

# The Flats Arterial

## COMMUNITY PANEL

### **DRAFT Case Statements on the Arterial Route Options - March 2019**

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The Flats Arterial Community Panel is tasked with recommending the route for a new arterial road through False Creek Flats that best meets the needs of the neighbourhood, city, and region as a whole.

The following is the Panel’s assessment of each route, with the top 5 advantages, top 5 drawbacks, and a clear statement of rationale for and against each route. These statements will be finalized after further public and stakeholder input.

# Prior/Venables Case Statement

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## **These are the most significant advantages that should be taken into account when considering this route:**

1. In the City's estimates, it is a low cost option because: the overpass structure is shortest; park mitigation costs are lowest; land acquisition costs are lowest; roadway costs are lowest; and the shared bicycle/pedestrian overpass/underpass is included in the estimated cost. However, necessary improvements could increase the costs.
2. Minimal transportation impact on Produce Row distribution hub because it is the least disruptive option.
3. Fewer or no impacts to gardens and parkland because wild spaces and parks are not sacrificed for the arterial.
4. Easier and more efficient access to public transit and local amenities and services because there is shorter distance requiring less walking for local residents.
5. Better hospital access and emergency response even in extreme scenarios as the grid network around Prior allows for more contingency routes to bypass arterial blockages compared to Malkin-linked alignments (even though in some areas Union and Keefer do have road blockages still).

## **These are the most significant drawbacks that should be taken into account when considering this route.**

1. There is limited room for sidewalks, cycling lanes, parking, high priority vehicles, and boulevards because it is a narrow road (20.6m). But, an underpass would be slightly wider than an overpass (at the actual overpass) according to the concept sketches.
2. Limited local pedestrian access across the arterial because this creates: a disconnect between 2 parks on either side of Prior; a separation between residents and Strathcona Park; a separation between residents and their neighbours a safety hazard for pedestrians. Residents would be separated from the Park by the arterial, posing a safety hazard. But, an underpass mitigates this issue slightly because an overpass increases vehicles' tendency to speed downhill into the neighbourhood.
3. The selection of Prior would further erode trust between the community and the government due to the historic decision to remove the viaducts and Council commitments to downgrade Prior as an arterial
4. There is significant resident opposition to Prior as the arterial.
5. Less large truck access to the area between Raymur Ave, Clark Drive, Prior, and Terminal Ave because trucks would be forced further North, onto Prior. But, an underpass could allow right turns onto Raymur, making this slightly better.

## Rationale

**In favor:** Given these effects, some might argue that the Prior variation advantages outweigh the drawbacks because this route offers benefits to transportation because it provides community members with access to local transit, particularly benefiting seniors like the residents of the two senior homes on Prior, and offering the most efficient access to St. Paul's via the most robust grid network. This route also allows traffic to disperse more efficiently at Venables & Clark going east and provides a direct route west to downtown. The selection of Prior as the arterial route is the least expensive, which includes the cost of mitigation and relocation for businesses benefiting residents city-wide, potentially supporting opportunities for local community enhancements and spending priorities. Additionally, selecting Prior as the arterial would be comparatively low-impact to Produce Row (minimising impact to local and regional food distribution systems) and community greenspace (local gardens and parks). Prior also optimises St. Paul's Health Campus Master Plan for emergency access and disaster response.

**In opposition:** Given these effects, some might argue that the Prior variation drawbacks outweigh the advantages because its selection as the arterial would have negative impacts on the community due to an increase in traffic in a residential area, further exacerbating the perception of barriers for community members in accessing Strathcona Park. Community livability would be negatively impacted by this route due to the expected increase of traffic onto Prior which would increase air and noise pollution in the Strathcona neighborhood, increase the use of side streets for truck traffic, and challenge locals' access to transit (#22). The Prior option may also displace 5 local businesses. Additionally, the selection of Prior as the arterial faces significant community opposition due to previous Council commitments to downgrade Prior.

