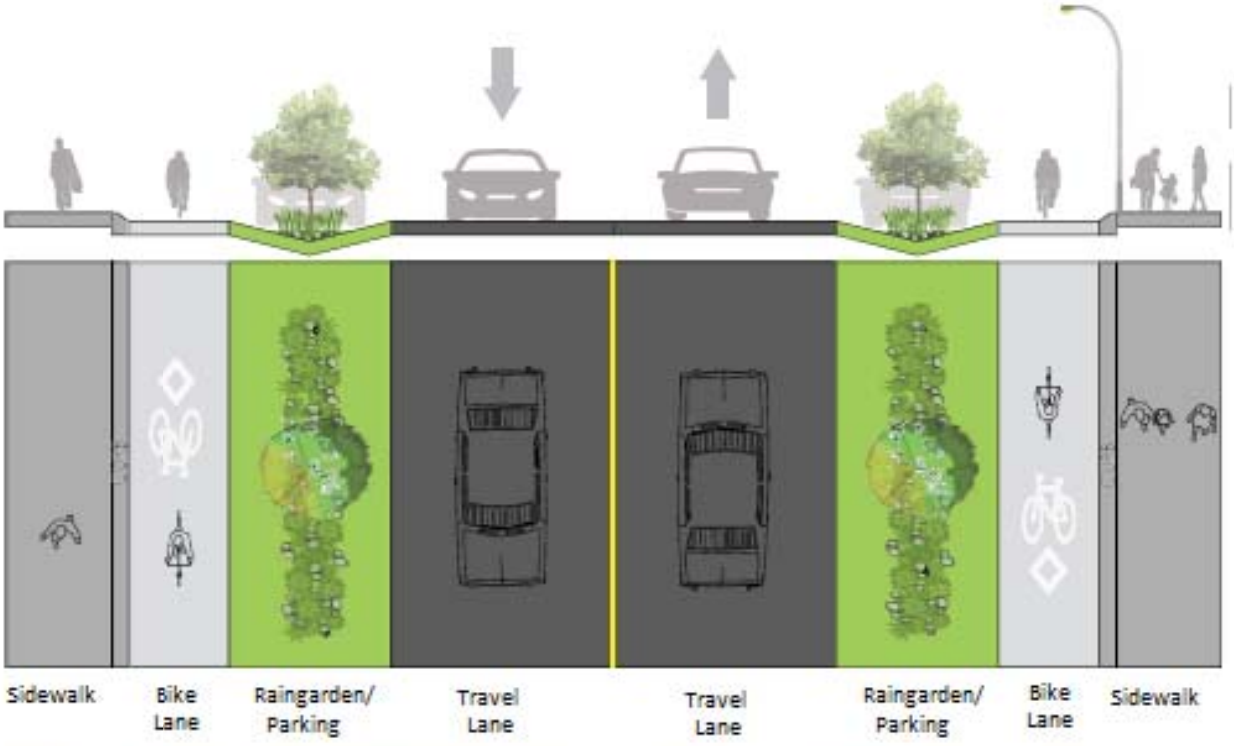


OPTION 3:

- Similar to Option 1, but reduces the width of the raingarden / boulevard to permit enhanced bike lanes
- Two vehicle travel lanes with no parking on either side
- Buffered bike lanes & enhanced wider sidewalks
- Could be used between Harmston and Menzies, if the public and Council chooses to prioritize active modes in the corridor over parking
- Back alley access on side street - parking still available for most residents

5th Street Complete Streets Pilot Project

Option 4 Design Concept



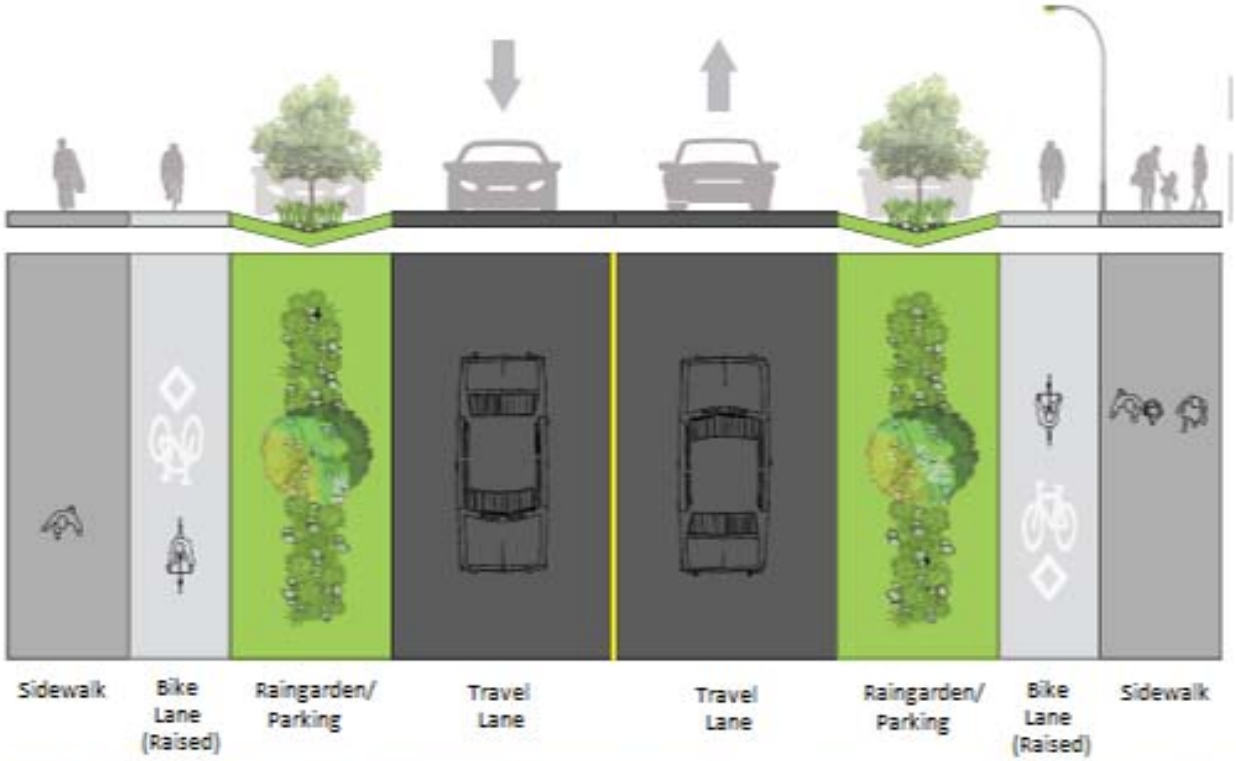
SAMPLE PHOTO (NOT EXACTLY AS SHOWN)

