

Roman Herchak
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August 23rd, 2004.

City Council
City of Richmond
Public Hearing Submission from the Floor

**Re: Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw 7712 and Zoning Amendment
Bylaw 7713 (RZ 03-232158)**

My name is Roman Herchak, and I have been resident at 11540 Seabay Rd. in Richmond since 1973. The purpose for this submission is because of my concern for the safety of motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users on an already full capacity major road. Indeed, Steveston Highway is indeed what it is named... a highway... and not a major, or arterial road, equal to Williams, or Francis roads. Therefore, I hope that my submission will help convince Council to direct staff to put a hold on this and all future rezoning applications for higher densities until the Ironwood Area Plan, completed in 1999, is reviewed and rewritten to address the concerns expressed in not only tonight's Public Hearing, but also the concerns expressed in numerous previous forums by the residents in this area.

My comments concerning this application are based on not only the City of Richmond website to review the chronology and contents of this application and my meeting with a planning staff member of the Urban Development Division, but also on the basis of my professional experience in urban and regional planning and development since 1964, both in Canada and internationally. Indeed, some members of council may recall that I served as the Deputy Director of Planning for the City of Richmond from 1976 to 1979.

The Richmond Official Community Plan states the following:

“Section 4.0 – Transportation (page 57)

To be effective, transportation in the City of Richmond must respond to changes in the communities' priorities. There is increasing concern over traffic congestion, noise, and air pollution, safety, accessibility for all groups, and the amount of paved area and lack of green. Future transportation solutions will need to be sustainable, environmentally, economically, and socially. As a result, transportation objectives must be coordinated with other plan objectives.”

Further, Objective 2 of Transportation, on page 59 states “Manage traffic flow for efficient and convenient travel while enhancing neighbourhood liveability.”

The policies to attain this objective state, on page 59 of the OCP, state:

- “a. Use a system of major and minor roads which directs through traffic to major roads and minimizes traffic intrusion into residential neighbourhoods;
- b. Maintain major roads as the primary corridors for the efficient movement of through traffic (transit, cyclists, and automobiles), with appropriate allowances for local circulation in areas of intense land use activity ;
- c. Require lanes parallel to major roads to discourage individual driveways which impede traffic flow, and create safety hazards for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians”

Staff reports from the July 6 Public Information Meeting indicated the following, among other issues:

1. Lane Access is supportable only if opening of the lane does not happen for a long time;
2. Traffic congestion along Steveston Highway from Highway 99 to Shell Road, with all its incumbent concerns for pedestrian and traffic safety and air pollution will naturally funnel towards the No 5 and Steveston interchange. This area should be considered a special case with respect to the City’s Arterial Road and Lane Policies.
3. This intersection is a major gateway to Richmond, and the City’s Arterial Road and Lane Policies do not necessarily apply”

Concerning future development in this area, the May 28 staff report stated “However, in the future it is likely that other multi-family developments may be considered adjacent to the site along Steveston Highway on the basis of Arterial Road Redevelopment Policy”

On page 13 of that staff report, a table is presented which presents various increases in housing units under various densities. Taking the Low Density Townhouse scenario, which relates to this application, and assumedly to all other future applications on Steveston Highway, staff estimates an increase from the current 22 lots from Steveston Highway to Seaward Gate to 120 residential units.

The deep lots on the west side of Number Five Road, from Seacliff Rd to Steveston Highway, also lend themselves to future applications for similar densities as proposed along Steveston Highway, so in the future, there can also be an increase of 100 more residential units along Number 5 Road. Together, therefore, demand and supply pressures present a realistic scenario that the area south of Seacliff and Sealord Roads to Steveston Highway between Number 5 Road and Shell Road will see an increase of approximately 230 residential units, with their compliment of an average of 1.3 vehicles per residential unit (say a total increase of 230 more vehicles) in an area that currently has approximately 240 residential units. That is about a 100% increase over the existing number of residences in this area. This application for 27 units represents only about 10 % of the new units. Now, therefore is the time for Council, not to approve this application, but rather, to put it on hold until there is a long term vision and plan for this area is completed.

Surely Council will see from this, and other submissions and concerns expressed, that this application can only proceed after the Ironwood Area Plan is reviewed to address the realities of future residential density increases along the north side of Steveston Highway and the west side of Number 5 Road. Council has so often displayed the vision that has made Richmond the attractive city I have proudly called my hometown for 31 years. This time also, I believe council will display the vision necessary for a long term plan for this area of Richmond, a vision and plan to manage multi-family developments, to facilitate compatible land used, and coordinated vehicle access for traffic safety concerns, If not, then many residents of not only this area, but other parts of Richmond, will increasingly continue to think that applications such as this are decided upon without vision and concern for the long term future of our neighbourhoods in transition, but are knee-jerk reactions to special interest groups.

I urgently request Council, therefore, to direct staff to put a hold on this and all future rezoning applications for higher densities until the Ironwood Area Plan is reviewed and rewritten in conformity with the Official Community Plan objectives and policies as quoted earlier, to address the concerns expressed in not only tonight's Public Hearing, but also the concerns expressed in numerous previous forums by the residents in this area.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Public Hearing. Of course, if I can be of any assistance to Council and staff to exercise my request, I would be please to be of service.

Roman Herchak