# William Case Statement

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## **These are the most significant advantages that should be taken into account when considering this route:<sup>1</sup>**

1. City Facilities are retained in their current, central location because the route doesn't directly impact the National Works Yard, Fire Training, Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (HUSAR), Vancouver School Board (VSB), or Animal Services.
2. Is potentially cheaper and more cost-effective than the Malkin and National alignments because it only goes over 4 train tracks.
3. Improved user access because: Prior is calmed/downgraded, resulting in improved access to Strathcona Park from the neighbourhood, and; impact to park land will create opportunities to reimagine bike/walk access to Trillium and Strathcona Parks through mitigation strategies.
4. Less impact to Malkin Ave & Prior St businesses and the downstream businesses they serve.
5. Prior/Venables remains an important street for local and emergency access.
5. Giving a viable replacement transit route in place of the #22 Prior St bus route because William is one of the more centrally located alignments that run through Strathcona.

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<sup>1</sup> In prioritizing, there was a tie for 5th place, resulting in 6 advantages included in this list.

## **These are the most significant drawbacks that should be taken into account when considering this route.**

1. The impact to eagles which are symbolic, sacred, and valued, especially to Indigenous residents—this may go against provincial conservation guidelines.
2. Some businesses along William may need to be relocated, and some may not be financially viable to reopen after construction, due to the route alignment going directly through existing properties east of Raymur St. The number of potentially affected businesses is unknown and needs clarification.
3. It works against the Parks Board goals to protect and grow green space in a neighbourhood that is the most severely deficient, as well as City policies like the Healthy City and Greenest City Strategies, because it has the most hectares of green space lost out of all the alignment options.
4. May harm the local artist community because 1000 Parker Place may be impacted by the road indirectly.
5. The reduction of the parks and urban canopy in a neighbourhood that already has a low park to people ratio and a low urban canopy (5.9%). This is because the route cuts through the park and requires removing 60+ mature trees. This reduces community livability.

## Rationale

### In favor:

The route has three main benefits:

- It creates a defined separation of uses between residential/recreational and business. By pulling the arterial away from residential area, Prior becomes an approachable pedestrian scale street and there is an opportunity to develop William as a complete street. This means residents' access to Strathcona Park becomes a better experience.
- The route retains access to publicly-funded infrastructure, some of which is quite new, and retains faster fire response times.
- The roadway network is connected, and provides reduced traffic congestion and optimizes flow for people in cars, users of transit, and commercial vehicles.

### In opposition:

The William alignment causes two stakeholder groups to suffer:

- Community members will experience a measurable loss of hard-to-replace parkland as the William option has the highest loss of park space out of any of the proposals. Additionally, there is a loss of tree canopy, ecosystem, and biodiversity, a running track is lost, and a community garden (Cottonwood) becomes isolated as an island in roadways.
- Businesses both east and west of the tracks may experience negative effects on operations or may need to close/relocate due to land requirements.

# Malkin North Case Statement

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## **These are the most significant advantages that should be taken into account when considering this route:**

1. For the Malkin North alignment, improved maneuvering, access, and circulation for Produce Row and lower congestion compared to the other Malkin variations because of the separated service lane. However, additional information is needed to confirm this is true; Produce Row representatives have not confirmed the service lane is viable.
2. It has more practicality and flexibility for design and constructability because the width is quite large and there is more space to work with and potential for variations, allowing for more walkability and bike lane options. It also has less of a steep gradient, better soil than the southern options (that are more in the mud flats reclaimed land).
3. For all Malkin alignments, Prior could become a local serving road because traffic would be redirected to Malkin.
4. That it returns Prior/ Venables to a local street and unites park to Strathcona neighbourhood and benefits bike/pedestrian route.
5. Strathcona Park would be better connected to the residential area. The Malkin route would separate residential and park uses to the north, with industrial uses to the south.

