

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 TUESDAY, 2014-FEB-11, COMMENCING AT 2:00 P.M.

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

Guests: Blake McGuffie, DNBIA Parking Committee
Eric McLean, DNBIA Parking Committee
John Cooper, DNBIA Parking Committee
Jerry Hong, DNBIA Parking Committee
Corry Hotstetter, DNBIA Parking Committee
Andre Sullivan, Nanaimo Region Rail Trail Partnership
Greg Barker, CitiPlanet

Absent: David Murchie

Staff: Andrew Tucker
Rod Davidson
Gordon Foy
Jodi Wilson

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m.

2. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR:

- a) The Chair requested a motion to open the first Draft Motion for discussion. *It was moved and seconded that Draft Motion 2a) be open for discussion. The motion carried unanimously.* Clarification was provided. No changes were made.

It was moved and seconded that Staff report back to the Transportation Advisory Committee on potential opportunities to utilize parking or other transportation related variances to fund sustainable transportation improvements. The motion carried unanimously.

- b) The Chair requested a motion to open the second Draft Motion for discussion. *It was moved and seconded that Draft Motion 2b) be open for discussion. The motion carried unanimously.* The motion was altered to read as follows:

It was moved and seconded that Staff report back to the Transportation Advisory Committee on potential strategies for including pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks within future industrial developments and including areas that are not normally subject to sidewalk requirement. The motion carried unanimously.

3. INTRODUCTIONS:

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND LATE ITEMS:

It was moved and seconded that the 2014-Feb-11 agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

a) *It was moved and seconded that the 2013-Dec-19 minutes be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.*

6. DELEGATIONS:

No delegations were present.

7. PRESENTATION / REPORTS:

a) Proposal for Central Nanaimo Streetcar System – Greg Barker (presentation attached)

Greg Barker presented a proposal for the development of a Streetcar System to serve central Nanaimo. This presentation is a follow-up to his initial presentation made to Engineering staff 2012-Feb-27.

- Proposed rail transit system within downtown Nanaimo and linking to Departure Bay Ferry Terminal via Stewart Ave.
- System would use streetcars, allowing them to operate within the street, either within a dedicated or shared space.
- Provides connections between BC Ferries, Stewart Avenue and downtown to support residents and tourists.
- System Cost (Preliminary Estimate) = \$74 million

DISCUSSION:

Michele Patterson asked if the Streetcars are driverless? The streetcars require drivers.

Leo Boone feels this is more a tourism project than a transportation project for the City. The Vancouver Trolley company operates independently in Vancouver and does a very good business providing several circuits on cars, not rails which are quite noisy. The amount of track that would need to be laid in Nanaimo would be far too expensive.

Councillor Anderson asked if there are any comparable communities that have utilized this type of service. Mr. Barker did not have any comparable statistics, but felt that there would be some available. Since the presentation was prepared in 2012, additional research has not been done. Mr. Barker suggested going to the following websites for further information.

www.railwaypreservation.com
www.modernstreetcar.org
<http://www.reconnectingamerica.org>

b) Downtown Nanaimo Business Improvement Association (DNBIA) Parking Committee Presentation (see attached Letter of Recommendations)

John Cooper, President, Downtown Nanaimo Business Improvement Association introduced himself and the Parking Committee.

Mr. Cooper gave a brief introduction about downtown Nanaimo's growth and the DNBIA's requests. The DNBIA is seeking support from TAC for the following changes to parking policies in downtown.

1. Free Parking Parkade – metering Commercial Street parking to encourage user groups to use the Parkade combined with making the under-utilized sections of the parkade free parking. This would be a temporary measure. As parking demand increases, free parking would decrease.
2. Meter High Demand Street Parking.
3. Increase the Maximum Length of Parking to 4 hours.
4. Free Evening and Weekends – Evenings and weekends should be free as there is no demand. A lot of the businesses are closed, due to the lack of business they are receiving.
5. Adopt 3 Warnings before Ticket Policy and Increase Fines as Violations Reach Identified Metrics – The repeat offenders need to be punished, but the people that are enjoying their dinner and stay a little longer than planned are rewarded with a \$35 parking ticket and will likely not return.

