

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE,
HELD IN THE BOARD ROOM, 1ST FLOOR, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE,
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, ON FRIDAY, 2014-MAY-09, COMMENCING AT 2:30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillor George Anderson, Chair
Councillor Bill McKay
Councillor Ted Greves
Michele Patterson
David Grey
Jim Routledge

Absent: David Murchie

Guests: Leo Boon, Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition
Dan Appelle

Staff: Tom Hickey
Bob Prokopenko
Gordon Foy
Amir Freund
Jane Beaton

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m.

2. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR:

None

3. INTRODUCTIONS:

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND LATE ITEMS:

It was moved and seconded that the 2014-May-09 agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

Amendment for delegation. Moved and seconded.

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

6. DELEGATIONS:

Dan Appelle, Concerned Citizen

Addressed priority triangle within Plan; noted it is opposite to what we have now – different priorities, dramatic shift. Changing the way people think is required or people's mindset. Once this happens people will buy into a pedestrian, transit, cycling system.

As a Planner, my goals are a safer city, to improve creativity and productivity.

His comments on report – need to start here and need to make it sellable to the general public. This is a starting point.

Question – Michele Patterson – Are you recommending a change in the document or just talking about how it is communicated to public?

Acknowledged that as the City transitions its approach, you will get some conflicts.

7. PRESENTATION / REPORTS:

Gordon Foy – same report as last week

No updates yet.

Should go through each item in order to bring it forward to Council.

Gordon Foy said he had received many comments from GNCC on Monday that he had reviewed. It would be challenging to go through all of them so have tried to summarize them into eight core issues.

Main question – does this document reflect the general direction we gave last year. Have we achieved a more readable, organized, precise document that people can use and have easy readability?

The other issue was short term vs. long term – Section 4 tries to address more focus on short term with a five-year summary.

It was moved and seconded by the Transportation Advisory Committee that Council adopt the Transportation Master Plan.

DISCUSSION:

David Grey said that the recommendations they made to staff weren't in the spirit of undermining the plan. He supports it, but it is not a perfect document. Suggestion made to try to get the very best language; goals and policy before having it go to Council. A few of them are worth revisiting before adopting the Plan.

David Grey asked for clarification on if the Plan had changed or not since last week. Gordon Foy said that the intent is to change the document as per the Committees motion on May 2, but the document has not been updated yet.

1) Speed Limit from 50 km/hr to 40 km/hr on residential streets

When it went to UBCM for this, it did not pass. So this is not illustrated in the Plan.

Michele Patterson said she did not think it should be in the Plan. She doesn't disagree with it, but it will be tough.

Councillor McKay noted that if changes are made at this point, the public will not have a chance to look at them.

Councillor Greves was not in favour of this change.

David Grey commented that the reduction of speed would save lives through fewer fatalities.

Councillor Anderson suggested a future meeting to discuss this, based on the potential options that could be recommended to Council, after we have had comments from staff on practicalities of doing something like this.

Gordon Foy said it might be good for the Committee to consider that if their objective is to reduce speed then changing speed limits may not satisfy their objectives if there is little difference in speed and there are more enforcement issues. Instead, if you start looking at other traffic calming strategies, including traffic circles and curb extensions, then you will achieve the objective of reducing speeds.

At this time, traffic calming is not placed in new development the plan supports speed reduction in neighbourhoods through traffic calming.

David Grey said that it was brought forward as a discussion item at this point and is something they expected to be deliberated on and voted on.

Councillor Anderson said there is a motion on the floor to adopt the plan so he suggested this be brought up at a future meeting for further debate.

2) Timeframes for pedestrian/cycling projects – from Long term to Short term

David Grey thinks that the term 'medium term' is not used enough. It is only used three times in the document. They had suggested that in some places in the document 'medium to long-term' be used instead of only 'long term.' The plan is a little bit on the conservative side in terms of the vision. It is important to think of placing 'medium term' at strategic places in the document.