## **These are the most significant drawbacks that should be taken into account when considering this route.**

1. If Malkin North is selected, there would be significant impact to Cottonwood Garden, likely requiring the complete removal of Cottonwood Garden. However, we acknowledge that this area is currently a legal right of way.
2. The negative impact to Produce Row because access, loading, and dock sales would be more difficult. The Malkin alignment would put some out of business, like North American Produce sales, but if the Malkin North variation is selected, the negative impact to access to most of Produce Row may be reduced, with the segregated road and access for trucks. Additional information is needed to confirm this is true; Produce Row representatives have not confirmed the service lane is viable.
3. For the south and central Malkin alignments, that it would severely disrupt the transportation of regional food and other goods because there is a potential existential threat to Produce Row, though the North version may mitigate this impact.
4. The higher impact of the Produce Row being greatly affected during road construction.
5. For all Malkin alignments, moving the #22 bus route further south may reduce access for the local residential community because it would reduce the number of residents within a 5 minute walk to transit, making it a longer and harder journey for the elderly (many elderly residents in the neighbourhood) and those needing to do shopping. However, a shuttle bus on Prior can help mitigate this drawback.

## **Rationale**

**In favor:** Given these effects, some might argue in favor of Malkin North because it separates traffic from the Strathcona community and provides improved access to the Park and Gardens for Strathcona residents. It keeps transit access reasonably close to Strathcona and leaves the possibility of developing a “complete street” on Malkin. It allows Produce Row to continue to function and provides opportunities for the city to mitigate damage to the businesses that are negatively affected. It is a good compromise between the William and other Malkin routes.

**In opposition:** Given these effects, some might argue in opposition to Malkin North because Strathcona community and larger regional areas will lose a part of a historic garden Cottonwood with unique heritage plants and local community programs. Some of the eagle habitat will be impacted by the road right of way. Some Produce Row businesses may not survive with Malkin as the arterial.

# Malkin Central Case Statement

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## **These are the most significant advantages that should be taken into account when considering this route:<sup>1</sup>**

1. For all Malkin alignments, Prior could become a local serving road because traffic would be redirected to Malkin.
2. It returns Prior/ Venables to a local street and unites park to Strathcona neighbourhood and benefits bike/pedestrian route.
3. Strathcona Park would be better connected to the residential area. The Malkin route would separate residential and park uses to the north, with industrial uses to the south.
4. Less impact to public facilities and lower mitigation costs for the City than (some) other options because otherwise, resources would have to be allocated away from other priorities.
5. It has more practicality and flexibility for design and constructability because the width is quite large and there is more space to work with and potential for variations, allowing for more walkability and bike lane options. It also has less of a steep gradient, better soil than the southern options (that are more in the mud flats reclaimed land).
5. No impact on Strathcona Park boundaries.
5. There would be better access (walk, cycle, transit) to the parks with finished complete street. Currently there are no sidewalks on the south side of Strathcona park and utilizing the 30m right of way area with the Malkin route, would permit connectivity, access enhancements because there is sufficient space

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<sup>1</sup> Due to a three-way tie for 5th place, seven advantages are included here.

## **These are the most significant drawbacks that should be taken into account when considering this route.**

1. The south and central Malkin alignments would severely disrupt the transportation of regional food and other goods because there is a potential existential threat to Produce Row, though the North version may mitigate impact.
2. The Malkin Central variation would mean dramatic impact leading to potential elimination of the Cottonwood Gardens land because they are on the city's right of way, leading to the loss of an important community asset.
3. The negative impact to Produce Row because access, loading, and dock sales would be more difficult. The Malkin Central alignment may put some companies out of business, like North American Produce.
4. The higher impact of the Produce Row being greatly affected during road construction.
5. There would be significant impact to the urban forest canopy and ecosystem from removal of large, mature trees that have eagles (wildlife habitat) and we cannot recreate this.



## Rationale

**In favor:** Given all the effects, we believe Malkin-Central is a good option because there already exists a 30m right of way which allows for creating a complete street with an enhanced north side of the street. This will increase appeal and use for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and park goers, especially after Transportation 2040 guidelines are applied to further reduce car trips in Vancouver.

