

COUNCIL REPORT

M&C No.	MC 2020-256
Report Date	October 19, 2020
Meeting Date	October 26, 2020
Service Area	Public Works and Transportation Services

His Worship Mayor Don Darling and Members of Common Council

SUBJECT: MoveSJ Draft Roundabout Strategy

OPEN OR CLOSED SESSION

This matter is to be discussed in open session of Common Council.

AUTHORIZATION

Primary Author	Commissioner/Dept. Head	City Manager
<i>Tim O'Reilly</i>	<i>Michael Hugenholtz</i>	<i>John Collin</i>

RECOMMENDATION

Your City Manager recommends Common Council receive and file this report.

REPORT

Over the last 10-15 years, during preliminary planning for several existing signalized intersection reconstruction projects, a modern roundabout was considered as a design option. Designs were considered for Simms Corner, Grandview/Bayside, Rothesay Avenue/Ashburn Lake, and Somerset/Churchill intersections.

None of these initiatives resulted in constructed roundabouts. In some cases, the additional land needed for a roundabout was significant, the project was too costly to incorporate into the Capital program, or signals were deemed as the solution based on application of best practices at the time. The City of Saint John remains without any modern roundabouts and the many benefits they offer. Lack of progress on installing modern roundabouts have also created some community concern that the City is "anti-roundabout".

Modern roundabouts present many benefits. Reduced speeds as well as fewer and angled conflict points reduce the frequency and severity of accidents compared to traditional intersections. They can improve safety for pedestrians by acting as a speed calming measure and reducing crosswalk distances. There are additional operational, economic, and environmental benefits over signalized intersections. These benefits are detailed in the attached draft strategy.

MoveSJ has created the opportunity for the City to approach planning our transportation system in a progressive and improved way to better serve our citizens in many ways. A new approach to achieving the benefits from modern roundabouts has been proposed through MoveSJ via the attached strategy.

Two of the more significant barriers that have prevented the City from installing any modern roundabouts are:

1. Most of the feasibility analysis has been completed over 10 years ago. Best practices for roundabout design have since been updated, and
2. The City only generally considered roundabouts for limited locations where the intersections were due for reconstruction.

To overcome these previous barriers, an updated methodology was used as part of MoveSJ, including:

1. Actively scanning various intersections around the City and identifying those that may be good candidates for a modern roundabout, and
2. Using current best practices to visit (or in some cases revisit) candidate roundabout sites.

Six intersections were identified as ones that were most likely to be good roundabout candidate sites. These were:

1. Woodward Avenue/ Boars Head Road
2. Ashburn Road/ Rothesay Road
3. Manawagonish Road/ Gault Road
4. Simms Corner
5. Sandy Point Road/ Foster Thurston Road, and
6. Millidge Avenue/ Somerset Street.

These candidate sites were chosen based generally on one or more of four factors:

1. Enhanced traffic control (i.e. traffic signals) were identified as a warranted improvement
2. The intersection is wide currently to accommodate the land needed for a roundabout
3. The intersection currently includes complicated features such as multiple conflict points
4. Traffic speeds were measured as being high where traffic calming may address the speeding.

Only one of the six intersections, Woodward Avenue/ Boars Head Road, were discounted as not being a good candidate site after further review.

Preliminary design details and drawings for the remaining five intersections were then undertaken. Details are provided in the attached Strategy.

A prioritization exercise was then completed for all five intersections.

Engagement Plan

The general public will be provided an opportunity to provide input on the Roundabout Strategy and all other strategies of MoveSJ Phase 3.

Public education on roundabout use is important. It is best practice for example to introduce more simple, single-lane roundabouts to a community (such as the Ashburn/Rothesay or Foster Thurston/Sandy Point projects) before installing more complicated ones such as at Simms Corner. Other factors may not allow this sequencing plan but, with all else equal, this would be the preferred approach to implementation.

In addition, and as has been the case with previous MoveSJ strategies, more focused consultations with particular stakeholders will be completed for the Roundabout Strategy, such as:

- **Saint John Ability Advisory Committee and CNIB:** Roundabouts present safety improvements generally for pedestrians. However, this infrastructure at times needs particular design features for pedestrians with certain disabilities. For example, APS can and are installed at signalized intersections with crosswalks but are not a baseline design feature of roundabouts.
- **Provincial Department of Transportation & Infrastructure:** Three of the proposed five roundabout candidate sites include Provincial Highways. The Province has authority to regulate Provincial Highways, including changes to traffic control at intersections, and therefore their input and eventual approval of constructed roundabouts at these three sites is required.
- **Nearby Property Owners:** Most of the five identified candidate sites for roundabouts have accesses to properties at or close to the proposed roundabouts. Initial feedback from these property owners would be appreciated as some may be more impacted than others with the proposed layouts.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Modern Roundabouts align with Council's priority of a Vibrant, Safe City.

SERVICE AND FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

As detailed previously in this report, modern roundabouts present several service improvement and operational saving opportunities over traffic signals or stop-controlled intersections.

Modern roundabouts require upfront Capital investment. Several of these five candidate locations will need to be incorporated into already planned infrastructure renewal projects. The Provincial government may be a funding

partner on the three projects involving Provincial Highways. In some cases, Growth or identification within the overall City Strategic Plan will prioritize certain projects. Due to the City's current financial constraints and large infrastructure deficit, it is unlikely that these projects will move ahead in the short term unless they line up with planned infrastructure renewal projects or other City initiatives.

INPUT FROM OTHER SERVICE AREAS AND STAKEHOLDERS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

City Staff Presentation
Draft Roundabout Strategy