

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER

INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

City Hall, Atrium / Community Room
141 West 14th Street, North Vancouver

Wednesday, September 17, 2014 at 6:00 pm

A P P R O V E D M I N U T E S

Present: Alex Boston
Ann McAlister
Brian Polydore
Cam McLeod
Heather Drugge (Acting Chair)
Pam Horton
Raj Janjua
Robert Glover

Staff: Courtney Miller, Planning Technician
Daniel Watson, Transportation Planner
Tanis Huckell, Committee Clerk

Presenter: Alex Kurnicki, Streetscape Planner (until 7:30 pm)

Observers: Clare Husk, Film & Wharf Liaison
Natasha Elliott, Traffic Engineer (until 7:30 pm)

Apologies: Craig Keating
Melina Scholefield
Susan Skinner

Quorum 5

0360-20-ITC

1.0 CALL TO ORDER, OPENING COMMENTS

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 6:00 pm with a quorum present. The new Committee Clerk, Tanis Huckell, was introduced. The Acting Chair welcomed Tanis and members introduced themselves.

The Acting Chair asked if there was any business before the Committee proceeded to the scheduled walking tour of Central Lonsdale. One member wished to make some remarks with an express desire that they be recorded in the minutes.

Ms. Horton commented that she felt insulted by the City's response to her messaging with respect to having mobility aids available for the trip tonight. She reiterated that for tonight's walking tour to look at the streetscape, she had suggested some wheelchairs be made available so that people could understand that what looks good and "walks good" does not necessarily "roll good". Emails that were received offended her greatly. She stated that the intention of City staff in this messaging did not matter; that is how she felt.

The Acting Chair expressed an apology that Ms. Horton felt this way, and assured her that her comments would be noted.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was regularly moved, seconded and carried unanimously:

THAT the minutes of the regular Integrated Transportation Committee meeting held on Wednesday, July 17, 2014 be adopted with minor corrections amended.

3.0 WALKING FIELD TRIP OF CENTRAL LONSDALE

The indoor component of the meeting was remitted between 6:20 and 7:30 pm while the Committee took the walking trip outside of City Hall.

Mr. Alex Kurnicki, City Streetscape Planner, led the Committee to the Civic Plaza. He informed the Committee that there used to be a street right through this area, linking 14th Street on both sides, as well as a parking lot. The Plaza, previously a place for cars, has over time evolved into an increasingly successful people space. The current library building was originally envisioned as aligning south-north, along the lane just west of Lonsdale. The City felt that the linear space running along 14th from Chesterfield to the Hospital would have been interrupted, so the orientation of the design changed.

As the Committee moved forward into the lane beside the library, Mr. Kurnicki pointed out that quite heavy pedestrian use has evolved in this particular lane, and it is used like a wide sidewalk.

Approaching 15th Street, discussion moved to how the City determined the location of the midblock crossing 15th between Chesterfield and Lonsdale. Ultimately decision was made to install a mid-block crossing just outside of the Summerhill Retirement Residence at 135 West 15th.

Discussion ensued regarding changing streetscape standards over time, alongside changing tastes, styles, and political will. In addition, the materials used change. For example, the bricks previously used on our sidewalks are no longer manufactured in Abbotsford – rather, the closest manufacturer is in New Brunswick. This lack of material actually provided the City with an opportunity to consider a new standard.

Crossing 15th at Summerhill, Mr. Kurnicki pointed out the difference in ramp entrances to sidewalks. The City staff work with the North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (ACDI) in implementing various solutions.

Staff also showed the Committee an example of brick replacement: exposed aggregate. An acid wash is used to expose the aggregate. Looking west down 15th, Mr. Kurnicki explained the sidewalk layout. There is an approximate 3 m zone down the middle, which he likened to a “runway”; this is basically the pedestrian path. A zone of approximately 1.5 m between this and the road is the interface between road and sidewalk, allowing space for car doors opening, street furniture, trees, street lamps, and so forth. The zone between sidewalk and store openings is a “flex zone” – its use varies. He pointed out that the bands on the sidewalk roughly align with the columns of the building, creating a continuity of line.

Mr. Kurnicki drew our attention to the joints dividing the sidewalk squares. The current trend is to create “saw cut joints”, for which the dividing lines are cut with a trowel.

The Committee also looked at the “gator bags” around the base of some of street trees on 15th. The bag capacity is one gallon of

water which slowly “leaks” into the tree base over a number of days. It is much more cost effective than more frequent watering. One member pointed out some uneven tiles in this area, which can be frustrating for someone using any type of wheeled mobility device (wheelchairs, scooters, skateboards, strollers).

As the Committee moved through the alley connecting 15th and 16th, Mr. Kurnicki pointed the “rollover” curb. This is the type of curb that looks like a gentle slope as opposed to a sharp, 90 degree cut. Even though it is a less definitive curb, it still clearly defines pedestrian space (as opposed to road space for cars.)