**In opposition:** Given all the effects, we believe Malkin-Central is a challenging route for balancing the traffic uses, specifically commuters from downtown, thru-traffic, emergency vehicles, with truck access for trucks turning in and out of Produce Row without the buffer of a service road. In addition, there will be major users (e.g. Fresh Direct, Discount Organics) requiring mitigation. Malkin-Central would also require replacement of Cottonwood Gardens land.

# Malkin South Case Statement

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## **These are the most significant advantages that should be taken into account when considering this route:<sup>1</sup>**

1. Strathcona Park would be better connected to the residential area. The Malkin route would separate residential and park uses to the north, with industrial uses to the south.
2. There would be better access (walk, cycle, transit) to the parks with finished complete street. Currently there are no sidewalks on the south side of Strathcona park and utilizing the 30m right of way area with the Malkin route would permit connectivity and access enhancements because there is sufficient space.
3. The Malkin South variation would not physically impact the actual boundaries of Cottonwood.
4. For all Malkin alignments, Prior could become a local serving road because traffic would be redirected to Malkin.
5. It has more practicality and flexibility for design and constructability because the width is quite large and there is more space to work with and potential for variations, allowing for more walkability and bike lane options. It also has less of a steep gradient, better soil than the southern options (that are more in the mud flats reclaimed land).
5. No impact on Strathcona Park boundaries.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to a two-way tie for 5th place, six advantages are included here.

## **These are the most significant drawbacks that should be taken into account when considering this route.**

1. The south and central Malkin alignments would severely disrupt the transportation of regional food and other goods because there is a potential existential threat to Produce Row, though the North version may mitigate impact.
2. Negative impact to Produce Row because access, loading, and dock sales would be more difficult. The Malkin South alignment may put some companies out of business, like North American Produce.
3. The higher impact of the Produce Row being greatly affected during road construction.
4. The Malkin South variation offers minimal mitigation opportunities to integrate Produce Row and arterial through traffic.
5. For all Malkin alignments, moving the #22 bus route further south may reduce access for the local residential community because it would reduce the number of residents within a 5 minute walk to transit, making it a longer and harder journey for the elderly (many elderly residents in the neighbourhood) and those needing to do shopping. However, a shuttle bus on Prior can help mitigate this drawback

## Rationale

**In favor:** Given all these effects, one could argue that the Malkin South Alignment advantages outweigh the drawbacks because Strathcona neighbourhood liveability quality would be improved from the calming of Prior and the moving of air and noise pollution with the new arterial to the southern end of the neighbourhood. There is also the advantage of enhancing Trillium Park for wider regional use, as the new arterial would allow easier access to the park's sports fields, as well as the preservation of Cottonwood Garden as is, though there would still be the issue of the garden being directly adjacent to the new major arterial.

**In opposition:** Given all these effects, one could argue that the Malkin South Alignment drawbacks outweigh the advantages because, most importantly, many businesses on Produce Row could be severely impacted or dispersed to the periphery of the city. This jeopardizes the region's independent food system, which leads to potential increase in food costs (especially for organic produce) at grocery stores, downtown restaurants, and could even make it harder for food banks to access donations, not to mention the downstream effects of job loss for immigrants and low-skilled workers, as well as higher costs of doing business for independent grocers. Furthermore, the neighbourhood's unique biodiversity (Strathcona Park's eagles and Cottonwood Garden's mix of many plant species, bees, and insects) would still be adjacent to the new major arterial and thus subject to high levels of air pollution and traffic disturbance.

# National-Grant Case Statement

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## **These are the most significant advantages that should be taken into account when considering this route:**

1. It moves arterial traffic further away from residential areas because the alignment is further south of Prior and Strathcona Park (it would allow Prior to be downgraded to a local street).
2. It has a lower negative impact on businesses because of improved access and least impact on Produce Row. Produce Row will not need to relocate as the path mainly bypasses the buildings and companies.
3. National-Grant route would result in the least amount of park land loss. It preserves existing parks, gardens, and natural assets, which is more likely to receive Park Board approval.
4. It would allow for more complete street / maximize flexibility of road design because the right of way width would not be as constrained/narrow as Prior (wider than the existing route).
5. For all National variations, it has a low impact on artists/artisans and art-based businesses because many of them are located along/close to the other routes.

