



Public Works & Transportation Committee

Date: Wednesday, March 22nd, 2006
Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall
Present: Councillor Linda Barnes, Chair
Councillor Derek Dang, Vice-Chair (4:05 p.m.)
Councillor Cynthia Chen
Councillor Rob Howard
Councillor Bill McNulty
Absent: Councillor Harold Steves
Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

1. It was moved and seconded
That the minutes of the meeting of the Public Works & Transportation Committee held on Wednesday, February 15th, 2006, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

2. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday, April 19th, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. in the Anderson Room.

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DELEGATIONS

3. *Airi Sigurgeirson concerning the intersection at No. 1 Road and Moncton Street.*

Ms. Airi Sigurgeirson, of 11238 Fourth Avenue, accompanied by Mr. Gordon Kibble, briefly reported on an accident which she had been in at the intersection of Moncton Street and No. 1 Road. She advised that the area was becoming increasingly busier as more and more families moved into the Steveston area, and added that even more pedestrian traffic would be generated with the opening of the water park in Steveston Park.

Ms. Sigurgeirson stated that quite often pedestrians were in all four crosswalks at this intersection, which made it quite difficult for motorists to move through the four-way stop intersection. She advised that now was the time to seriously review this matter, and referred to previous discussions about traffic flow in this area, stating that she did not support Moncton Street becoming a one-way street as this could have a negative impact on the merchants on this street. She also commented that the major problem appeared to be with traffic travelling south on No. 1 Road and then proceeding into the Steveston town site. In concluding her presentation, Ms. Sigurgeirson expressed the hope that something could be done to make the No. 1 Road/Moncton Street intersection safe for pedestrians and motorists.

(Cllr. Dang entered the meeting at 4:05 p.m., during the above presentation.)

Discussion then took place among Committee members and staff on the request, with information being provided that the installation of a traffic signal at No. 1 Road and Moncton Street would also require a similar installation at No. 1 Road and Chatham Street. At the request of the Chair, the Acting Director of Transportation, Victor Wei, provided information on possible traffic improvements which were being considered for the area and the timing of these improvements. He advised that a report would be submitted to Committee in early summer with a number of recommendations relating to parking and the No. 1 Road and Moncton Street intersection.

Discussion continued on the issue of traffic flow in the Steveston town site and the importance of traffic flow to the merchants and residents, as well as to the tourists who visited the area. Reference was made to upcoming public open houses on the issue of parking in Steveston, and Steveston residents were encouraged to attend these meetings to see the different types of traffic patterns which could be achieved.

During the discussion, comments were made about the need for improved signage in the Steveston area to direct visitors to the long and short term parking lots. The suggestion was made that these improvements should be in place for the 2006 summer tourist season.

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In concluding the discussion, the Chair asked staff to liaise with Ms. Sigurgeirson on this matter as a means of communicating the proposed plans and timeline to Steveston residents. The suggestion was made that consideration also be given to using the Steveston Advisory Task Force on Parking and the Steveston Merchant's Association to communicate the information to the public.

POLICIES / STRATEGIES (0 ITEMS)

DECISIONS / ACTIONS (4 ITEMS)

ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION

4. DRAINAGE PUMP STATION UPGRADES

(Report: Mar. 6/06, File No.: 10-6045-08-02/2006-Vol 01) (REDMS No. 1777643)

The Manager, Engineering Design & Construction, Jim Young, in response to questions, advised that staff had undertaken a comprehensive review of the City's pump stations, and that it had been determined that three pump stations, No. 2 Road North, Ewen and No. 7 Road, required new 'jockey pumps'. Because of the increasing difficulty in economically maintaining the operation of these pump stations and in obtaining parts, staff were seeking the approval of the transfer of funds to replace the 'jockey pumps' for these stations.

It was moved and seconded

That the transfer of \$180,000 of capital funding from the Emergency Response Equipment (Project 40317) be approved to allow pump replacement at the No. 2 Road North, Ewen and No. 7 Road South drainage pump stations.

CARRIED

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

5. CYCLING AND PARKING ISSUES ON ARTERIAL ROADS

(Report: Jan. 26/06, File No.: 10-6360-16-01/2006/Vol 01; xr 10-6455-01) (REDMS No. 1649175, 1612239)

Mr. Wei, accompanied by Transportation Planner, Joan Caravan, referred to the traffic issues related to the parking currently permitted on the west side of Railway Avenue, north of Steveston Highway. He advised that in the interest of the overall benefits to community safety, and in order to achieve minimum national standards for road safety to accommodate motorists, cyclists and parking, that staff were recommending that the west side parking be removed.

