



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

LAKELSE AVENUE ROAD RECONFIGURATION BEGINS

June 29, 2017

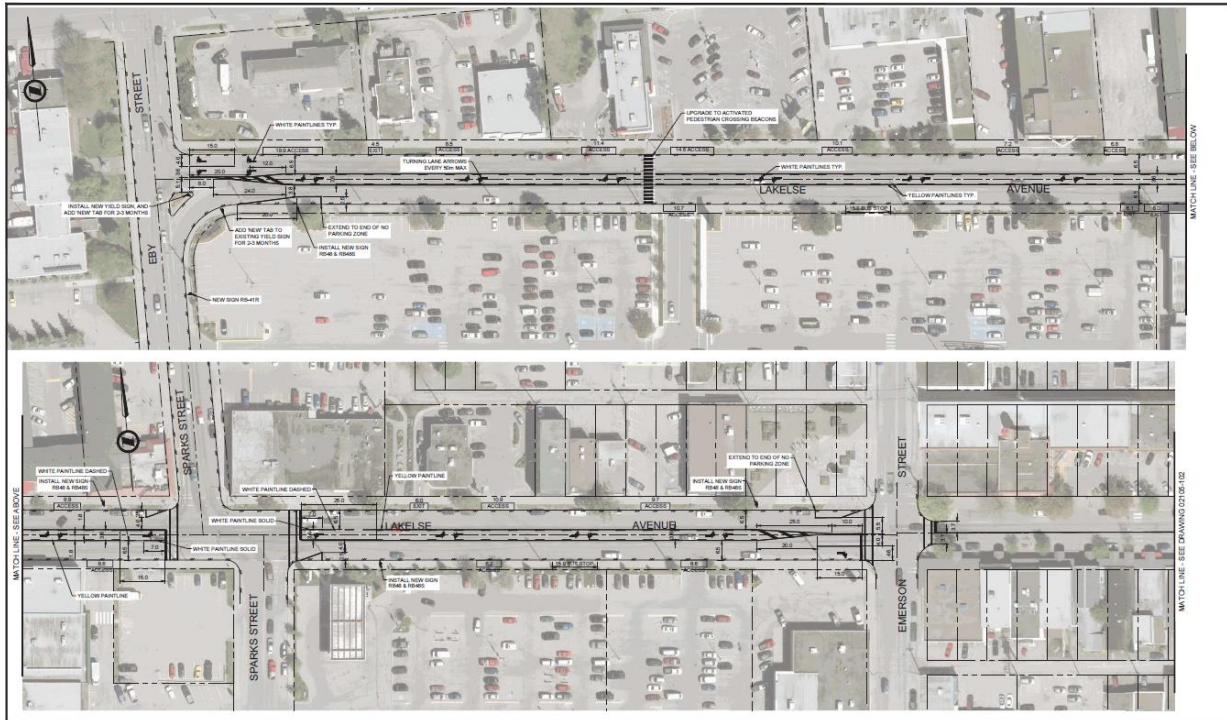
TERRACE – The City of Terrace is set to begin work on the Lakelse Avenue Road Reconfiguration project. The street conversion, designed and planned with support from ICBC, is intended to reduce the volume and speed of traffic, improve safety, and encourage more cycling and pedestrian traffic.

This road reconfiguration, often referred to as a “road diet”, involves converting the existing four-lane roadway into three lanes consisting of two through vehicle lanes and a centre two-way left turn lane. The reconfiguration will begin at Eby Street in front of City Hall and end at Aspley Street at the east end of the downtown.

The “lane diet” will improve safety on Lakelse Avenue by traffic calming (the reduction in traffic speeds) through Downtown Terrace. There will also be increased lane widths available for on-street parking manoeuvres, and improved sight lines for left-turning movements at intersections.

Work is scheduled to begin on June 29th with the installation of new traffic signage and line painting completed by the third week in July, weather permitting.

Below is a diagram showing the layout of the new lane configuration on the west side of the project area and a FAQ on the project.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In 2014 the City of Terrace completed a reconfiguration of Kalum Street north of Park Avenue to reduce vehicle traffic lanes and install a two-way left turn lane. This initiative has proven to be very successful in reducing vehicle speed, enhancing pedestrian and cyclist safety and comfort while maintaining efficient vehicle flow. The City is now implementing a similar reconfiguration for Lakelse Avenue through the downtown. This was a recommendation in the 2016 Transportation Master Plan and the design for the reconfiguration has been prepared by McElhanney Consulting's Transportation Engineers and has been refined and supported by ICBC through a Road Safety Audit process.

Why is the City of Terrace reconfiguring Lakelse Avenue?