## **These are the most significant drawbacks that should be taken into account when considering this route.**

1. The S-curve because of safety hazards. S-curves are less safe for people walking/ cycling and ICBC statistics indicate that rates of vehicle collisions double with S-curve road profiles.
2. This option provides for the least equal arterial spacing. It is most closely located to Clark-Terminal intersection and may experience congestion problems.
3. Long distance between bus line (#22) and the surrounding communities, leaving a large gap in transit on Clark between Hastings and National (which is heavily used) and negatively impacts mobility and transit access for residents.
4. This route is the most expensive to build because of widest span over rail with 14 lines, land acquisition and construction costs.
5. A substantial portion of the project costs would not be eligible for partners funding (ie. land acquisition to relocate/rebuild Fire Training and HUSAR facilities and for property mitigation), which would take away from other city priorities and projects because it would dominate capital demands. However, if replacing fire training and HUSAR aligns with City needs for upgrading these facilities, this would not be as big of an impact.

## Rationale

**In favor:** This route preserves the majority of the Produce Row food hub which is essential to affordable food and food security. This route moves arterial traffic and congestion away from the residential area, reconnecting residents to Strathcona Park and improving air quality. This route results in the least amount of parkland loss, preserves existing parks, gardens and natural assets in an already green space deficient neighbourhood. With projected population increase by 2041, this deficit will become severe. There are also benefits related to art-based businesses, complete streets and bus access to St. Paul's hospital.

**In opposition:** This route has the largest cost estimate and a substantial portion is not eligible for partners sharing (ie. land acquisition and property mitigation are the City's responsibility). Allocating money to this route means there will be trade-offs for other City projects. This route provides the least equal arterial road spacing. The route is not direct and could create congestion at Clark Drive (due to proximity to Terminal /1st). This route could disrupt more than 35 local businesses, resulting in relocations, loss of revenue or closures. The route will interfere with or possibly eliminate the Vancouver School Board facility yards located at Clark and Grant. Finally, relocation of the 22 bus line along the new arterial would increase walking distance for Strathcona residents to access bus services.

# National-Charles Case Statement

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## **These are the most significant advantages that should be taken into account when considering this route:<sup>1</sup>**

1. Has a lower negative impact on businesses compared to other alignments because of improved access and least impact on Produce Row and other businesses, though the National-Charles St variation would require minimal building modifications.
2. It moves arterial traffic further away from residential areas because the alignment is further south of Prior and Strathcona Park (it would allow Prior to be downgraded to a local street).
3. It preserves the Cottonwood and Strathcona Gardens, which is important because these create community and food security.
4. National-Charles involves the least amount of park land loss and preserves existing parks, gardens, and natural assets.
5. It would allow for more complete street / maximize flexibility of road design because the right of way width would not be as constrained/narrow as Prior (wider than the existing route).
5. Truck traffic can access Produce Row off of the arterial because they can continue on Malkin at multiple intersections.
5. For all National variations, it has a low impact on artists/artisans and art-based businesses because many of them are located along/close to the other routes.

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<sup>1</sup> Prioritizing advantages for this route led to a three-way tie for the fifth top advantage.

## **These are the most significant drawbacks that should be taken into account when considering this route.**

1. It may be most expensive to build because of widest span over rail (14 lines), land acquisition and construction costs. It may be hard to secure funding partners and positive cost/benefit.
2. A substantial portion of the project costs may not be eligible for partners funding (ie. land acquisition to relocate/ rebuild Fire Training and HUSAR facilities and property mitigation for city works yard).
3. It would increase local impacts because of longer construction time and complexity, along with relocating services.
4. A drawback of National-Charles is the opportunity costs and compromises across the City because of the costs required for land acquisition and construction to move facilities, which may take away from other city priorities and projects.
5. Impacts and inefficiencies in public services because of the interconnected systems and optimal location of existing works yard.

