


NEW WESTMINSTER

To Public Hearing
Date: Jan 18, 2010
Item # 2
Re: Bylaw 8557

January 18, 2010

File: 13.2530.15
Doc#125447

The City of Richmond
Attention: City Clerk
6911 No.3 Road,
Richmond, BC, V6Y 2C1

SCHEDULE 6 TO THE MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL FOR
PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD ON MONDAY,
JANUARY 18, 2010.

By Fax: 604-278-5139

Dear Mayor Brodie and City of Richmond Council:

Re: Public Hearing for Bylaw No. 8557

The purpose of this letter is to submit the City of New Westminster's comments on Bylaw No. 8557, for the zoning of a site in the Hamilton neighbourhood to establish a bus operations and maintenance facility.

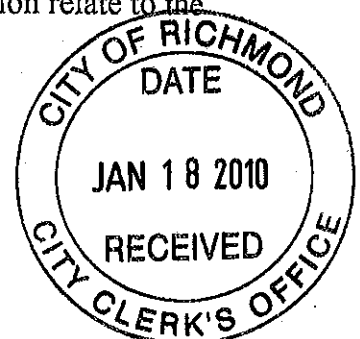
New Westminster Council and staff members have received expressions of concern from members of the community about the proposed bus operations and maintenance facility to be developed on the Richmond-side of Boundary Road adjacent to Queensborough, the subject of tonight's Public Hearing.

Council has been informed that staff from New Westminster Planning Division and Engineering Department learned about the proposed development in November 2009, and received information from the Richmond Planning Department at that time. However, since that time no further updates or information was received. New Westminster staff was monitoring the City of Richmond's project website, where no further information or updates had been posted. After learning of this Public Hearing on January 11, 2010, Planning and Engineering staff members have been in contact with Richmond City staff to obtain information. As you can understand, New Westminster staff has not been able to review the new information and consulting reports in that short period of time to properly address the concerns of residents.

In reviewing the proposal, New Westminster Council and staff consider the proposed bus facility appropriate for a light industrial area, and therefore do not have concerns regarding the proposed land use. The concerns expressed in this submission relate to the

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management of the transportation and traffic impacts of the proposal, specifically that impact on traffic patterns in the Westminster Highway/Howes intersection and the lack of communication regarding the design of Boundary Road. Fuller details of the specific concerns are included in the enclosed staff report, dated January 18, 2010.

The following provides a summary of the three most significant concerns which have been identified by New Westminster staff and residents:

1. A condition of the rezoning will require that approximately 90% of the bus traffic to and from the facility will be restricted to the Westminster Highway, Highway 91A corridor, passing through the Howes Street intersection. These routes, all passing through Queensborough, are part of the Major Roads Network, and are intended to accommodate regional traffic with no restriction on access.
2. Concern has been expressed that the additional traffic generated from the proposal will exacerbate a condition where congestion is currently a problem. The intersection capacity analysis submitted to New Westminster staff did not take in account traffic generated by approved developments located on the former Western Forest Product site or along Westminster Highway and Boyd Street. Additional analysis should be done to account for planned New Westminster developments and to ascertain if traffic improvements are required for the Westminster / Howes intersection.
3. There has been no consultation with Richmond staff regarding the role and potential functional design of Boundary Road. The City of New Westminster wishes to remind the City of Richmond that in February 1964, the Boundary Road Improvement Authorization Bylaw was adopted which authorized Richmond to improve Boundary Road according to specified plans and thereafter maintain the road. According to Section 37 of the *Community Charter*, in the case of an intermunicipal boundary highway, improvements to boundary highways may only occur with the approval of both municipalities. Engineering staff has identified a number of concerns with the proposed improvements to Boundary Road as well as the intersection with Westminster Highway which need to be addressed at the functional and detailed design stage.

Considering the above, the City of New requests that the City of Richmond not give Final Approval of the rezoning application until the concerns summarized in this letter are



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reviewed and measures are taken to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development on the community, and that both municipalities agree to the functional and detailed design of Boundary Road.

The City of New Westminster wishes to acknowledge that we value our collegial and constructive relationship with the City of Richmond. We look forward to working together to resolve the issues outlined in this submission.