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Discussion ensued among Committee members and staff on this issue, with Mr. Wei using an aerial photograph of the area to explain the impact of losing the west side parking for the patrons of O'Hare's Pub and the neighbourhood. During the discussion questions were raised the potential for parking occurring on the west side of Railway Avenue, south of Steveston Highway and whether there would be sufficient space to accommodate both parking and the bicycle lane.

Mr. Jack O'Hare, the owner of O'Hare's Pub, reviewed the history of the area with regard to the use of the CPR right-of-way, during which he expressed the belief that eventually this right-of-way would be developed in some form. He expressed concern about the potential loss of business and customers if the west side parking was removed, and he asked that the parking be allowed to remain until such time as a plan had been developed for the entire area.

Mr. O'Hare also suggested that signage be erected along this stretch of Railway Avenue to encourage motorists to slow down. He referred to the west side parking and stated that there were very few individuals who actually parked in that area, and indicated that he would ask his staff to find another place to park their vehicles. In concluding his presentation, Mr. O'Hare urged the Committee to take no action until a development plan had been created for the area.

In response to a request from the Chair, the General Manager, Urban Development, Joe Erceg, advised that there were no plans at the present time to develop the CPR right-of-way. He stated that it was his understanding that the City hoped to preserve this area for a major trail.

Mr. Larry Pamer, a member of the Richmond Cycling Committee, noted that the bicycle path along Railway Avenue was used by many cyclists. He voiced the opinion that this route was extremely hazardous to cyclists because they were forced, in the area north of Steveston Highway, to ride in the traffic lane rather than in the bicycle lane because of vehicles parked on the shoulder of the road. He sought assurance that the removal of the parking on the west side of Railway Avenue at Steveston Highway was the focus of the discussion, and that assurance was given to him.

A brief discussion then ensued among Committee members and staff on the current danger to cyclists who were being forced into the roadway to avoid the vehicles parked on the west side of Railway Avenue. Also addressed was the need for additional signage to alert individuals to the fact that (i) parking was no longer permitted on the west side of Railway Avenue, and (ii) parking was available on the east side of the street.

Mr. Klaus Focker also commented on the dangerous situation with the bicycle lane/parking area on the west side of Railway Avenue. He noted that the road was very narrow in this area and that congestion occurred, especially during rush hour, when a motorist could be waiting to make a left turn onto Steveston Highway.

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A brief discussion ensued with Mr. Focker, during which he commented that the increase in population in the area was making the existing situation even more dangerous. In response to questions he advised that he would prefer that the parking was removed from the bicycle lane because the potential for a serious accident was very real.

In response to questions from Committee, advice was given that if individuals continued to park in the west side parking area once the parking had been removed, the individuals would be fined. Further advice was given that a grace period would be initiated to alert motorists that parking was no longer allowed.

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That the summary of the examination of establishing bicycle lanes along major arterial roads, (as described in the report dated January 26th, 2006, from the Acting Director, Transportation), be received for information.*
- (2) *That the existing parking permitted on the west side of Railway Avenue immediately north of Steveston Highway be removed and a "No Parking Anytime" regulation be established along this section of roadway to allow the continuation of the existing bicycle lane.*
- (3) *That staff continue to pursue opportunities to improve trail and pedestrian connections in the vicinity of Railway Avenue and Steveston Highway to encourage neighbourhood residents to use non-vehicular modes to access local businesses.*

The question on the motion was not called, as Committee members expressed their regret about the problems which Mr. O'Hare could face as a result of the removal of the parking, but recognized the need to deal with the increase in cyclists and traffic in the area. The comment was made that the City was encouraging residents to find alternate methods of transportation and that the recommendation being put forward supported that initiative. It was also noted that the parking was simply being relocated from the west side to the east side of Railway Avenue.