## Rationale

**In favor:** National-Charles is the preferred alignment because it allows for the downgrade of Prior which will benefit the local community by improving access to Park space and improving air quality. It leaves the green canopy, gardens, and eagle habitat in Strathcona Park unaffected. Although one business on Produce Row may be affected, there is potential for mitigation, and the other businesses on Produce Row will not be affected. The wide right of way allows opportunities for a “complete street,” including bicycle lanes and sidewalks, and this can be incorporated into St. Paul’s Hospital site designs. Although this is one of the more expensive routes, and there would be some impact on the city works yard and require relocation of the fire training facility, this alignment has the least impact on the community of businesses, park lands, and art spaces, all of which have intrinsic and intangible value that cannot be measured in dollars and cents.

**In opposition:** This alignment is not preferred because, due to costs, it might take longer to secure funds. The s-curve design has a statistically-shown higher risk of accidents, requiring mitigations through design. If the #22 bus were to be rerouted onto National, it will be less convenient to Strathcona residents. It may impact some artists and businesses, though less impact than other National variations.

# National-Civic Case Statement

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## **These are the most significant advantages that should be taken into account when considering this route:**

1. It preserves the Cottonwood and Strathcona Gardens, which is important because these create community and food security.
2. It moves arterial traffic further away from residential areas because the alignment is further south of Prior and Strathcona Park (it would allow Prior to be downgraded to a local street).
3. It would allow for more complete street / maximize flexibility of road design because the right of way width would not be as constrained/narrow as Prior (wider than the existing route).
4. Safer relative to the other National variations because it doesn't have an S-curve, which see double the rates of collisions.
5. For all National variations, it has a low impact on artists/artisans and art-based businesses because many of them are located along/close to the other routes.

## **These are the most significant drawbacks that should be taken into account when considering this route.**

1. That it may be most expensive to build because of widest span over rail (14 lines), land acquisition and construction costs. It may be hard to secure funding partners and positive cost/benefit.
2. A substantial portion of the project costs may not be eligible for partners funding (ie. land acquisition to relocate/ rebuild Fire Training and HUSAR facilities and property mitigation for city works yard).
3. This option provides for the least equal arterial spacing. It is most closely located to Terminal and 1st T-intersection with Clark and may create congestion problems at these intersections.
4. For all variations, disruption to local businesses because an arterial road may cause loss of revenue, relocation, or closure. The National-Grant and Civic Facilities variations would potentially impact 35 businesses, Yellow Cab, and the back of Produce Row buildings. The National-Charles variation would potentially impact 15 artists, 12 other local businesses, and Fresh Point.
5. Long distance between current bus line (#22) and the surrounding communities, leaving a large gap in transit on Clark between Hastings and National (which is heavily used) and negatively impacts mobility and access, but the Civic variation is slightly better than the other National variations, though still far.



## Rationale

**In favor:** Given these effects, some might argue **in favor** of National-Civic variation because it prioritizes safety over dollars and cents. It is the safest route when it comes to the local community, commuters, EMT and traffic (including the lack of heavy vehicles as trucks can continue on Malkin Ave). It also preserves the unique historical legacies of Strathcona and Cottonwood gardens -- which provide green spaces that promotes community wellbeing, preserves the eagle/critter habitats (which has been there for generations), and has minimal impact to Produce Row, which guarantees food security and preserves its historical legacy. Any mitigation required by the National-Civic variation is limited to city-owned facilities, ensuring community support. Finally, it leaves the Strathcona artist community, which represents the highest density of artists in Canada, intact.

**In opposition:** Given these effects, some might argue **in opposition** to National-Civic variation because it is the most expensive option based on city estimates around mitigation of their own facilities, in particular, mitigation of recently built (2002-2004) city facilities (city yard and VSB). The National-Civic variation also leaves the future of VFD/HUSAR unclear, with the potential for city jobs to be decentralized. While this variation is the most complex to build, spanning 14 tracks, the National-Civic variation is also the least researched option, with the least information on it available.