OPTION 4:

- Two vehicle travel lanes
- Parking on both sides with alternating raingarden
- Bike lanes physically separated from vehicle traffic (although potential dooring issue from passenger side to bike lane)
- Design considerations at intersections for cyclists wanting to turn left
- Operations and maintenance considerations for separated bike lanes (may require specialized maintenance equipment)

5th Street Complete Streets Pilot Project

Option 4 (Raised) Design Concept

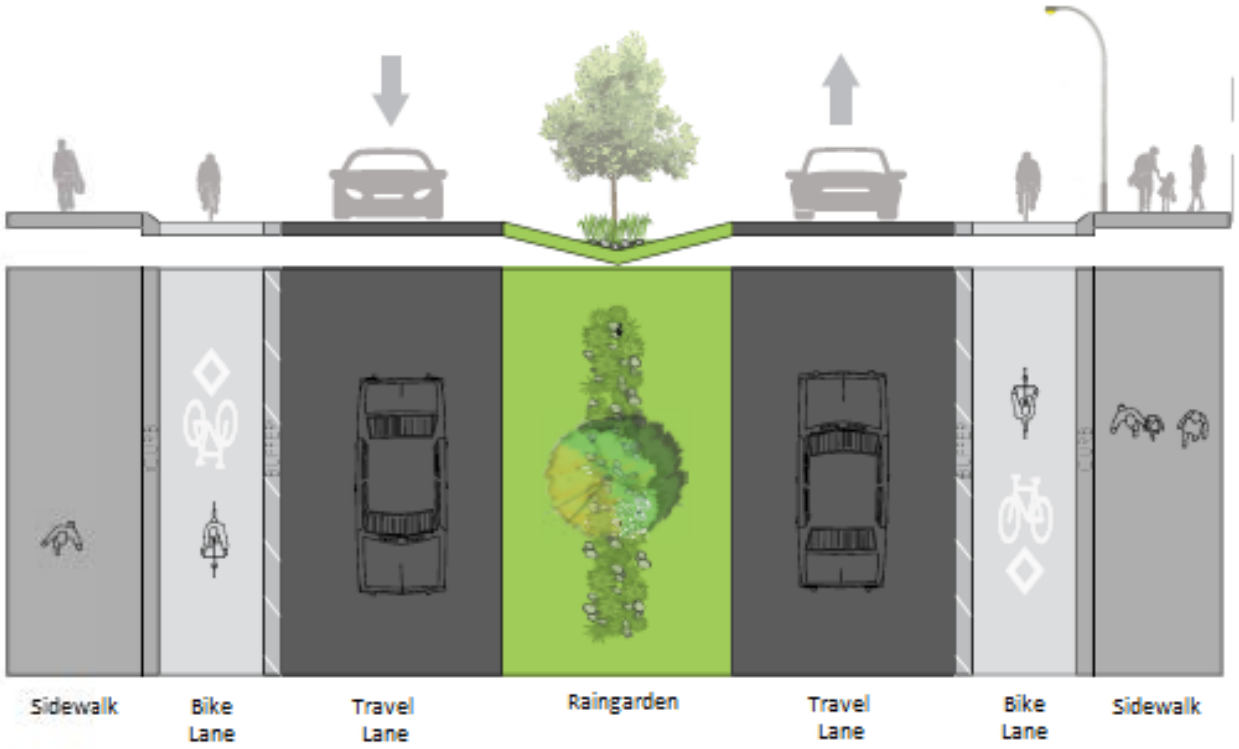


OPTION 4 (Raised):

- Same cross-section as option 4, but raises the bike lane to the elevation of the sidewalk
- Improves operations and maintenance considerations as bike lane / sidewalk is at the same elevation
- No physical separation between pedestrians and cyclists

5th Street Complete Streets Pilot Project

Option 5 Design Concept



SAMPLE PHOTO (NOT EXACTLY AS SHOWN)

OPTION 5:

- Rain garden centre median
- Two vehicle travel lanes with no parking on either side
- Dedicated bike lanes with painted buffer
- Enhanced wider sidewalks
- Centre median could accommodate largest trees (compared to side boulevards)