



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

TO: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee **DATE:** July 12, 2001
FROM: Kate Sparrow **FILE:** -
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
RE: Steveston Interurban

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. That the City work with the Steveston Interurban Restoration Society to have the Tram Car No. 1220 restored and operating in Richmond within ten years at no cost to the City;
2. That within the next ten years the City establish a viable corridor and operating tracks for a Steveston Interurban with costs being considered through the normal capital budget submissions;
3. That the City not oppose the Society exploring options to lease the tram outside Richmond for a period not to exceed ten years or the year 2012, whichever comes first.

Kate Sparrow
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services

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ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Director, Public Works	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
Transportation.....	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
Law	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
Finance	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	

STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

At the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting on June 26th discussion regarding the Richmond Interurban occurred from an information memo written to Council by staff. Council members present requested additional information regarding:

1. costs of restoration;
2. logistics of providing a working track and operating costs;
3. the legality of the Steveston Interurban Restoration Society's intent to lease the tram to Surrey thereby causing it to leave Richmond; and,
4. a potential corridor for the operation of the tram.

This report provides preliminary information and some options for Council consideration.

ANALYSIS

City of Richmond staff met with staff responsible for the operation of the City of Vancouver trams. Much of the information contained within this report was provided from their experience in establishing and maintaining an operating tram system as a tourist attraction.

1. Costs of Restoration of the Richmond Tram

The Steveston Interurban Restoration Society (SIRS) has estimated that approximately \$200,000 to \$260,000 is required to complete the restoration of the tram. City of Vancouver staff, who have extensive experience restoring and operating interurban cars, felt that the \$260,000 was a reasonable estimate with \$60,000 to \$80,000 required for the interior alone. Most of the remaining work needs to be done by professional machine shops and not on site by volunteers.

2. Provision of a Working Track and Operating Costs and Logistics

Estimates have put track construction, provision of overhead power lines, a rectifier station and crossing and crossing protection at \$700,000 per kilometer. An additional 10% is required for engineering and construction specifications bringing the cost per kilometer to \$770,000. Additional costs, estimated at \$450,000, are required for platforms and a station. Interurban doorways are higher than trains or streetcars so platforms are needed.

Interurbans are designed predominately for dedicated corridors. In some cases they do run on streets like streetcars but typically in straight lines because they are long and require large turning radii.

Anything to do with rails is under Provincial government regulations. All drivers must pass an examination and the City must conduct regular inspections (twice weekly in the case of Vancouver) of the rails and keep these records for provincial inspections. If the tram runs on the streets the City must operate it for liability reasons. The City of Vancouver operates their tram within the old CP corridor and is operated by volunteers.

Vancouver operates their two interurbans, both of which are leased, Saturday and Sunday, noon to 5pm from May to October, on their demonstration mile. The trams are also used for special events and private rentals. The City maintains the trams using city staff time. They have an annual budget of \$11,000 for hard costs. Staff time of an electrical engineer, a mechanic and a person to work with the volunteer drivers on the customer service side is covered in departmental budgets. From the revenue collected from fares, 15% goes to the owners of one of the trams and the City receives approximately \$9,000 per year. They have a long term lease for the second tram for which they paid \$75,000 – 80,000 to complete the restoration.

The City of Nelson operates a street car as a tourist attraction. They generate \$14,000 to \$15,000 per year in revenue and this revenue covers the expenses of the station and car barn which include telephone, heat & light, office supplies, operating manuals. The power to run the car is provided by the City and the labour is provided by volunteers. Minor maintenance is done by volunteers. There has been no major maintenance required to date.

3. Legality of the Society Signing a Long Term Lease for the Tram

Staff were asked to comment on the constitution of SIRS and the legality of their signing a long term lease for the tram whereby it left Richmond for an extended period of time. The opinion of the City Solicitor is that they would be contravening the purposes of the Society as laid out in clause 2 of their constitution.

The purpose of the Society is to preserve history. This will include establishing a working heritage interurban site in the City of Richmond raising funds for, and participating in the operation of such a site; collecting artifacts, photographs and repair of heritage interurban and associated elements of Richmond history. Integral functions of the Society will include education, research and promoting the general understanding and enjoyment of Canada's West Coast interurban history in an open accessible setting.

Clause 3 states:

The operation of the Society is to be carried out in the City of Richmond, within the Province of British Columbia. This provision is unalterable.

4. Possible Corridor for an Operating Tram

Most discussion over the years has placed the tram operating in the same general area – Steveston Village to London Heritage Farm. Since there are no existing tracks and any tracks would need to be within the road right-of-way, engineering studies would be required for exact locations. However, from the corner of No. 1 Road and Bayview Drive east along the Bayview Extension, Westwater Drive and the City owned CP corridor from No. 2 Road to London Farm is approximately 3 kilometers. This route would link Steveston Village with two heritage sites – Britannia and London Farm – thereby enhancing the visitors' experience and adding to the tourist destination appeal of Steveston. The route poses a challenge on Westwater Drive with its sharp turns around the Britannia apartments making land acquisition on the west side and a swath through Britannia Shipyards on the east necessary. The remainder of the route is relatively straight with few road crossings. Given the turning radius requirements of the tram and the limited property availability within the village of Steveston, it is not considered feasible to operate the tram west of No. 1 Road.