The City would like to reduce the speed of vehicle traffic on Lakelse Avenue and improve the safety and movement of all road users including vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. The existing land configuration includes vehicle and parking lanes that are quite narrow and does not meet traffic engineering design standards. Narrowing streets and enhancing pedestrian and cycling networks will improve speed limit compliance among drivers and reduce accidents and severity of accidents. The reconfiguration of an existing street through reduction in vehicle lanes is commonly referred to as a “road diet.”

What is a “road diet?”

A road diet is a road reconfiguration that improves vehicle safety and operational use by reducing the number of lanes on a roadway. In this case, the project involves converting the existing four lane roadway into three-lanes made up of two through-lanes and one centre two-way left turn lane. The extra space that is freed up by removing the lane will be converted into shared roadway for bicycles and wider side-street parking on both sides of Lakelse Avenue. Once the reconfiguration is complete, it will maintain and enhance traffic flow while reducing crashes and improving pedestrian safety.

What is a two-way left-turn lane?

A two-way left-turn lane (TWLTL) is a centre lane that gives left-turning vehicles from either direction the option to turn without slowing down and blocking through traffic. Drivers who will be making left turns on Lakelse Avenue will have the opportunity to do so freely (allowing the driver to pause and wait until it is safe to turn) and without holding up traffic from behind. A centre two-way left-turn lane reduces traffic “slow-down” and unsafe lane changes (passing on the right), reducing the occurrence of rear-end and side-swipe crashes.

How do I use a two-way left turn lane?

To use a two-way, left-turn lane, follow these steps:

Step 1) Signal and move into the centre lane shortly before your left turn. Slow down.

Step 2) Make your turn when the way is clear and safe to proceed.

- *Remember that vehicles from the opposite direction also use this lane to turn left. These left-turn lanes are not to be used for passing – this is a traffic violation.*

What are through-lanes?

A through-lane is a traffic lane for *through* traffic.

How does this Road Diet make driving safer?

Eliminating 2 narrow vehicle lanes on Lakelse Avenue (from the current 4 lane configuration) and providing a centre turn lane makes left turns simpler. A driver turning left will only need to cross one lane of traffic and encounter fewer blind spots. Currently, drivers making left-turns on Lakelse Avenue must find a gap in two lanes of traffic and encounter more blind spots. The 2 vehicle lanes and parking lane against the curb will be wider, safer for all users and meet acceptable transportation design standards.

How does a road diet make walking and cycling safer?

The Lakelse Avenue reconfiguration is designed to provide ease of movement and access for all road users (vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists). Pedestrians will be crossing a narrower street, will encounter fewer blind spots and vehicle speeds will be slower. The installation of bike lanes will increase the safety of cyclists on Kalum Street and continue to enhance the City of Terrace's Active Transportation Network. The removal of a through lane in each direction will permit marking of a wider single vehicle lane and a centre two way left turn lane.

With fewer lanes, how will Lakelse Avenue carry the same amount of traffic?

When a car slows or stops in a through-lane to turn left it causes congestion, blind spots, unsafe lane changes, and changes in vehicle speeds. Narrowing Lakelse Avenue (via this "road diet") should not increase traffic congestion. The existing four lanes can carry approximately 1,500 vehicles per hour, due to the effects of left turning traffic in through lanes. By creating a dedicated left turn lane in the middle of Lakelse Avenue, the left turning vehicles are removed from the traffic stream, and the road capacity remains approximately 1,500 vehicles per hour. This will be enough capacity to accommodate the 600 vehicles per hour currently using Lakelse Avenue and will readily accommodate future growth in traffic volumes.

What are the benefits of the Lakelse Avenue Lane Diet?

The “lane diet” will improve safety on Lakelse Avenue by traffic calming (the reduction in traffic speeds) through Downtown Terrace. There will also be increased lane widths available for on-street parking manoeuvres, and improved sight lines for left turning movements at intersections.

Will the speed limit be changing?

The posted speed limit on Lakelse Avenue will not be changing. However, street narrowing is shown to improve speed limit compliance among drivers which decreases crash severity if a crash does occur. Narrowing roads results in drivers operating in a calmer manner.

How far does this Road Diet go on Lakelse Avenue?

Lakelse Avenue road reconfiguration will begin at Eby Street (by City Hall) and run the full length of the downtown to Apsley Street.

When will this project be completed?

The work to mark the layout in preparation for the new lane line painting has started. Installation of new traffic signage poles will take place in the first week of July with line painting to commence at the same time. Line painting will take approximately 2 weeks to complete. Road painting will occur on a block-by-block basis each day and is expected to be completed by the third week of July; however, the completion date depends on the weather.

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Media Contact:

Brian Doddridge

Communications and Business Development Officer

City of Terrace

250.638.4712

Email: bdoddridge@terrace.ca

Website: www.terrace.ca