



To: Public Works and Transportation Committee **Date:** March 6, 2002
From: Gordon Chan **File:** 6360-06
Director, Transportation
Re: **Proposed Closure of No. 8 Road at Granville Avenue Right-of-Way**

Staff Recommendation

1. That the proposed permanent closure of No. 8 Road at the Granville Avenue road right-of-way for all traffic except for emergency vehicles be endorsed.
2. That staff be directed to continue to work with all landowners, business operators, area farmers and residents to ensure reasonable alternative access for Fraser Port Lands is provided while respecting the intent and direction of the OCP, the City's long term road network expansion strategies, and related City policies.

Gordon Chan
Director, Transportation

Att. 1

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Development Applications	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy Planning	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	

Staff Report

Origin

Recently, major industrial development of the Fraser Port and Kingswood lands in East Richmond has prompted staff to examine the issue of access to these industrial properties from Westminster Highway via No. 8 Road and/or Nelson Road. This report provides a background on the nature of the proposed industrial development, existing City policies and strategies regarding the support of agriculture in the area and more importantly, presents the rationale for the permanent closure of No. 8 Road north of the development to minimize the potential traffic conflicts between industrial and farming uses.

Analysis

1. Existing Conditions on No. 8 Road and Nelson Road

No. 8 Road is currently a 2-lane rural standard roadway between Westminster Highway and the Fraser Port site, south of the Granville Road allowance. It is fronted on both sides by agricultural land and serves both farm traffic as well as heavy industrial truck traffic generated by the sand sales and recycling operations currently operating on the Fraser Port land. Nelson Road is also a 2-lane rural standard roadway south of Westminster Highway which currently serves as the primary access to a number of existing industrial users in this area.

2. Proposed Industrial Development

The Fraser River Port Authority (Fraser Port) and Bontebok Holdings each has large development sites located adjacent to agricultural land in East Richmond (see Attachment 1). The Fraser Port site, known as Fraser-Richmond, is approximately 720 acres in size while the Bontebok site, known as Kingswood, is approximately 90 acres in size. Both properties have industrial zoning that is consistent with the City's OCP and their sites are presently accessible from Westminster Highway via No. 8 Road or Nelson Road.

Fraser Port and Bontebok Holdings have both secured tenants for part of their properties and are working with the City to obtain approvals for development. As a condition of development, the applicants are required to dedicate and construct Blundell Road from Nelson Road to just west of No. 8 Rd, construct No. 8 Rd from Blundell Road to the northern boundary of the Fraser Port site and construct improvements to the intersection of Nelson Road and Westminster Highway. Future road requirements will be made as additional areas develop.

In addition to the above road improvements, in order to preserve the function of No. 8 Road north of the site primarily as a farm access road with minimal conflicts with industrial traffic, the permanent closure of this roadway at the site boundary (at approximately the Granville Avenue road right-of-way) is also required. This proposed permanent closure of No. 8 Road is consistent with the City's policies on preserving farming viability and strongly supported by the Farmers Institute. The applicants of the above developments, however, have now requested staff to keep No. 8 Road open so that access to and from the industrial site via this roadway can be maintained.

3. Recommended Closure of No. 8 Road

The rationale for the recommended permanent closure of No. 8 Road at the northern boundary of the Fraser Port Lands is as follows:

3.1 Existing City Policies

Official Community Plan

Richmond's Official Community Plan (OCP) is clear on the protection of land within the ALR from intrusion from roadways not directly benefiting farming activities. The following guiding principle and policy objectives speak directly to this issue:

- *Transportation Guiding Principle: To support the productive use of agricultural land through improved farm access and by discouraging the development of major new roads which negatively impact on farming;*
- *Agriculture Objective 2(j): Discourage, wherever possible, major roads through the ALR; and*
- *Road Network Objective 4(d): Restrict the development of major new roads in the ALR to avoid jeopardizing farm viability, except for service roads intended to serve adjacent industrial land.*

Agricultural Viability Strategy

In January 2002, the City released its draft Agricultural Viability Strategy. The strategy articulates the City's commitment to "protecting the supply of agricultural lands and ensuring the viability of farm operations." Several sections of the draft Agricultural Strategy contain objectives and recommendations that are applicable to the No. 8 Road discussion. With respect to Services and Infrastructure, the Agricultural Strategy contains the following objectives:

