



To: Public Works & Transportation Committee **Date:** December 12, 2001
From: Robert Gonzalez, P.Eng.
 Manager, Engineering Design and Construction **File:** 4400-00
Re: **Downtown Clean-up Project**

Staff Recommendations

1. That Council endorse the Downtown Clean-up Project; and
2. That staff continue to develop and implement the Downtown Clean-up Project initiatives.

Robert Gonzalez, P.Eng.
Manager, Engineering Design and Construction
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Staff Report

Origin

As outlined in the *Corporate Renewal Program – Learning from the Past/Shaping the Future*, it is the City's vision to make Richmond the most appealing, liveable and well-managed community in Canada. In order to move the City closer to achieving the "appealing and livable" components of the vision, the Civic Beautification and Design Team, a cross-divisional staff team, continues to focus on initiatives that enhance the livability and attractiveness of the City. This Team's mandate is to support development of a more attractive, sustainable environment for Richmond, by establishing a framework for championing and facilitating a high quality urban form that is responsive to community needs and values.

The Downtown Clean-up Project is a strategy intended to recognize existing opportunities to improve the appearance of the Richmond core area, emphasizing partnerships with property owners and businesses.

The purpose of this report is to introduce the Downtown Clean-up Project, and request Council's endorsement for staff to further develop the strategy and implement specific initiatives.

Analysis

Richmond is centrally located within the GVRD. Many people use the major transportation corridors in Richmond for work, shopping or to access the airport. Currently, the busiest routes in Richmond are Westminster Highway, Alderbridge Way and the north end of No. 3 Road. These high traffic routes represent an opportunity to demonstrate to residents and visitors that Richmond is an attractive place to live, and work. There has been significant improvement to the public realm within road allowances along major corridors in Richmond over the past few years. There is now a need to expand our thinking beyond the public realm to encompass private property in order to make further significant improvements to the major transportation corridors. With development applications on the rise again, it appears that Richmond should be ready to enter a new development cycle. The Downtown Clean-up Project is an opportunity to work directly with residents and the business community to improve the attractiveness of the City at key focus areas within the City Centre.

In concert with physical clean-up initiatives, staff will also focus on internal City processes, such as better co-ordination of bylaws and the review of development permit design guidelines to make Richmond more attractive. The focus of attention and energy is intended to ensure high quality physical development and on-going maintenance practices.

Objective

Staff proposes a proactive approach that will involve partnering with residents and the business community. The objective of these efforts is intended to make Richmond a more attractive City, more pedestrian friendly, greener and a better place to live, work, and play. City bylaws and guidelines should also reinforce this objective to enhance livability, improve the quality of life, and establish Richmond as the community of choice for business and residents to develop pride in our City.

The implementation plan will:

- Initially focus on three major corridors; Westminster, Alderbridge, and the North Gateway;
- Include a comprehensive list of downtown clean-up recommendations;
- Include an implementation plan and suggest an implementation strategy;
- Investigate internal processes and bylaws to create a co-ordinated approach, and;
- Ultimately, develop a comprehensive approach to investigate all major corridors within the City.

Anticipated Next Steps

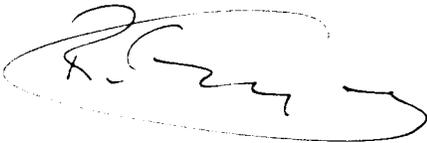
With Council's endorsement, staff will continue to develop and expand the scope of the Downtown Clean-up Project. It is anticipated that attention and energy would focus on clean-up recommendations for the three main corridors namely, Westminster, Alderbridge and the North Gateway. The attached three sheets are excerpts from the Downtown Clean-up report for the three corridors.

Financial Impact

It is difficult to quantify the financial impact at this time, however every effort will be made to partner with private property owners, and to tie Clean-up efforts to directly related capital projects or maintenance activities. When partnership funding or funding for new initiatives is required, staff will request Council's endorsement prior to proceeding.

Conclusion

The Downtown Clean-up Project is a strategy to advance Richmond's vision 'to be the most appealing, livable, and well managed Community in Canada. Staff seek Council's endorsement of the Downtown Clean-up Project for staff to further develop this strategy and implement initiatives.



Robert Gonzalez, P.Eng.
Manager, Engineering Design and Construction

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Westminster Highway Corridor

Focus Area: Westminster Highway from Garden City Road to Gilbert Road

Key Issues:



- Westminster Highway is the major east-west spine in the City Centre;
- It is a major transportation and commercial corridor;
- This corridor is the only area with significant pedestrian volumes;

Partial List of Opportunities:

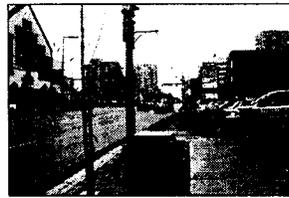


- Work with owners to reduce visual clutter and simplify signage;
- Add boulevards and street trees along Westminster Highway;
- Separate, screen and buffer parking from the sidewalk;
- Consider the eliminate of the centre turning lane at strategic locations;
- Sidewalks and boulevard improvements where space permits;

Selected List of Improvement Options:

Quick Wins:

