

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Bear Street Woonerf trial proposed for summer

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - APRIL 7, 2015**

**Banff, AB** – The 200 block of Bear Street may get a temporary makeover in time for summer to encourage leisurely exploration by visitors and residents.

Council will consider a trial at their next meeting to transform the Bear Street block between Caribou and Wolf Streets into a “living street” or “woonerf” (pronounced VONE-erf), a Dutch term to describe shared-use streets that focus on the pedestrian experience. Street design could include temporary planters, street furniture, additional bike parking, and sidewalk café seating. Vehicles are still allowed, but at a much slower speeds. On-street parking will be strategically placed to calm traffic, and access to the surface lot and parkade would remain. The living street would be dismantled for winter.

The plan also calls for holding events on Bear Street, such as the weekly farmers market. Banff Lake Louise Tourism, The Banff Centre and Parks Canada have also indicated interest in using the space for musical entertainment or wildlife education.

Turning Bear Street into a living street was one of the recommendations in the Transportation Master Plan. The trial proposed over the next three summers will test the design and impact to assist with long-term decision making. Bear Street businesses support the idea as a way to better link Bear Street and Banff Avenue and attract more visitation. A permanent woonerf for the street is listed in the 2017 and 2018 capital budget.

Bear Street is not considered a main arterial road in the downtown core and receives a fraction of the vehicle and pedestrian traffic of nearby Banff Avenue or Lynx Street. Living streets are designed to foster more sustainable, active modes of transportation, and enhance the vibrancy of downtown spaces. The capital cost of the proposed trial ranges from \$81,000 to \$99,000 depending on the options. The estimated cost of a permanent living street is \$3.75 million.

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