Yours truly,

Wayne Wright
MAYOR

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REPORT

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

To: Mayor W. Wright and Members of Council in Regular Meeting of Council Working Session Date: January 18, 2010

From: Lisa Spitale, Director of Development Services File: 13.2530.15

Jim Lowrie, Director of Engineering

Subject: Proposed Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility in Richmond.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council send a letter to the City of Richmond Public Hearing scheduled for January 18, 2010 regarding a proposal for South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority to rezone a site in Richmond at the north west corner of Westminster Highway and Boundary Road from "Industrial" (I) to "Light Industrial" (IL) in order to develop a Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility.

PURPOSE

This report provides Mayor and Council with information regarding a proposal for South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority to rezone a site in Richmond at the north west corner of Westminster Highway and Boundary Road from "Industrial" (I) to "Light Industrial" (IL) in order to develop a Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility.

The City of Richmond staff report regarding proposal is included as Attachment 1. (see public hearing agenda item #2)

BACKGROUND

At the Regular Council meeting of January 11, 2010, Council and Staff were informed that a public hearing for the proposed rezoning was set for Monday, January 18, 2010 at 7pm at Richmond City Hall. Council directed staff to prepare a report on the proposed rezoning application.

Preliminary information about the proposal was distributed to staff in November 2009, but since that time no further updates or information was received. Planning Division

staff was monitoring the project website, and no further information had been posted since November.

Having learned of the Public Hearing date of January 18, 2010 on the evening of January 11, 2010, Planning and Engineering Department members have been in contact with Richmond City staff to obtain information and clarify issues. However, staff has not had sufficient time to review the Public Hearing drawings and the consultants' reports to be able to respond to the concerns of the New Westminster residents. As such, this report recommends that Council submit a letter to the Public Hearing outlining the concerns of the residents and requesting that Final Approval of the rezoning application not occur until those concerns are explored and that both municipalities agree to the functional and detailed design of Boundary Road.

EXISTING POLICY/PRACTICE

Under the Local Government Act, municipalities are not required to refer rezoning applications to adjacent municipalities for comment. However, it is customary to refer applications which have an impact on adjacent municipalities for comment and review.

ANALYSIS

The Proposed Development

The proposed Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility will provide for maintenance and storage of the fleet which serves New Westminster, Burnaby, Delta and Surrey as well as providing parking for bus drivers. The site will be designed to accommodate an ultimate capacity of 350 diesel buses with about 600 TransLink staff employed at the facility, of which 100 will be on-site staff and the remainder being bus drivers.

The proposal includes a bus maintenance building and several smaller buildings with a collective capacity of about 11,148 m² (120,000 square feet). The main building will be used for vehicle maintenance, ancillary office space, storage, break facilities, and a fitness centre. The development also includes the provision of a community amenity (proposed to be a child care facility) a pedestrian trail between Westminster Highway and the foreshore and a natural buffer strip between the site and the Hamilton residential neighbourhood.

Staff has reviewed the proposal and information, and provides the following analysis for Council's consideration. The main concerns are related to the traffic and transportation impacts associated with the proposal.

Land Use

The subject site is currently zoned a mix of I (Industrial) and IL (Light Industrial). The proposed rezoning application will rezone the entire property to IL (Light Industrial) in order that the site can be consolidated and developed comprehensively.

Considering that the proposal involves a Light Industrial use, staff has no concerns with the proposed land use change from Heavy Industrial to Light Industrial. The permitted uses in the IL (Light Industrial) district are considered more compatible with the Queensborough Area as they include less industrially intensive activities. The current Industrial (I) zone permits typical heavy industrial uses such as concrete plants, recycling of hazardous material and waste management facilities which could cause significant neighbourhood externalities.

Traffic Concerns

Queensborough residents have expressed concern about the traffic generated from the site, particularly the bus and vehicular movements that will occur eastbound from the site to the Howes Street intersection. The Richmond staff report notes with the exception of the buses servicing the Hamilton community, all other bus traffic will be restricted by registered agreement on the title to access the site using roadways east of the property leading to Highway 91A. This agreement is a condition of rezoning. As well, TransLink has committed to work with their employees to ensure that they use similar routes to access the site. The result of these restrictions to road access is that the majority (90 %) of the bus traffic will be directed eastbound on Westminster Highway to the Howes Street intersection.

