

# Request for Decision



To: Regular Meeting

From: **Corporate Services / Economic Development**

Date: June 15, 2020

Subject: Temporary Market Avenue Closure

Recommendation: **THAT Council approves of the temporary closure of Market Avenue as presented by the Boundary Regional Chamber of Commerce with the following conditions:**

- 3rd Street to remain open for traffic
- closure of Market Ave from 2nd Street to 3rd Street
- closure of Market Ave from 3rd Street to 4th Street
- no permanent road closure infrastructure to be installed
- temporary, from June 29, 2020 to September 30, 2020
- Operations and Emergency Services staff to work with the Boundary Country Regional Chamber of Commerce on a layout and plans for barricades, emergency and delivery vehicle access, and accessible parking.

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## Background

At the Regular Meeting of Council on May 25, 2020, the Boundary Country Regional Chamber of Commerce (BCRCC) and Discover Grand Forks groups presented regarding a temporary closure of Market Avenue to support the business community during COVID-19 recovery efforts and to provide a test for the overall Marketing Strategy objective regarding implementation of a pedestrian friendly commercial core.

Staff since met via video conference with a traffic engineer to briefly discuss the potential closure. Staff also received a draft report from the traffic engineer shortly before agenda deadline regarding the overall downtown traffic calming options which included a section on Market Street and the recommendations. This is an excerpt from the draft report:

*It is easier to manage the operations and safety if Market Avenue is closed to motor vehicle traffic. As Highway 3 and 72nd Avenue are effectively parallel routes, vehicles can easily be detoured away from Market Avenue. The following suggestions are made to close Market Street to vehicular traffic:*

- *Close Market Avenue by block: 2nd Street to 3rd Street and 3rd Street to 4th Street. This will allow traffic on 3rd Street to still pass through without requiring a turnaround prior to Market Avenue.*

- *Create traffic control plan to show how traffic control devices will be placed to close Market Avenue from vehicular. This would include of barricades / barriers, signing of road closures, and so on. Note that since there is a relative grid pattern, signing of detours are not needed.*
- *Have a plan to accommodate emergency services during an incident.*

With a recommendation from the draft report of:

*Closing Market Avenue form 2nd Street to 4th Street can be accommodated reasonably with little requirements to traffic control. Full closure is preferable to partial closure and there is plenty of parking in the adjacent streets downtown.*

Staff also met with the user groups to discuss the challenges for the potential Market Avenue closure and discussion ensued regarding the options to ensure all key objectives are met.

The user groups earlier today presented as a delegation regarding the proposal and to showcase the layout, traffic flow, vision for the future and current trends from other municipalities regarding making streets available for pedestrians and even allowing alcohol consumption in public spaces.

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## Benefits or Impacts

### General

- Providing space for the downtown businesses to expand and equally allow for social distancing for pedestrians

### Strategic Impact



#### Community Engagement

- Partnership with BCRCC and Discover Grand Forks



#### Community Livability

- Providing for a safe downtown experience for pedestrian and cyclist



#### Economic Growth

- Implementation of the Marketing Strategy (as a test for the business community)
- Allowing businesses to extend their space to serve their customers while abiding by social distancing rules and guidelines



#### Fiscal Responsibility

- No permanent infrastructure would be installed

#### **Policy/Legislation**

Strategic Plan 2019

#### **Attachments**

Previously Received Letters from the BCRCC

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#### **Recommendation**

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#### **Options**

1. THAT Council accepts the report.
2. THAT Council does not accept the report.