



## General Purposes Committee

Date: Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Place: Council Chambers  
Richmond City Hall

Present: Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair  
Councillor Linda Barnes  
Councillor Derek Dang  
Councillor Sue Halsey-Brandt  
Councillor Rob Howard  
Councillor Kiichi Kumagai  
Councillor Bill McNulty  
Councillor Harold Steves

Absent: Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. **RAV – PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS RESULTS**  
(Material to be distributed prior to meeting.)

Mayor Brodie advised that the consultants who prepared the report “Public Consultation and Feedback on the Richmond-Airport-Vancouver Rapid Transit Line in Richmond”, had indicated that they were available to respond to questions.

The Chair explained that the City did not have any veto power over the TransLink decision but that recommendations would be made to TransLink about both an elevated and an at-grade system.

Senior Manager, Policy Development & Corporate Programs, Lauren Melville, accompanied by the Director, Engineering, Robert Gonzales, spoke about the potential impact of the RAV line on No. 3 Road. She then reviewed the public consultation process which had been undertaken over the past week and the results which indicated an almost equal preference for both an elevated and at-grade system. Ms. Melville then reviewed the staff recommendations with the Committee.

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Mr. Gonzales then commented on concerns expressed by the public on specific issues relating to both an elevated and at-grade systems, including safety and aesthetics.

Discussion then took place among Committee and staff on:

- the rationale for some residents believing that congestion on No. 3 Road would be reduced by the construction of an elevated system
- why Garden City Road was not being considered as an alternate route to the No. 3 Road route
- the results of the consultative process
- the cause of the accidents which had occurred on the Calgary at-grade rapid transit system
- the rationale as to why Calgary was intending to construct the next phase of their transportation system underground rather than at-grade
- why Richmond should be forced to accept an elevated system rather than at-grade system
- the number of stations which would be provided regardless of whether an elevated or at-grade system was selected
- how certain time requirements would be maintained to ensure that an at-grade train would have priority over regular motor vehicle traffic
- whether an analysis had been undertaken of the impact which an elevated system could have on businesses along No. 3 Road,
- how the concerns of business operators on No. 3 Road with respect to such issues as accessibility to properties during and after construction could be addressed, regardless of either an elevated or at-grade system, to ensure the least amount of impact possible.

Ms. Jane Bird, Project Director, of RAVCO, responded to questions on:

- the consultative process conducted in March and April of 2003, the results of which had indicated that a majority of those approached preferred an elevated system
- whether the private sector could produce bids for both elevated and at-grade systems which would provide a fast and reliable system
- the types of vehicles required for both elevated and at-grade systems and whether the cost of these vehicles would have significant implications on the overall cost of the system
- the length of the operating agreement, and whether, after 30 years, the RAV system would be an asset to TransLink rather than a liability
- whether the trains would be able to maintain speed between the five stations proposed along No. 3 Road.

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The Chair declared the meeting recessed (7:44 p.m.).

The Committee meeting reconvened at 7:46 p.m.

Discussion continued among Committee members and Ms. Bird on:

- the capital costs of constructing an elevated system from Bridgeport Road to the southern terminus
- how the cost of transit fares would be determined and whether they would be comparable to bus fares
- the proposed location of the transit corridor on No. 3 Road, and the impact which this location could have on No. 3 Road businesses
- the likelihood that the construction of an elevated system would reduce congestion on No. 3 Road
- how the RAV trains would connect with the bus transit system
- whether bicycles could be accommodated on the new train system
- regardless of the system chosen, the barriers which would result from either system.

Ms. Cushla Curtis, 9400 Patterson Road, expressed the hope that the system would consider the needs of those disabled who were restricted to wheelchairs and scooters. She expressed support for an at-grade system; and suggested that access to the major businesses on the north end of No. 3 Road could be given access to their properties from Hazelbridge Way. Ms. Curtis questioned the location of the Bridgeport Station, and in response, advice was given that the decision had not yet been made on the exact siting. Advice was also given that staff were working to ensure that any system chosen was accessible to those confined to wheelchairs and scooters.

Ms. Tracy Mills, #326 – 3411 Springfield Drive, expressed concern about what the RAV line would mean to Richmond transit users, as the new system would mean that she would have to take three sources of transit in each direction as opposed to one to reach her place of employment in Vancouver, at a travel time of over an hour. She questioned whether, because of the high cost of the new system, residents should see significant improvements in the transit system, and not just in reliability alone.

Mr. Bob Ransford, representing the Richmond Heritage Railroad Society, advised that the Society supported an at-grade system. He further advised that the Society supported the development of a separate at-grade light rail system running from Bridgepoint to serve the City Centre, and then splitting the technology to extend the system to Steveston. A copy of Mr. Ransford's submission is on file in the City Clerk's Office.

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In response to questions, Mr. Ransford spoke further on (i) the suggestion that a ground-level train be run from Bridgepoint to City Hall and from City Hall to Steveston, and the cost of constructing an at-grade system from City Hall to Steveston; (ii) the feasibility of re-establishing an interurban line between the City Centre and Steveston; (iii) whether the density and ridership could support such a transit system; (iv) the proposal to use a bus system from Bridgepoint to connect with the RAV line, the dedication of a corridor along No. 3 Road to local transit traffic and whether a bus system would result in the RAV line not being constructed to Bridgepoint; (v) whether the costs of constructing a rapid transit line would be so prohibitive that Richmond would always have buses.