- *ensure that servicing an infrastructure projects do not interfere with farm practises; and*
- *ensure that farm vehicles can adequately move between agricultural area.*

Specifically, the strategy recommends that the City revisit OCP Transportation Policy 4d to "limit future major road development on ALR land that does not serve the viability of agriculture." With respect to Non-Farm Uses, the Agricultural Strategy contains the following objectives:

- *ensure all existing and any proposed non-farm uses of ALR land do not interfere with normal farm practises; and*
- *ensure that City policies related to parks, transportation and others support overall agricultural viability.*

The strategy further recommends that the City: "Restrict the upgrading of existing roads and development of new roads unless there is a direct or net benefit to farming."

3.2 Access via Nelson Road

Access to the Fraser-Richmond and Kingswood sites is possible via Nelson Road or No. 8 Road. While both roads pass through agricultural land, there is a historical precedent for industrial traffic on Nelson Road as the Lafarge Cement plant and ConForce operations have generated truck traffic on this road for many years. Moreover, Nelson Road is in better structural condition than No. 8 Road and thus better able to accommodate existing and future the truck traffic.

3.3 Potential Impacts of Allowing Industrial Traffic on No. 8 Road

Allowing industrial traffic on No. 8 Road could result in a number of negative impacts as detailed below.

3.3.1 Traffic Impacts

It is estimated that 4500-5000 vehicles per day could be using No. 8 Road within ten years. While these volumes represent a "best estimate", it is clear that this order of magnitude would have a significant impact on existing farming operations. This increased industrial traffic would also likely result in worsening the conflicts with farm vehicles which are significantly slower moving vehicles.

3.3.2 Maintenance Impacts

No. 8 Road is not constructed to the same standard as Nelson Road. By allowing increased heavy truck traffic onto No. 8 road, the City will be faced with an increased maintenance burden for the portion of No. 8 Road between Westminster Highway and the northern Fraser Port boundary.

3.3.3 Established Road Network Improvements

Off site roadway improvements currently established between the City, Fraser Port and Bontebok Holdings as part of the development approvals process were predicated on No. 8 Road being closed. Keeping No. 8 Road open would necessitate revisiting the improvements previously agreed to and potentially requiring the developers to provide an increased level of roadway improvements.

3.3.4 Impact on Long Term Road Network - Blundell Road Extension to New Interchange

Keeping No 8 Rd open would provide an additional access to Westminster Highway and allow industrial traffic to distribute itself over two access points on this 2-lane rural arterial road. This condition would undoubtedly result in increased traffic pressure on Westminster Highway which is not planned for future widening to preserve its shared use by the adjacent farm lands. In order to facilitate the increased industrial traffic adequately in the long term, the OCP calls for the extension of Blundell Road to the west with a new interchange at Highway 99. Such a significant shift of traffic pattern from Blundell Road to Westminster Highway would be inconsistent with long-term transportation strategies for the area.

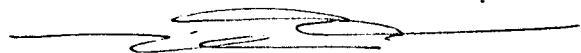
Financial Impact

There is no direct financial impact to the City at this time. However, a decision to keep No. 8 Road open may have an immediate impact on the maintenance cost related to this road as it is currently substandard to accommodate the anticipated industrial traffic.

Conclusion

Given existing City policies to support the continued viability of agriculture within ALR lands and the potential impacts of allowing industrial traffic on No. 8 Road, staff recommend that access to all new sites to be developed in the Fraser Port Lands be from Westminster Highway via Nelson Road and Blundell Road via the new interchange at Highway 99. The City has required as condition of development that No. 8 Rd be closed to all traffic at the northern boundary of the Fraser Port site with emergency access being maintained. This requirement was consistent with the objectives in the OCP and Agricultural Viability Strategy as described above.

By closing No. 8 Road now prior to development proceeding, conflicts between farming activities and non-farm traffic along No. 8 Road can be dealt with proactively, thereby eliminating similar types of conflicts that have been experienced on No. 6 Road as a result of the development of the Riverport area. The recommended closure would also support the orderly development of an area road network based on Blundell Road as an east-west spine and as the primary access point to the industrial area.



JH Jim Hnatiuk
Transportation Engineer

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