At our next stop by the medical clinic at 115 West 16th, Mr. Kurnicki discussed the challenges with locating the disability parking with an access ramp. At this location the designated parking spot for individuals with disabilities. Although the spot is wide, unfortunately the ramp up to the curb is directly in front of the where the car would be parked. If there was another car parked to the right of the spot, an individual with a mobility aid could be forced to go into traffic on the road to go around and onto the sidewalk.

He also discussed street trees whose roots have forced through the sidewalk. With correctly installed tree grates it can keep tree roots down while providing them with good soil and a healthy growing medium. Now, the City uses new soil cell technology (cubes of soil of approximately 1m³) when designing streetscapes. The tree will last for many years and replacing a tree is much more expensive than replacing sidewalk.

The Committee considered Lonsdale between 16th and 17th (the bus bulge and large planted area beside it). If the City was to plant in this area again, it would probably be built with a 90 degree angle. Something that cuts into the pedestrian space less significantly would be preferable.

Bus bulges are becoming more common as a means of improving traffic efficiency along Lonsdale.

At the new Loblaw’s City Market at 1650 Lonsdale all the new trees were planted using the new soil cell technology. The City recommends tall, narrow street trees to provide better sightlines.

4.0 OLD BUSINESS – FIELD TRIP RESCHEDULING

The group reconvened inside City Hall at 7:35 pm to continue the meeting.

Daniel Watson clarified that as the Committee field trip, originally planned for August, did not happen, staff would like to suggest “transferring” the trip to the next meeting, Wednesday October 1. We would still like to start at 4 pm; sunset on that day will be at 6:50pm.

ACTION: Committee Clerk to request RSVPs.

The route would be: south from City Hall with a discussion of East 3rd, discussion of the Port at the bottom of Brooksbank, along the Low Level Road and then over to Harbourside. The “stops” on the field trip would not involve disembarking from the bus,

The idea is that the Committee will learn about goods movement and port activity, as well as future corridor planning with an idea of road configuration. At Harbourside, Mr. Boston was asked, and agreed, to discuss sea level changes for that area.

It was clarified that the Committee is interested in the port as a major destination and origin of freight, as well as retail activity up and down Lonsdale. What are the challenges?

It was queried whether there would be discussion about the railway involvement; staff responded that they could speak on railway crossings.

One member wondered whether the North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce had any interest in commercial freight transportation issues. Mr. McLeod responded that the biggest concerns are probably the amount of developments going on, and issues for 3rd Street traffic getting onto the Second Narrow Bridge.

The Acting Chair suggested that for next year’s field trip the Committee could work with the Advisory Committee on Disability Issues to put together a combined field trip, so we can all

understand the issues that people with mobility impairment experience.

ACTION: Staff to discuss in more detail in early spring 2015.

5.0 CITY PROJECTS UPDATE

Mr. Watson noted that sections 7 and 8 of the Spirit Trail are completed; this includes the end of Forbes going east towards Rogers. The City are continuing to work on the design for the Marina section, and it should be completed in 2015. This does not include the yacht club to the west of Bewicke; there is another, longer term plan for that.

Construction of the bridge over 3rd has been delayed, precast parts are being brought in and it should be installed by the middle of November. The remainder of the Spirit Trail adjacent to the Low Level Road project should be done by the end of October.

Discussion ensued regarding the accessibility of the entirety of the Spirit Trail adjacent to the Low Level Road; Mr. Watson the current Spirit Trail route along St. David's and 2nd is accessible by everybody. The City is concentrating on the Marina plus the Park and Tilford sections.

The Green Necklace at Mahon is still under construction, to be completed mid-November. Paving north of West 16th has been completed, and crews are starting south of 16th.

Lonsdale median construction work is progressing, with completion in mid-October. In response to a query Mr. Watson noted this project has been an opportunity to put in irrigation for the trees. The City is also creating three bus bulges, reducing the median, and adding a left turn lane northbound on Lonsdale at 3rd, as well as fixing a number of general sidewalk issues.

Discussion ensued regarding potentially allowing left turns onto Lonsdale when heading eastbound or westbound on 3rd. It was generally recognized that people cross Lonsdale, then turn left into the next alley, which is arguably a greater hazard.

Another hazard in that general vicinity appears to be the construction site near the SeaBus station which has taken over the sidewalk. There are huge pedestrian safety issues there, with the sidewalk being occluded and buses on detour. Mr. Watson pointed out that the fence has been repositioned several times to find a point of solution. A member out that by forcing people to use the north side of the road, additional danger is incurred. The Committee agreed that it is a busy area right now.

Mr. Watson commented on Site 8 of the Spirit Trail, which is at the foot of Lonsdale where the parking lot was. The City hopes to restructure and improve the area with better pedestrian management concepts.

Discussion ranged to the ownership of the Lonsdale Quay and some of its components/neighbours (the TransLink exchange, the ICBC building). Mr. Watson mentioned that the design for the Chesterfield project is being finalized now. Some members expressed an interest in seeing the design; it was agreed that we could bring it to an upcoming meeting and ask Ms. Elliott to speak to it.