The Engineering Department has reviewed the information and provide the following comments:

Background

1. The site is being designed to potentially accommodate 350 diesel buses, approximately 600 staff will be employed at the facility with approximately 100 on-site staff and the remainder transit drivers. A total of 350 parking spaces are proposed to accommodate both visitors and employee parking.
2. The site arrangement proposes access off of Boundary Road with a new site access located approximately 50 meters north of Westminster Highway.
3. The City of Richmond staff report as well as the site plan states that "*with the exception of buses serving Hamilton community, all other bus traffic will be restricted by registered agreement on title to access the site using roadways east of the property leading to Highway 91A.*" The staff report goes on to say site servicing will include:

- A new traffic signal with a north-south crosswalk at Westminster Highway and Boundary Road with Boundary Road widening and an exclusive left-turn lane for southbound traffic;
- Site frontage improvements include street lighting on all frontages as well as a sidewalk on the north side of Westminster Highway and the west side of Boundary Road, a transit landing and shelter near the Westminster Highway/ Boundary Rd intersection as well as a bike lane along Westminster Highway frontage (north side);
- In addition a Transportation Demand Management Plan has been submitted by the applicant. The Plan elements are intended to reduce auto related trips generated by the site (see Attachment 5 of the Richmond Staff report.)

Transportation staff has reviewed the material, including a Transportation Assessment, provided from the City of Richmond regarding an application from TransLink for a Bus Maintenance Facility for the site located in the northwest quadrant of Westminster Highway at Boundary Road . A Traffic Assessment prepared by Itrans Consulting examined operations at two intersections: Westminster Highway at Boundary Road and at Howes Street during both morning and afternoon peak periods for three horizon periods, 2012 Opening Day and 2017. The report notes the following:

Due to development restrictions mandated by the City of Richmond, the majority of buses (90%) are required to access the Site from Highway 91A and the Howes Street (from the east). The report goes on to note that "the (traffic) analysis for 2012 Total Traffic found that the intersection of Westminster Highway / Howes Street operated at acceptable levels... the intersection of Westminster Highway / Boundary Road, the northbound and southbound movements experienced delays with unacceptable levels of service." A traffic signal at this intersection is recommended to mitigate poor operations.

Transportation staff have reviewed the Transportation Assessment and note the following:

1. Within the City, Boundary Road is a designated local road, the municipal boundary, for the section north of Westminster Highway, is centred in the existing road right-of-way, generally in line with the painted yellow centreline. An emergency access to the Casino site (gated access) is located off of Boundary Road about 150 m north of the subject site generally in line with an access to Tree Island Steel located on the west side. It is important that roadway geometrics and traffic operations on Boundary Road be managed so as to not hinder emergency access to the Casino at this location. It is recommended that the functional plan for the Boundary Road corridor that City of Richmond has required be extended to include the two accesses to these two existing properties and the intersection of Boundary at Westminster Highway and that any subsequent road works be done accordingly. It is noted that improvements outlined in Richmond report - Attachment 4 regarding works on the New Westminster side of the municipal boundary were missed in the main body of the report. This also requires clarification from City of Richmond staff regarding this oversight. Since some of

the required roadway improvements (e.g. Boundary Road and the Westminster Highway/Boundary Road intersection) are located in the City of New Westminster, the functional and detailed design drawings for these improvements will need to be reviewed and approved by the City of New Westminster.

2. Westminster Highway, in both Richmond and City of New Westminster is part of the Region's Major Road Network (MRN). Generally MRN roads are intended to accommodate through regional traffic including both passenger and commercial service vehicles. Movements on the MRN are not typically restricted and, in this case, the transit vehicles should be considered "commercial service" vehicles, in that they are on their way to, or leaving their their route location. Commercial service vehicles should not have movements restricted on MRN corridors and that the choice of eastbound or westbound travel should really be dependent on traffic conditions, which vary by time of day, season and other factors. Due to existing land uses and proximity to the Highway 91 A, the section of Westminster Highway east of the site experiences congestion and delays during peak periods, therefore the primary goal should be to maintain schedules and minimize travel delay for this type of activity. Transportation staff, therefore do not support the restriction posed by the City of Richmond to restrict bus travel to "roads east" of the subject site.
3. Furthermore the intersection capacity analysis for the intersections of Westminster Highway/Boundary Road and Westminster Highway / Howes in the traffic assessment for the Tree Island Bus Depot (August 2009) prepared by iTRANS does not consider the traffic generated by the planned commercial/industrial developments located on the former Western Forest Products site nor does it appear to accurately reflect the large volume of bus type traffic in the Synchro traffic analysis¹. Therefore once both developments are factored in, it is likely that increased travel delays will be experienced on Westminster Highway east of Boundary near Howes in the community of Queensborough. Therefore additional analysis should be done to account for planned New Westminster developments and to ascertain if traffic improvements are required for the Westminster / Howes intersection.
4. Also in regard to the Westminster Highway / Boundary traffic signal, as part of the site works for the 401 Jardine site, the City obtained a contribution of \$45,000 towards a future signal at this intersection. In addition traffic signal progression along Westminster Highway to coordinate signals at Boundary Road, Gifford Street and Howes Street is a part of Servicing Agreement Conditions. Therefore the proposed traffic signal for the intersection of Boundary at Westminster Highway should remain under City of New Westminster jurisdiction so that on-going traffic signal coordination can be implemented and maintained.

