



Special General Purposes Committee

- Date: Wednesday, June 7, 2023
- Place: Council Chambers
Richmond City Hall
- Present: Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair
Councillor Chak Au
Councillor Carol Day
Councillor Laura Gillanders
Councillor Kash Heed
Councillor Andy Hobbs
Councillor Alexa Loo
Councillor Bill McNulty
Councillor Michael Wolfe (by teleconference)
- Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION AND ENGINEERING DIVISION

1. **STEVESTON HIGHWAY MULTI-USE PATHWAY PROJECT
PHASES 1 AND 2 – UPDATE**

(File Ref. No. 10-6460-01) (REDMS No. 7195912)

Staff provided the following information:

- the multi-use pathway (MUP) is part of local and regional planned networks for cycling;
- the alternate option proposes to maintain lane widths to a larger degree; and
- the buffer in alternate option has been reduced therefore a railing or barrier has been proposed to separate users of the MUP from vehicle traffic.

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In reply to queries from Committee, staff advised that (i) with tunnel replacement there will be bike paths across the overpass which will be complete in 2025, (ii) tunnel project is underway and currently at the environmental processing stage, (iii) options for bike lanes through the tunnel come out at Rice Mill Road, (iv) when the tunnel project plans are finalized connections for bike routes from Shell Road to the tunnel can be examined, (v) narrowing of the road lanes was proposed as there is evidence that it contributes to lower speeds, (vi) cost estimates of the alternative option fit within the proposed budget, (vii) the proposed MUP will be bidirectional, (viii) there is no plan to remove any left turn lanes, (ix) currently only some trimming of hedges would be required, however an arborist report will be required to examine tree removal and retention, (x) divider lines can be painted on the MUP to aid with direction of traffic, (xi) in order to create a dedicated bike lane separate from the pedestrians, a traffic lane would need to be removed and staff are not prepared to do that at this time, (xii) there have not been any complaints with regards to cyclists hitting pedestrians on other MUPs in the City, and (xiii) the proposed MUP is a mixed use facility.

John Roston, spoke in opposition to the proposed MUP at Steveston Highway, and noted that (i) air pollution along Steveston Highway can have adverse health effects on adults and especially children, (ii) routes through farmland would be a better option, (iii) bikes routes along Williams Road is a better option, (iv) Council should vote against the proposed MUP and use the money for other routes in Richmond.

Derek Williams, Richmond Active Transportation Committee, spoke in support of the proposed MUP, and noted that (i) a MUP on Steveston Highway is important as it provides a more direct route, (ii) the Williams Road bike route is good as is but could use some minor upgrades, (iii) should people wish not to cycle along Steveston Highway, they can take alternate routes, and (iv) if lowering the speed along Steveston Highway is the goal then to proceed with that.

Devyn Cairns, HUB Cycling, spoke in favour of the proposed MUP on Steveston Highway, and noted that (i) he does not own a car and biking is his form of transportation, (ii) cyclists need safer infrastructure to ride, (iii) riding on roads or crossing has been unsafe, (iv) there are many routes to Steveston Highway, however the connections stops there, (v) lane width is a major factor with excessive speed and lowering speeds will improve air quality in the area, and (vi) Council should approve this project and provide more convenient options to walk and bike in all areas of Richmond.

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Jeff England, Richmond resident, spoke in favour of the proposed MUP, noting that (i) A MUP on Steveston Highway would allow for a more direct route for his kids to get to school, (ii) he keeps up to date with engineering projects to see what is happening around the City, (iii) the MUP will be beneficial for people of all ages and abilities, (iv) this is important for the City's growth, (v) the goal is to have a cycling facility on every road, and (vi) the proposed MUP will narrow traffic lanes and help slow down traffic on Steveston Highway.

James White, spoke in favour of Option 1, as noted in the original staff report, and noted that (i) a MUP is not well suited for people trying to go fast, however is beneficial for new cyclists, children, motorized scooters and bikes, (ii) more people cycling means less cars on the road, and (iii) there is a need for safe bike parking as well.

Les Kiss, spoke in opposition to the proposed MUP, and was of the opinion that (i) the railing will not be beneficial from an environmental and safety perspective, (ii) with no space between the road and the MUP it will be difficult for cars to pull over to allow First Responder Vehicles to pass, (iii) there will be visual problems along the driveways with the installation of the railing, (iv) cyclists will be stranded with nowhere to go after Shell Road, and (v) MUP's should not allow motorized scooters and e-bikes as they go too fast.