Questions were raised about the enforcement which would be in place to deal with individuals who continued to park on the west side of Railway Avenue, and Mr. Wei indicated that he would request the Manager of Community Bylaws to provide an information report to Council prior to the March 27th, 2006 Council Meeting on this matter. Information was also provided in answer to questions, that area residents would be advised that the west side parking on Railway Avenue was being eliminated.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

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6. **PARKING IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS IN STEVESTON**
(Report: Feb. 21/06, File No.: 10-6455-01/2006-Vol 01) (REDMS No. 1376694)

Discussion ensued among Committee members and staff on the potential for conflict arising between the regulations resulting from the various parking options and the spirit and character of Steveston, and the need for coordination of strategies to ensure that function and parking needs were appropriately addressed. Advice was given that staff want to ensure that they had the support of the Steveston Village Conservation strategy, as it was staff's intent to still retain Steveston's heritage characteristics at the same time as improving parking in the area.

Discussion then took place on how these parking improvement options would be communicated to the public, during which information was provided by staff on how this would be accomplished.

During the discussion, reference was made to the redevelopment of a heritage building which was to have included provision for public parking, but had been blocked to the public when the building opened, and staff provided information on the status of the situation.

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That the various parking improvement options identified from the Steveston Parking Study, (as described in the report dated February 21st, 2006, from the Acting Director, Transportation), be considered in the development of the upcoming Steveston Village Conservation Strategy and Implementation Program.*
- (2) *That staff report on the recommended parking-related improvement options for the Steveston Village area upon completion of the Steveston Village Conservation Strategy and Implementation Program in early 2007.*

CARRIED

7. **ICBC/CITY OF RICHMOND ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – PROPOSED PROJECTS FOR 2006**
(Report: Feb. 21/06, File No.: 0150-20-ICBC1-01) (REDMS No. 1770088)

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That the list of proposed road safety improvement projects potentially eligible for funding contributions from the ICBC 2006 Road Safety Improvement Program, (as described in the report dated February 21st, 2006, from the Acting Director, Transportation), be endorsed.*
- (2) *That should the above applications be successful, staff be authorized to execute the cost-share agreements.*

CARRIED

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INFORMATION / AWARENESS (1 ITEM)

ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION

8. **AGING INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING UPDATE**

(Report: Feb. 1/06, File No.: 10-6060-01/2006-Vol 01) (REDMS No. 1408490, 999774, 1775539, 1776229, 1776937, 1409450, 1782281)

The Manager, Engineering Planning, Siu Tse, in response to questions, advised that each utility had a different priority list which targeted specific areas for infrastructure replacement. During the discussion which ensued, the comment was made that the report should be referred to the Finance Committee for consideration in conjunction with the City's long term financial strategy.

It was moved and seconded

That the report (dated February 1st, 2006, from the Director, Engineering), regarding the Aging Infrastructure Planning Update, be received for information.

CARRIED

It was moved and seconded

That the report (dated February 1st, 2006, from the Director, Engineering), regarding the Aging Infrastructure Planning Update, be referred to the Finance Committee for review in conjunction with the Long Term Financial Strategy.

CARRIED

The Chair advised that the motion proposed by Councillor Howard regarding the Fire Department would be added to the agenda as an additional item.

9. **REVIEW OF FIRE DEPARTMENT**

It was moved and seconded

That the City conduct a full and independent review of the Richmond Fire Department, including hiring history, hiring practices, work place safety, and harassment policies; including a view of the current situation of our female firefighters, with recommendations that will allow them to return to, and continue to work, and to feel secure in doing so.

The question on the motion was not called, as Cllr. Howard provided his rationale for presenting the motion now under consideration. He referred to the newspaper articles which had appeared in local publications about the allegations and lawsuits relating to the Richmond Fire Department and alleged treatment of some of the female firefighters, and stated that it was important to address this issue quickly with an independent review.

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Cllr. Howard further stated that it was important to the community at large that the City not be seen as having prejudicial work ethics with respect to this matter. He added that he had every confidence in the Fire Department staff and the union that this matter would be dealt with quickly.

Fire Chief Jim Hancock, Deputy Chief Geoff Lake and Tim Wilkinson, President of Firefighters Association Local 1286, came forward and discussion then ensued among Committee members and the delegation on:

- whether the proposed motion was premature in light of the pending legal cases
- the harassment policies which were in place
- the potential cost of an independent review, and whether adjustments would be required to the City's budget to accommodate this cost.