¹ To be confirmed by consultant (iTrans)

Queensborough residents have asked City staff if the agreement restricting access which is a condition of rezoning is legally enforceable. Staff received a legal opinion stating that normally the Section 21 of the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act precludes any action that would reduce the capacity of any part of the major road network to move people (Westminster Highway is part of this network), unless approved by the Authority. In this case, the Authority would be considered to have approved such restrictions if they are contained in an agreement to which the Authority is a party since they are the applicant.

Boundary Road Improvements

The rezoning application is proposing improvements to Boundary Road as a condition of the rezoning. There exists a "Boundary Road Improvement Authorization Bylaw" affecting the City of New Westminster and the City of Richmond which authorized Richmond to undertake specified improvements on Boundary Road. According to Section 37 of the *Community Charter*, in the case of an intermunicipal boundary highway, improvements to boundary highways may only occur with the approval of both municipalities. To the extent that the improvements to Boundary Road described in Richmond staff report regarding the proposed rezoning affect Boundary Road, the approval of New Westminster will be required. Engineering staff has identified a number of concerns with the proposed improvements to Boundary Road as well as the intersection with Westminster Highway which need to be addressed at the functional and detailed design stage.

Richmond City staff has inquired as to whether the design of Boundary Road was an issue in the consideration of the OCP amendment and rezoning for the Starlight Casino. Staff has informed Richmond staff that as a result of the functional analysis of this road as well as comments received from the City of Richmond, Boundary Road is considered only as an emergency access route from the Casino site, and that a locked gate prevents general traffic from accessing Boundary Road from the Casino parking lot.

OPTIONS

The following three options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. That a letter be forwarded to the City of Richmond for submission to the Public Hearing for the proposed Hamilton bus maintenance facility;
2. That the City of New Westminster decline to provide comment at the Public Hearing and staff be directed to meet with City of Richmond staff to discuss the issues raised by New Westminster residents; or
3. That Council provide other direction.

Staff recommend Option 1.

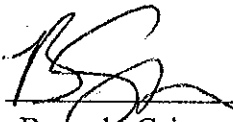
INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Planning Division and Engineering Department Transportation staff collaborated in reviewing the proposed rezoning application and preparing this report.

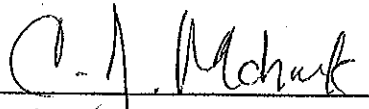
CONCLUSION

Overall, both Planning Division and Engineering Department staff believe that the proposed rezoning application represents a reasonable use of the land, and therefore the land use proposed on the site is not of concern. However, it is clear that the proposal presents potentially significant traffic and transportation externalities to New Westminster, and staff has not been able to evaluate these impacts nor be in a position to respond to the issues raised by residents.

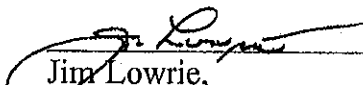
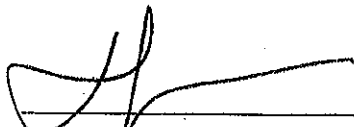
As such, this report recommends that Council submit a letter to the Public Hearing outlining the concerns of the residents and requesting that Final Approval of the rezoning application not occur until those concerns are explored and resolutions found, and that both municipalities agree to the functional and detailed design of Boundary Road.



Beverly Grieve,
Manager of Planning




Catherine Mchoruk,
Transportation Engineering Specialist


Jim Lowrie,
Director of Engineering

Lisa Spitale,
Director of Development Services

Approved for Presentation to Council

for


Paul Daminato,
City Administrator