Michele Patterson thinks this one is dependent on resources and capacity in the Engineering Department. You cannot put anything into one 3 – 4 year period as it is disruptive to the City. She does not think it needs to be changed.

Councillor McKay thought it is self explanatory at this point.

Councillor Greves thought that more resources need to be put towards this in the future.

Councillor Anderson mentioned the mobility hubs and how there would be less need for driving.

Gordon Foy said in terms of cycling, page 55 shows the priority network which tries to address the medium term perspective. The concentration will initially be on downtown, VIU and NRGH area.

Councillor Anderson asked if there are any projects from long term to medium term that are not already listed.

Gordon Foy said it is always on a sliding scale and depends on various factors.

Councillor McKay asked about the maps on page 52 & 53. The cycle track is discussed but there is only one short part of cycle track on Front Street. Shouldn't it be put in ahead of development? He felt that Bruce Avenue and Wakesiah Avenue would be perfect areas for cycle tracks.

Gordon Foy said there are cycle tracks on Albert Street and Front Street that are identified. They are a new facility type and offer a test project to try out. Once in place, feedback from users can be used to consider expansion.

Per Bruce Avenue – The neighbourhood plan has just been completed; recommended bike lanes along Bruce Avenue and a greenway along Georgia Street.

Councillor Anderson asked Gordon Foy if he knows the cost per kilometer to install a cycle lane. Mr. Foy stated that in Vancouver, Hornby Street was \$1.1 million/km and Dunsmuir Street was 750k million/km. Note: In both those cases they removed parking and had the road there to work with.

David Grey said that in Montreal they put in plastic chains/bollards to separate car traffic and cyclists. He can't see it costing that much if you do not put in a concrete barrier.

Gordon Foy said you also have to switch all the signals around and re-do the signals at each block.

Councillor Greves asked how we allocate more money to cycling. Last year was \$30,000.

Councillor Anderson pointed out that other projects can include cycling within a project rather than the budget.

Gordon Foy said it is difficult to determine because there can be cycling components within a project.

Tom Hickey also mentioned a gas tax that the City gets. Right now it is going to the water treatment plant, but after that is complete, more money will be available to use in other areas. An incremental approach is a good way to go about it and it builds momentum.

Leo Boon suggested there are not cycle specific projects, but complete streets are mentioned. This takes into account all parts of a street. He believes in order to make changes, there needs to be more building, in a quicker timeframe. While it talks about the infrastructure, it does not talk about how to implement it.

Councillor Anderson asked Gordon Foy about the Standards the City is building to, based on Mr. Boon's comments. Mr. Foy said there are 65 kms in the priority network so if you want to complete it in ten years, you need to complete 6.5 kms per year. Mr. Foy thinks this is an ambitious document for this community and will need to work hard to deliver it. If we all work together as advocates and as a team, then it can be completed.

Councillor Anderson asked Gordon Foy if there is a timeframe for when we want to see the priority network finished.

Mr. Foy said no. We have said in the plan 'we should do this first' and that is why it is a priority. If the objective is to get as many people riding as quickly as possible, then this is the best approach, but it is still left to Council to decide.

Councillor Anderson thinks this plan gets us on a path to getting more cycling. We are doing some just now and there will be more in the future. The targets do not mean that we would stop working once we reached a target, we would keep going.

3) Additional GNCC specific references

Gordon Foy said there are other groups in the community that help with cycling items.

Recommends they find a place in the plan to identify some of the community partners and then refer to the community partners further on. The Committee agreed to proceed with this recommendation.

Councillor Anderson asked if the Committee would be fine with that.

David Grey asked about when the City goes to ask for provincial funding and they (GNCC) are asked to sign off on it? They are the only group dedicated to advocacy. Leo Boon said that all of those other groups are corporate members of the GNCC and so that is why they can act on behalf of all cyclists.

4) Roadshare Targets

To change these targets to be more aggressive.