- Work with Public Market to make façade improvements;
- Clean-up vacant sites complete with re-grading, grass and trees;



Short Term Improvements:

- Underground BC Hydro wires along Westminster Highway;
- Introduce a 'Community Use' at grade in the Public Market;
- Remove the 'Happy Video' pylon sign;
- Complete the 'Legion site' frontage improvements;

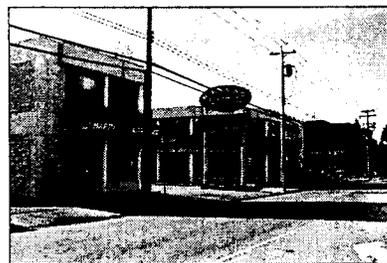
Long Term Improvements:

- Encourage redevelopment at the SE corner of Westminster & No 3;
- Construct lanes along rear property lines where possible;
- Stimulate development of the NW corner of Westminster & Cooney;
- Underground BC Hydro wires;
- Sidewalk improvements on the north side between Cooney & No 3;
- Consider landscape centre median between Buswell & Cooney;



Comprehensive Program of Corridor Clean-Up Recommendations:

- Develop visual tools to assist in the communication with property owners;



Alderbridge Way Corridor

Focus Area: Alderbridge Way from Garden City Road to Cedarbridge Way

Key Issues:



- The second most important east-west spine in the City;
- Major transportation corridor and part of the Major Road Network;
- The intersection with Garden City Rd is an important City gateway;
- The No 3 Rd intersection is a vehicle precinct dominated by parking;
- Parking at the NE corner of Westminster and No 3 crowds the street;

Partial List of Opportunities:



- Large vacant sites are over grown with weeds with dated billboard;
- Signage at the No 3 Rd intersection is cluttered and over powering;
- There are wide boulevards west of No 3 Rd with no improvements;

Selected List of Improvement Options:

Quick Wins:

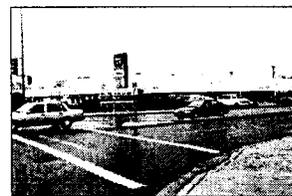
- Encourage Polygon to initiate interim landscape improvements;
- Work with Sport Mart/Future Shop to install boulevard improvements;



Short Term Improvements:

- Encourage owners of vacant land to enhance and maintain landscape;
- Add street trees in the boulevards west of No 3 Rd;
- Work with owners/tenants to simplify signage;
- Partner with Lansdowne Mall to install a sidewalk along No 3 Rd;

Long Term Improvements:



- Replace sidewalk on the north side between No 3 Rd & Hazelbridge;
- Locate a gateway element at SE corner of Alderbridge & Garden City;
- Stimulate the redevelopment of NE corner of Alderbridge & No 3;
- Upgrade centre median improvements east & west of No 3;
- Review sign bylaw and enforce guidelines;
- Negotiate with Sport Mart/Future Shop to employ joint signage;

Comprehensive Program of Corridor Clean-Up Recommendations:

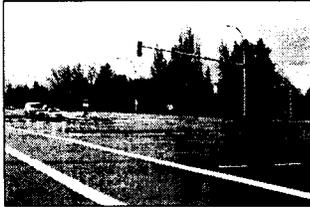
- Develop visual tools to assist in the communication with property owners;



North Gateway Corridor

Focus Area: The North Gateway extends along No 3 from Cambie Rd to Sea Island Way

Key Issues:



- The Corridor is regarded as the major gateway & access to Richmond;
- The west side of this corridor is fronted by interim, auto-oriented uses;
- It has the character of an area in transition;
- The block of vacant land on the east side of No 3 Rd (between Capstan Way & Sea Island Way) is considered a major visual problem;

Partial List of Opportunities:



- Important “gateway” to Richmond from Vancouver, Highway 99 and;
- Redevelopment of the Skyline Comfort Inn site has been negotiated;
- Corvette Way will allow access to small lots along the west side of;
- The former ‘Sun Tech’ properties remain a major redevelopment opportunity;
- The west side of No 3 Rd is scheduled for Hydro undergrounding;

Selected List of Improvement Options:

Quick Wins:



- Up-grade new 98B Line bus platform (between Sea Island & Bridgeport);
- Install all median improvements along No 3 from Cambie to Sea Island Way;

Short Term Improvements:

- Complete 98B Line median Improvements;
- Demolish abandoned house on the east side of No 3 Rd;
- Concentrate clean up efforts at the corner of No 3 & Sea Island Way;
- Community events banner/display at the SE corner of No 3 & Sea Island Way;

Long Term Improvements:



- Underground BC Hydro, BC Telephone & Shaw Cable overhead wires;
- Negotiate with Yaohan to plant street trees along this frontage;
- Negotiate and install frontage improvements on the east side on No 3 Rd;
- Initiate ‘Skyline Comfort Inn’ service agreement improvements;
- Construct Corvette Way Rd & negotiate No 3 Rd frontage improvements;
- Pursue conversion of CPR ROW to roadway west of No 3 Rd;

Comprehensive Clean-Up Recommendations and Implementation Strategy:

- Develop visual tools to assist in the communication with property owners;