ACTION: Natasha Elliott to attend a future meeting with details of the Chesterfield project.

The Lower Lonsdale East traffic calming was initially considered in 2009-2011, but did not have the funding to implement it. With the Low Level Road project nearing completion, the City is planning upon implementing the project.

The City is continuing to develop a Traffic and Youth Safety Committee. The creation of this Committee has been held up because of the recent strike, but Daniel visited the equivalent Committee in West Vancouver this morning. Theirs is more of a working group than we had envisioned; it has somebody from their Council on it as well as an individual from the School Board.

Council asked staff to set up a Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, and staff are investigating how best to make that happen. Around 11 years ago, the District of West Vancouver set up a similar task

force, outlining a school safety travel plan, that highlighted schools' needs. Their current committee is a legacy of that. Staff have not been given the mandate to produce something like a task force, but staff do want this to contribute to items such as the Walking School Bus. The ITC Committee had previously discussed whether this should be an ITC subcommittee, but ultimately decided against it.

Mr. Watson reported that the District of West Vancouver recommended that it not be a Council committee. They found that bureaucracy was tying it up, and they had to report to Council before making any moves. Mr. Watson spoke with the City Clerk as staff want the weight of Council behind the committee, but we do not want it to get constrained with red tape. It needs a funding stream so when schools report needing a speed bump or signage change (as examples) there are available funds to draw on.

Discussion moved to the Lower Lynn interchanges project, and what level of involvement ITC should have with that. The scope of review was discussed. It was questioned whether the Committee should make a motion recommending increased involvement, as this is a significant issue. Mr. Watson did try to find out more information to bring the Committee an update, but there is not much information on this politically sensitive issue. Over the next couple of months he will continue to keep requesting and researching and will bring back more information if he can get it. The Committee agreed this would be appreciated.

ACTION: Mr. Watson to report any information on the Second Narrows Bridge interchange improvements.

6.0 TRANSPORTATION EVENTS

Raj Janjua went to the AGM for TransLink. He felt that the information provided at that event was unsatisfactory with regards to a good rationale for moving the bus depot off of the North Shore. Discussion ensued regarding this issue, including the consequences of bridge closures, and the fuel costs of shuttling North Shore buses to and from Burnaby twice a day.

Discussion then moved to the new SeaBus. Ms. Horton informed the Committee that the new internal design should be superior to

the original; there is much more room for luggage, strollers, wheelchairs, and so forth.

The Acting Chair recently attended a presentation by Gordon Price, a previous Councillor from Vancouver, who now works at the School of Public Planning at SFU. She wondered if we could have him come and talk about the TransLink referendum, and whether members might have any interest in that?

Staff noted that Mr. Price is an expensive speaker. It was suggested that someone from his class could come. Mr. Watson also noted that there is not a lot of information on the referendum; Council could not obtain an official statement. Discussion ensued regarding the upcoming referendum; it became clear that general understanding of the issue is quite vague. Discussion further ensued regarding whether the City might host some sort of a public forum, or public debate. Staff will investigate the Committee being involved in facilitating a public discussion, or a panel of some sort.

Ms. Pam Horton and Mr. Janjua left the meeting at 8:30 pm.

ACTION: Mr. Watson to investigate and report back.

It was questioned whether City staff or a committee member could inquire into the status of the referendum process, just to find out where things are at. It was conceded that depending on who you speak with, you might get differing answers. The Committee could write to the Minister of Transportation. It was pointed out that in terms of voting, it is still early. By December or January information should be excessively available from all media sources.

Mr. Watson was asked to obtain information from the Mayor's Office, requesting staff to investigate about the timing and process of the TransLink referendum, an update on the status. As well, investigate whether we can hold some sort of public forum.

ACTION: City Staff to investigate whether City Hall could hold some sort of public forum on the Translink Referendum.

The Acting Chair brought to everyone's attention to an Open House that Western Stevedoring is hosting this upcoming weekend.

7.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE

Community Development's proposed bylaw changes on parking stall widths will likely come to the Committee in December.

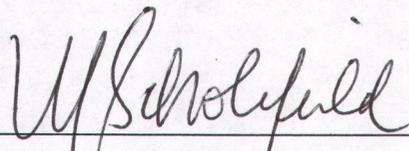
In response to a query about the proposed development at 1549 St. George's, Mr. Watson responded that the process has slowed down as a public hearing prior to the election could not be arranged. His understanding is that the first reading regarding this project will be by the end of 2014, then further readings will occur in January.

On behalf of the Committee, Ann McAlister thanked Mr. Watson for being so knowledgeable and straightforward, and that it is truly appreciated.

The Acting Chair also wished to thank the past Committee Clerk, Clare Husk, for her hard work and attention to this Committee and to pass on her best wishes in her future position.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.



Melina Scholefield, Chair
*on behalf of
Heather Dregge.*



Tanis Huckell, Committee Clerk