Capital Costs to Get the Richmond Interurban Operating within Steveston

Complete restoration of Richmond tram	\$ 260,000
Instillation of Track – London Farm to Steveston Village 3 kilometers @ \$770,000 per km	2,310,000
Transportation consultant fees for track location	100,000
Car Barn & Station	<u>450,000</u>
TOTAL	\$3,160,000

Options

There are four options presented for Council consideration.

Option 1: Complete Tram and Get Running as quickly as possible

Council could allocate the funds needed to complete the restoration and fund the transportation studies for the route from the 2001 capital budget (\$360,000) and the remaining \$2.76 million to lay the tracks and build the station and car barn in the 2002 capital budget.

Pros:

- the tram would be up and running connecting the heritage sites in Steveston and as a viable tourist attraction by 2003-2004.

Cons:

- the funds needed would need to be reallocated from other projects already approved for 2001 and in the five year capital plan for 2002;
- the timeline for the development of the BC Packers lands through which the proposed tram route would run is as yet undetermined.

Option 2: Five Year Phased Development of Tram System

A phased approach would still have Council taking the lead role in funding the tram restoration and operation but over a five year period.

- ❑ Phase one would be to allocate funding in the 2002 capital budget to pay for the completion of the restoration (\$260,000), move the existing barn and tram to another site somewhere along the eventual line (\$100,000), and hire the transportation consultant to finalize the route (\$100,000) for a total allocation in 2002 for \$500,000.
- ❑ Phase 2 (2003) would lay down 1 kilometer of electrified track (perhaps from Britannia to No. 2 Road) for \$770,000.
- ❑ Phase 3 (2004) would build the permanent car barn, station and museum at \$450,000.
- ❑ Phase 4 (2005) would build another kilometer of track for \$770,000.
- ❑ Phase 5 (2006) would complete the 3 kilometer of track for another \$770,000.

Pros:

- the tram could be running on a "demonstration" kilometer by 2004 providing a destination tourist attraction in Richmond and be completed by 2006;
- an important historical artifact would remain within the community;
- the financial outlay needed to have the tram operational would be spread over five years instead of in one;

- the laying of the track could be timed to coincide with the development on the BC Packers lands and the development of the Bayview extension.

Cons:

- The City would need to reallocate funding allocated in the five year capital plan from projects already prioritized.

Option 3: Ten Year Phased Development

The ten year phased development plan would have staff work with the Steveston Interurban Society to have the tram completed and seek lease options to another community on a lease not to exceed ten years. At the end of the lease Richmond will have constructed an operating route connecting the Steveston heritage sites that can accommodate the tram. Funding for the various stages above (minus the \$300,000 to complete the restoration) would be submitted with capital budget submissions.

Pros:

- time to do the engineering studies needed for locating the tram;
- capital budgets for 2001 and 2002 do not have to be reallocated;
- the buildings needed for the tram which are slated for removal from Steveston Park could be removed and more time is available for finding another site to locate the car barn and the station.

Cons:

- with the tram not in the community for such an extended period of time citizen interest diminishes. A small exhibit, possibly with models, could be set up at one of the heritage sites in Steveston to maintain awareness of the tram.

For any of the above options a strong working agreement with the Steveston Interurban Restoration Society is required in order to acknowledge direct City involvement in the ongoing operation of the tram. Options 1 and 2 would require intensive City involvement in the restoration and capital building stages as well as the operation.

Option 4: No further City involvement in the Tram

To date the City has not contributed financially to the actual restoration of the tram. However, City funding has gone to pay for the relocation of the tram from No. 1 Road and Moncton Street to its current home in Steveston Park; building of the car barn and workshops; utilities needed on the site. With the impending need to move the tram and buildings from Steveston Park in order to complete the approved Steveston Park Plan and the Society's stated wish to lease the tram to Surrey they could be requested to move the tram from the park and until such time as they can raise the funds needed to put in the track that the City have no further involvement other than to ensure that opportunities for future location of the tracks are not lost in perpetuity.

Pros:

- No cost to the City.

Cons:

- A part of the City's heritage and an asset to the community would be lost; probably for the foreseeable future.
- A tourist attraction would be lost to the community.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Should option 3 be adopted the cost of \$2.9 million to lay the tracks and build the station and car barn would be phased over the next 10 years and included in the normal capital budget submissions for Council approval.

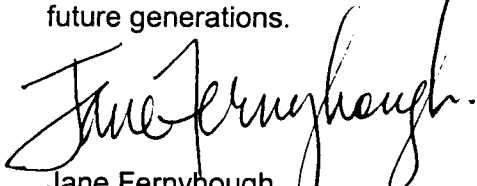
Should option 1 be adopted the \$3.160,000 needed to restore the tram and provide operating tracks would be needed in two years. Option 2, phased over five years would require \$3,260,000 (the extra \$100,000 is for a temporary car barn when the tram is moved from Steveston Park). The funding for these two options would come from reallocated capital funding or possibly through a referendum.

The above costs do not include any land acquisition that might be required to ensure adequate turning radii or station or car barn placement.

With any of the above options ongoing operating costs including tram operators, tram maintenance and track maintenance must be considered.

CONCLUSION

An operating tram in Richmond is a significant asset in the City's preservation and presentation of its heritage and could contribute immensely to the tourist destination aspect of Steveston. City involvement and commitment is required in order to have an operating tram in the City for future generations.



Jane Fernyhough
Manager, Cultural Services

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