

# Report

Date November 20, 2024  
Subject Budgetary considerations for gateway signs and street banners

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File:

## PURPOSE

To provide Council with information, including budgetary considerations, for new North Cowichan gateway signs and an enhanced street banner program.

## BACKGROUND

At the July 17, 2024, Council meeting, Council [received a report](#) that provided an overview of North Cowichan's current street banner program and gateway signs and asked Council if there was interest in expanding these initiatives. Council directed staff to return with a report outlining the potential locations, scope, and costs associated with updating North Cowichan's gateway and municipal hall highway signs and an expanded street banner program as part of the 2025 budget planning process.

## DISCUSSION

### Gateway signs

North Cowichan engaged the expertise of Lanarc Consultants to help identify locations, scale, style, and options for materials and design for gateway and municipal hall signs. The goal of creating gateway signs for the community is to improve the visibility of North Cowichan's boundaries and to help distinguish North Cowichan from our neighbouring communities.

The process included visits to potential locations to explore appropriateness, space, and access to amenities such as hydro as well as a thorough review of precedent signs from other municipalities.

The Gateway Sign Study recommendations are meant to *inform* a phased approach for the next steps, including a more rigorous exploration of design and materials, fabrication costs, and construction and installation. The report is presented in Attachment 1.

In terms of budget implications, staff are seeking Council direction to allocate funding in 2025 to partner with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to include gateway signage as part of the proposed pedestrian overpass situated at the new Quw'utsun Secondary School and to undertake design work for new signage at the north and eastern entrance to North Cowichan and the Municipal Hall. The new gateway signs could be installed in 2026 and further wayfinding efforts would be implemented in subsequent years.

### Street banners

North Cowichan's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2023 provided an opportunity to develop a modest street banner program. Thirty-eight banners were installed along Chemainus Road in Chemainus, at the municipal hall parking areas, and at the Cowichan Aquatic Centre. This fall, those 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary banners were retired and replaced with bright, new 'North Cowichan' branded banners.

The opportunity to expand the street banner program would include identifying and prioritizing suitable new locations. Ideally, new locations would have existing municipality-owned street light poles. These locations would need to be further examined to ensure banners would not interfere with other infrastructure or utilities on these poles, obstruct vision, and be in locations that warrant street banners.

Given these variables, it would be challenging to prescribe specific locations. As such, the approach would be to add as many new banner hangers and banners in as many locations across North Cowichan within a prescribed budget.

A \$10,000 budget could garner up to 40 new banners (hardware, printed banner, plus installation). The recently installed banners have a serviceable life of 2 years (on average). Should a standing budget amount be applied to street banners, the replacement of existing banners would need to be considered against further expansion in future years.

## **OPTIONS**

### **(Recommended Option)**

1. That Council receive the Gateway Sign Study for information and embark on the following phased approach for implementing gateway signs as part of the 2025, 2026, and subsequent budget years:
  - 1) Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure on incorporating Sign 3 (gateway overpass sign) as part of the proposed active transportation overpass on Highway 1 near Beverley Street as part of the 2025 capital budget, up to \$136,000.
  - 2) Allocate up to \$50,000 in the 2025 capital budget for the design and engineering for highway entrances and municipal hall locations.
  - 3) Allocate up to \$245,000 in the 2026 capital budget for the construction of gateway signs at Highway 1 southbound (near Radford Road) and Highway 18 eastbound (near Mina Drive) and at the municipal hall.
  - 4) Expand the street banner program in the amount of \$10,000 for 2025 to include up to 40 new locations that best represent North Cowichan's communities and main thoroughfares, and \$10,000 in subsequent years in order to further expand banner locations and refresh banners as needed.
  - 5) Develop a minor municipal gateway sign design and install at key border points and/or as markers to village boundaries and incorporate this into the 2027 business planning and budget process, up to \$75,000, and additional locations in subsequent years, as funding permits.
  - 6) Develop a complete North Cowichan wayfinding sign strategy as part of the 2027 business planning and budget process, up to \$95,000.

2. Or: **Alternative Option** Receive the Gateway Sign Study for information and direct staff to include the recommendations in the report to be considered as part of the 2026 budget deliberations.

## IMPLICATIONS

- The introduction of gateway signage will help North Cowichan distinguish itself from other communities and help garner a sense of place.
- There is a window of opportunity to partner with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to include gateway signage as part of the new pedestrian overpass at Quw'utsun Secondary School. Staff are recommending that funding of up to \$136,000 be included in capital for the signage. Staff are optimistic that, when working with the Ministry and their design consultants, the price can be reduced as part of a partnership approach to the project, given the requirement for the project to be built on municipal-owned land.
- The other three gateway signs at Highway 1 southbound (near Radford Road) and Highway 18 eastbound (near Mina Drive) and the municipal hall could be designed for 2025 or 2026. Once design work is complete, staff will have a better sense of the cost and can update the budget accordingly.
- Banners are a cost-effective way to help celebrate North Cowichan and to create a sense of place amongst our community of communities.

## RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the Gateway Sign Study for information and embark on the following phased approach for implementing gateway signs as part of the 2025, 2026, and subsequent budget years:

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- 2) Allocate up to \$50,000 in the 2025 capital budget for design and engineering for highway entrances and municipal hall locations.
- 3) Allocate up to \$245,000 in the 2026 capital budget for the construction of gateway signs at Highway 1 southbound (near Radford Road) and Highway 18 eastbound (near Mina Drive) and at the municipal hall:
- 4) Expand the street banner program in the amount of \$10,000 for 2025 to include up to 40 new locations that best represent North Cowichan's communities and main thoroughfares, and \$10,000 in subsequent years in order to further expand banner locations and refresh banners as needed.
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- 6) Develop a complete North Cowichan wayfinding sign strategy as part of the 2027 business planning and budget process, up to \$95,000.

Report prepared by:



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Engagement

**Report reviewed and approved to be forwarded to Council:**



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Bill Corsan  
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment:

(1) North Cowichan Gateway Signage Study