David Grey stated that the evidence shows that if you accelerate investment, you put more facilities on the ground, you get more people biking and walking and increase levels of public transportation. Cities with more infrastructure have higher levels of public transport. He thinks it could be a more ambitious project.

Councillor Anderson asked if Mr. Grey had any targets that he is suggesting. David Grey said that it is so far off, that it is almost meaningless. To have meaningful targets, you need to connect with more medium term goals.

Councillor Anderson asked people to look at page 18. It shows what the target is. He believes it gives a good indication of where it is heading. The size of the community is something to look at also. Victoria is six square miles whereas Nanaimo is over 50 square miles. He would like to see more aggressive targets. Shows 45,000 new trips. This could be shown as new trips by car.

Tom Hickey said that when looking at targets, it is also important to think about achievable targets, with not too lofty goals. You do not want to be too ambitious. Be cautious because you may not achieve a target and all the benefits from meeting a target.

David Grey believes that any target you set needs to be within a meaningful timeframe. In terms of the suitability of Nanaimo as an area that is conducive to cycling/walking, he thinks the key indicator is the medium trip distance. There is a huge potential for the commuter to make a shift to cycling. People would consider this option if they thought the roads were safe.

Councillor Anderson agreed with Tom Hickey's assessment about setting achievable goals.

More aggressive targets can be achieved through implementation strategy.

5) Addition of Cycle Track on Bowen

Councillor Anderson suggested that it comes down to the price again.

Councillor Anderson asked if we were to look at these, would we need to reconfigure the entire road.

Gordon Foy referred back to Vancouver, where the costs would be similar, but if you support this motion you would be supporting the removal of a lane the length of Bowen Road.

David Grey said we are talking about 2041, not in the next ten years. From the point of view of building a high quality bicycle network, if you do not include Bowen Road, you will not have a decent bicycle network. It is an essential North/South link.

Councillor Anderson replied that Bowen Road was added to the plan, as a Committee, but it was not called a cycle track.

Gordon Foy said if you thought Bowen Road was a priority for cycling, then it could be added, but he reminded the Committee to think about the challenges of that.

David Grey said that it is not included in the beginning of the plan where it mentions the E&N Trail and Parkway Trail as main North/South routes.

Gordon Foy clarified that the text reflects the current context.

David Grey argued that Bowen Road should be added and not only the E&N Trail. Multi-use trails are not a substitute for areas with amenities. He would argue that on page 49 the wording should include Bowen Road. Some other routes are not as safe as this route.

Councillor Anderson asked Gordon Foy if it is possible to add the wording to reflect that Bowen Road is an important route. It should be illustrated as one of the same connections as the E&N Trail and Parkway Trail.

Gordon Foy replied that in the last paragraph of the introductory page that was just mentioned, it says that E&N is the spine and it is important to develop that spine. If you mention Bowen then you are stating that it is the second most important facility on the cycling network.

David Grey thinks that it is.

Michele Patterson referred to page 50.

Councillor Greves agreed with Mr. Grey but felt that it would be hugely expensive.

Councillor Anderson made a recommendation that as it is mentioned in the plan, it does identify it and in the future we are aware that if the opportunity arises, we need to look at what ways there are to increase the safety. This is identified by the direction that we gave staff in the summer.

6) More emphasis on cycle tracks

Gordon Foy referred to the visuals which show using facilities as a toolbox. In different situations, different facilities make sense. Cycle tracks are more expensive per lineal kilometre and tend to make sense in areas with high cycling use. If cycle tracks were used more extensively, more resources would be required to develop the same sized network.

David Grey said the issue of standards comes in. Based on volumes and speed, you can look at what facility to create. These should be considered based on the circumstances. Various barriers may need to be considered.

Councillor Anderson said that an incremental approach should be taken and within the plan we have put that we want to have these two test areas and then look at what else is possible after this.

7) Congestion and other barriers to driving

David Grey thought it speaks to planning in transportation planning. If you are going to build more box stores, that encourages more traffic.