Mr. Barry Ogilvie, #326 – 8520 General Currie Road, expressed agreement with the statements of the previous speaker. He questioned why Garden City Road and not been chosen as an alternate route, but also expressed support for an at-grade system. He suggested that No. 3 Road should be converted to accommodate walking and bicycle traffic only.

Ms. Lorraine Bell, of Steveston Highway, expressed support with the statements made by the previous speaker. She stated that she did not support an elevated system because of the negative appearance; and she expressed support for the current transit system.

Mr. Kurt Derrer, 7680 Granville Avenue, spoke about the public consultation process, and compared the costs of an elevated and at-grade systems. He spoke about the impact of an elevated system on No. 3 Road and suggested that (i) the RAV system would not carry significantly more passengers in the north/south corridor than the present 98B Line, and (ii) that the current 98B Line be maintained in Richmond, with the RAV line being constructed in Vancouver. Mr. Derrer also spoke about traffic congestion in Richmond and he expressed the opinion that this congestion would remain after construction of the RAV line. He commented further on his suggestion that the RAV line be eliminated in favour of the 98B Line.

Mr. Chris Riscouvish, spoke about the proposed use of the RAV line to provide service to the airport, and a feeder line from the City Centre to downtown Vancouver. He spoke about where the ridership would come from – the outlying areas of the City, and questioned why the line was being constructed on No. 3 Road. He expressed concern about the disruption which would result on No. 3 Road, and spoke in favour of a Garden City Road route which he felt was more suitable for an elevated system than No. 3 Road.

Mr. Peter Mitchell, 6271 Nanika Crescent, spoke in support of the proposal put forward by Mr. Ransford to put a light rail transit line from the City Centre to Steveston. He questioned whether approval would be required from the GVRD and whether this proposal would be successful.

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Ms. Bird came forward, and advised, in response to previous questions, that the cost of an elevated line from Bridgepoint Station to the southern terminus would be \$265 Million and \$165 Million for an at-grade system over the same distance. With reference to a statement made by a previous speaker, Ms. Bird stated that it was expected that there would be a significant increase in ridership over the 98B Line. She also commented on the feasibility of using Garden City Road as an alternate route for the RAV Line; and stated that she could not comment on the use of Arbutus Corridor for a future transit system from Bridgepoint Market.

The Mayor advised that presentations were now concluded.

It was moved and seconded

*That the public consultation results and a letter be sent to the RAVCO and TransLink Boards from the Mayor on behalf of Council that communicates the community's strong support for the RAV line, and recommends that:*

- (1) *The RAVCO and TransLink Boards forward both an at-grade and elevated rapid transit system proposal to the Best and Final Offer (BAFO) stage; and*
- (2) *The comments received from the public contained in the report (attached to the report dated March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004, from the Chief Administrative Officer), be incorporated into the draft design objectives provided to the two proponents during the BAFO stage in addition to the feedback received at the upcoming RAVCO open houses.*
- (3) *RAVCO and the TransLink Boards be advised that the preference of Richmond City Council is for an at-grade system in the City.*

The question on the motion was not called, as Mayor Brodie commented on the negative impact which an elevated system could have on the City.

Councillor Steves spoke about the at-grade transit system which had been constructed in Tacoma, Washington and he displayed photographs of this system. (A copy of these photographs are on file in the City Clerk's Office.) Cllr. Steves expressed support for the construction of an at-grade system which could connect at sometime in the future with Steveston or with the area of No. 5 Road and Steveston Highway. As a result of Cllr. Steve's presentation, the following **amendment** was introduced:

It was moved and seconded

*That the main motion be amended by adding the following as Part (4), "The City investigate the possibility of having an independent system constructed on No. 3 Road, through the two mile town centre, with the technology to be determined."*

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The question on the motion was not called, as discussion ensued on whether approval of the amendment could jeopardize the overall RAV project; whether the work could be completed; the scope of the work; the impact which this investigation would have on staff workload, and the feasibility of completing the work completely independent of the RAV project.

During the discussion, the request was made that the recommendations be dealt with separately.

The question on the amendment was then called, and it was **CARRIED** with Cllrs. Dang and Howard opposed.

Discussion continued on the motion as amended, and in particular, on (i) the rationale for forwarding the at-grade and elevated proposals to the BAFO stage; and (ii) the advantages and disadvantages of each system.

The question on the motion, as amended, was not called, as the following **amendment** was introduced:

It was moved and seconded

*That Part (3) of the main motion be amended by deleting the word "City", and by substituting therefor, the words "No. 3 Road corridor."*

**CARRIED**

The question on the motion as amended, was not called, as Committee members expressed their views on the proposed recommendations. Also discussed was the feasibility of accommodating an independent ground level system along the City Centre No. 3 Road RAV corridor.

A question was raised about the rationale for recommending both an at-grade and elevated system to the Best and Final Offer (BAFO) stage, and the mixed message which might be conveyed to RAVCO and TransLink. As a result of the staff response, the Mayor directed that Part (1) of the recommendation would be **WITHDRAWN**.

The question on Part (2) of the amended motion was called, and it was **CARRIED**.

The question on Part (3) of the amended motion was called, and it was **CARRIED** with Cllr. Howard opposed.

The question on Part (4) of the amended motion was called, and it was **CARRIED** with Cllr. Dang and Howard opposed.

### ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded

*That the meeting adjourn (9:56 p.m.).*

**CARRIED**

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Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

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Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie  
Chair

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Fran J. Ashton  
Executive Assistant, City Clerk's Office