In response to questions raised about the Department's hiring practices, advice was given that these practices were based on industry standards; that changes were occurring which would have a universal impact on fire departments, and that Richmond intended to be on the leading edge once these changes had been adopted. Further advice was given that the City's harassment policies were followed by the Department and that these policies had been reviewed with the staff; and that in addition, a code of conduct would soon be put in place.

With reference to the proposed independent review, advice was given by Chief Hancock that this review would probably discover what the department already knew about itself, and that any action which might result from this review would be welcome. A further comment was made that there would be little to discover by undertaking the independent review, and that the question now would be to make a decision on whether to return the female firefighters to work now or wait until the plan was in place. In response to further questions, Chief Hancock confirmed that a plan was in place to return the female firefighters to work. He also indicated that he did not know if an independent review would hamper this plan.

Mr. Wilkinson spoke about the City's harassment policy and commented briefly on its conception. He noted that the Union and the Fire Department had worked closely in the past to deal with any gaps in this policy. He also spoke about the plan which was in place and stated that the Union would expect that plan to continue. Mr. Wilkinson advised that the Union had no fear of, and would welcome, a third party investigation, and added that the Union supported the Department's Chiefs and the manner in which they were dealing with this issue.

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Discussion continued, a suggestion being made that a legal opinion should be obtained on whether this independent review would be appropriate at this time. Questions were raised about whether the Department actively recruited women firefighters and those in the visible minorities when hiring new firefighters. In response, information was provided that the Department was currently undertaking a complete review of its recruitment and hiring practices, including standards and criteria for other fire departments, to determine if Richmond's requirements were set too high. He advised that the Department was committed to having women and minorities as firefighters. Statistics were then provided on the percentage of women (2%) who graduated from firefighter colleges.

Mr. Wilkinson then commented on the Department's standards, stating that the tests were based on skills rather than athleticism to ensure the safety of not only the members of the public who may require assistance but also the safety of the firefighters responding to an emergency. He added that the criteria for these standards was set by the firefighting colleges.

Discussion continued, with concern being expressed that the allegations being made could seriously damage the Department's ability to recruit staff in the future. The Chair indicated that while she did not disagree with the holding of an independent review, she stressed that this should not be taken as a sign of non-confidence in the Department and its members. Other Committee members also expressed their agreement with this statement.

Cllr. Howard spoke further on the proposed motion, stating that it was good to see that there was a united front and a determination on behalf of the City, the Chief's Office and the Union to resolve the matter. He indicated that he had thought that the review could occur while the court cases were taking place, as he had checked with the appropriate staff who were of the opinion that this review would not jeopardize the current position. Cllr. Howard urged the Committee to send the resolution forward to Council, commenting that the cost of the review should not be too significant, and that it was critical to move quickly on this issue.

Discussion continued briefly, with a comment being made that the source of funds must be identified, and therefore, the matter should be referred to the Finance Committee. Also, concern was expressed about whether an independent review would interfere with the present court cases.

The question on the motion, as amended to add the following as Part (2),

“(2) That staff provide:

- (a) information on costing of the proposed review and the source of funding, and a legal opinion, prior to the March 27th, 2006 Regular Council Meeting; and***
- (b) a plan for implementation of any recommendations which may result from the independent review.”***

was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

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10. MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Wei reported that the RCMP and ICBC would be holding an orientation session for the participants of the STARS program on Saturday, March 25th. The Chair asked that the Committee's congratulations and support be extended to the organizers, along with the Committee's apologies for not being at the orientation session due to a prior commitment.

The Director, Engineering, Robert Gonzalez, reported that the Capital Works Projects Open House would be held at City Hall on Thursday, March 30th, 2006, and that every department with capital works scheduled for 2006 would be represented at that event.

Mr. Gonzalez also reported that the City had been advised by PowerSmart that Richmond would be the subject of a second video. Reference was made to the first video on the City's method of completing sewer maintenance, and the Chair offered her congratulations to those individuals who had participated.

Cllr. Chen referred to correspondence, accompanied by a petition, which she had received from residents in the area of 9700 block of Patterson Road, regarding the need for street lights. This request was passed onto Mr. Gonzalez for review.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded

That the meeting adjourn (5:45 p.m.).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Public Works & Transportation Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Wednesday, March 22nd, 2006.

Councillor Linda Barnes
Chair

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