Dr. Meena Dawar, Chief Medical Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation (Copy on File, City Clerk's Office) spoke in favour of the proposed MUP and highlighted the importance of physical activity.

Rex Hudson, Manager of System Plans, Translink, and Stephen Wong, Manager, Municipal Funding Program, Translink, highlighted that (i) a bike route on Steveston Highway from Highway 99 to Steveston Village is part of a major bikeway network, (ii) there is regional funding for cycling networks and funding programs for local governments to apply for, (iii) there are program rules and guidelines that local governments need to adhere to when applying for funding, and (iv) for the proposed project, approximately \$5M was committed from regional funds and TransLink is in support of this project. Mr. Hudson further noted that (i) should the funds not be used for this specific project the money would be returned to the program and would be used to support other projects, and (ii) Richmond has the opportunity to apply for other funding programs for other projects.

Jonathan Vegt, spoke in favour of the proposed MUP, noting that (i) even short trips using the MUP means less cars on the road, (ii) staff have done well with addressing concerns raised by Council, and (iii) separated paths are supported as they are safer.

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Michael Bomford, expressed support for the proposed MUP, noting that (i) he bikes everywhere, (ii) taking Williams Road adds an additional 1.6 miles to his commute and he prefers to take the most direct route possible, (iii) it is important to provide safe routes throughout town to meet goals by 2041, and (iv) it is time to restore the space for people to get around without a steel cage.

Jesse Li, expressed support for the Option 1 MUP, noting that (i) he cycles everywhere, (ii) the City should rename Steveston Highway to Steveston Road and make it similar to all other roads in Richmond, (iii) narrowing road lanes will lead to slower traffic and fewer fatal collisions, (iv) narrower MUP lanes make it difficult to manoeuvre around pedestrians and other MUP users, (v) the alternate option is sufficient, however Council should approve Option 1.

Donna Kwan, expressed support for the proposed MUP, noting that (i) it is important to plan for the future, (ii) traffic patterns may change on Steveston Highway once tunnel project is complete, (iii) many people use Steveston Highway to avoid the gridlock through the tunnel, and (iv) Richmond needs more cycling infrastructure and more connections.

Yvonne Bell, spoke in support of the proposed MUP, noting that she lives very close to Steveston Highway and the MUP would help in cutting down time when traveling to places, and there is no need to spend money on Williams Road as there is already an existing bike path.

Abbas Virji, expressed support for the proposed MUP, and noted that (i) he is an avid cyclist and in favour of increased active transportation infrastructure, (ii) reducing lane widths will reduce speeds and fatal crashes, (iii) one person cycling on MUP is one less person driving a car which is significant in achieving climate goals, (iv) the eventual completion of the overpass will allow for connections and the tunnel will have dedicated bike lanes separated from the traffic allowing people to travel from the ferries to Steveston Village, (v) the funding alone is reason to proceed with this project so as not to put the future on hold.

Robin White, noted that (i) the proposed MUP needs to be wide enough for everyone to use safely, (ii) the location of the MUP should be along Finn Road, however she does not want to see the project delayed, and (iii) narrow MUP's are more difficult to maintain and keep clean. She then queried whether the path would be lit.

Erjun Ma, spoke in favour of the original proposed MUP, noting that (i) narrower road lanes result in slower traffic, (ii) the alternate design only has a metal railing between the users of the MUP and traffic, (iii) sections of the MUP will not have railings due to driveways, and (iv) absence of greenspace on the MUP will result in less use of the path.

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Evan Dunfee, spoke in favour of the proposed MUP, noting that (i) the MUP is for all types of users, (ii) as a child, rollerblading around town and cycling around town gave him a sense of independence, (iii) there is a need for separated, safe areas for children to move about, (iv) there is a large demand for micro mobility in the city, however we need the infrastructure to support it, (v) replacing cars with bikes is less wear and tear on the roads, and (vi) new developments are required to provide bike storage and end of trip facilities, and routes to get from the garage to work are also needed.

David MaGowan, spoke in favour of the original MUP, noting that the road lanes need to be narrowed and the MUP needs to be as wide as possible and was of the opinion that the pathway will be popular and well used.

The meeting was recessed at 6:31 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:17 p.m. with all members of Council present.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded

That the meeting adjourn (7:18 p.m.).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Special General Purposes Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Wednesday, June 7, 2023.

Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie
Chair

Sarah Goddard
Legislative Services Associate