Councillor Anderson referred to Mr. Appelles' presentation which indicated that they need to put pedestrians first. Cars would not be the first thing. The building of roads would work on a point system and allocate funds on a hierarchy. If it had the pedestrian and cycling possibilities, it may be built first.

David Grey thought the word 'comprehensive' needs to be added when talking about traffic calming.

Councillor Anderson said that Gordon Foy has covered in Part 1 about reduction of residential speed limits and the emphasis that should be placed on traffic calming.

8) Comments regarding funding cars to bikes

Councillor Anderson thinks that this has been talked about previously. We need to look at funding options – water, gas tax, and senior grants.

Tom Hickey said we need to remember transit and pedestrians and not only cycling.

David Grey thinks that in cycling they take a broad view on this. They are in business of promoting active transportation. Pedestrians and cyclists are natural allies. When you approve facilities for cyclists, you are also doing it for pedestrians.

Strategic Direction & Goals (extra item brought forward by David Grey)

David Grey referred to page 37 which refers to strategic direction and goals. He thinks the policy is good to get more people walking sooner, but he asked about the areas where there is an absence of sidewalks and safe areas to walk.

Councillor Anderson said it was brought up at a previous meeting and there is a report coming forward which refers to industrial areas.

David Grey wanted to know which professional standards are being used in relation to road design or design facilities.

Gordon Foy replied that the MOESS is used. It is based on the Transportation Association of Canada standards.

David Grey asked if this could be included in the document. There is no reference to any of them in the plan.

He would caution the committee to restricting staff to using Transportation Association of Canada standards. They are quite conservative and only address general conditions. Councillor Anderson agreed with Mr. Foy.

It was moved by David Grey and seconded that the following additions to the text be included – “that we adopt the street standards set out by the following organizations – NACTO, ASAHTO AND TAC”.

Councillor Anderson would not include that as none of us know what the Standards are.

Gordon Foy replied that we pull from all of those agencies right now. And we will continue to do so in the future. They are used as a guide where appropriate. If we are locked down to a particular group of standards, it will not allow us to progress.

Councillor Greves would never agree to that as he does not know what it is.

David Grey suggested adding ‘best practices’ regarding all the guidelines.

Councillor Anderson asked for all those in favour of the motion.

The motion was defeated.

Councillor Anderson asked for any other comments about the document.

Jim Routledge said he won’t be supporting the motion to adopt the Transportation Master Plan. He has many questions about the document and processes. The communication has been difficult.

Jim Routledge said he has asked in the past for an account of how much has been spent on this plan.

Councillor Anderson asked if he was talking about the planning document, or the items within the document.

Councillor Greves thinks that what Mr. Routledge is asking is how much it cost to do the plan over two years.

Gordon Foy responded that the creation of this document by Urban Systems would be under \$200,000. The various documents for the Transportation Master Plan are for transportation planning over the next five years. Mr. Foy said the budget for the Transportation Master Plan was \$700,000.

Jim Routledge said that money is a difficult thing to talk about. Mr. Routledge asked if it is DCC money.

Gordon Foy said that it is 50% DCC money and 50% from General Revenue.

Jim Routledge would like more documents that were previously created, referenced in the document.

Councillor Anderson said that communication could not be blamed when meetings have been missed and all staff would be willing to discuss items.

Jim Routledge asked if anyone could speak to land use.

Gordon Foy referred back to Discussion Paper #3 per the density and development surrounding neighbourhood streets. They identified the issue that as the density changes, the residential street network should be more robust. Also provided guidance on where laneways may make more sense. As lot frontages get smaller, it gets harder to service driveways.

A diagram has been added to this document to clarify Discussion Paper #3 which was vaguer and had some general text.

Councillor Anderson asked for all those in favour of the motion.

The motion carried.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

None.

9. CORRESPONDENCE:

No correspondence submitted.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

11. NEXT MEETING:

To be determined.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 4:42 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

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