DISCUSSION:

Councillor Anderson commented on the Ambassadorial role that has initiated in the downtown. The reports show that enforcement has gone down and that the consumers are happier with a more relaxed enforcement policy.

The DNBIA would still like to see further changes to the parking enforcement.

Jim Routledge inquired about specific details about the poor transit that Mr. Cooper referred to.

Our transit system has to improve before the downtown businesses feel they don't have to be concerned with parking policies and enforcement. The Opus Report stated 91% of survey respondents use their car as their primary method of transportation; therefore, we need to make the downtown attractive to this market in the short term.

Councillor McKay inquired if Mr. Cooper has examples of other communities that are struggling with their downtown core meeting their potential. Do you have examples of other programs such as this that have been applied in other communities?

Many cities have free parking on evenings and weekends, including the City of Calgary. The City of White Rock struggled with their commerce centre. They decided to only

enforce parking during the summer months which ended around 8:00 p.m. Once the businesses were busy all the time, they went to a stricter enforcement policy and now the parking is full all the time.

Councillor McKay asked for specific examples of other shopping areas.

Mr. Cooper gave Woodgrove, Terminal Park and Brooks Landing as examples.

Councillor McKay advised that at Woodgrove, businesses are paying somewhere between \$40 - \$80 sq. ft. and a percentage of their sales. Would the merchants in downtown be prepared to fund this program through their landlords with a \$5 per sq.ft increase in their rent?

Mr. Cooper advised that the property owners in the downtown already pay higher taxes than most of the other areas in the City. If the economic vitality supported that kind of revenue, they would have no problem paying the increase. Right now, it would be difficult to get them to support this increase because the demand in business is not there.

Councillor McKay wants to know why the tenants in the downtown shouldn't pay for the parking spaces in the downtown as the tenants at the shopping malls do. Councillor McKay asked which parkade Mr. Cooper would like to see free parking space in. Mr. Cooper would like to have free parking space in the areas that are the most under-utilized.

Councillor Greves brought forward the renovation that is currently taking place in the 6 storey parkade which is costing 1.2 million. Since the Ambassadorial system was put in place, the City has dropped \$100,000 which is a 1/3 reduction from previous years. This is due to a more relaxed ticket enforcement.

Gordon Foy would like to know if the DNBIA is open to a revenue neutral tax solution where the additional revenues generated through metering of Commercial Street offset the changes in the parkade? It appears as though the spaces on Commercial Street are being occupied by non-patrons as Commercial Street spaces are normally occupied prior to the majority of the businesses being open. Maybe Commercial Street could be metered between 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. or that of business hours.

Mr. Cooper is asking for a short-term overall reduction in revenue with the idea that it will increase parking over time with greater long-term demand.

Rod Davidson clarified all on-street metered parking is free after 5:30, 7 days per week. There is also no enforcement of on-street parking on Sundays. The DNBIA is free to advertise this information. Rod Davidson advised that the City does have Ambassadors work when there are special events at the Port Theatre at night. To-date, tickets have been issued only for safety related parking offenses such as parking in front of a hydrant. The Ambassadors are not issuing tickets in the parkade as there's no need for it. They are there to assist with directions, parking cars, ensuring there aren't any panhandlers etc. Essentially, free evenings and weekends already exist in most part. Rod Davidson said he would like to answer, in writing, the DNBIA's questions regarding the parking in the downtown. Rod Davidson will include any cost implications and traffic management.

Leo Boone asked if parking signage is an issue in the downtown.

Mr. Cooper advised that signage has always been an issue and addressed that the City of Nanaimo chose to use different parkade signage than the internationally known signage used in other locations. The DNBIA website has parkade and bicycle parking locations on it.

It was moved and seconded that staff submit a report regarding the DNBIA presentation and requests. The motion carried unanimously.

c) Nanaimo Region Rail Trail Partnership – Andre Sullivan (see attached presentation)

Mr. Andre Sullivan introduced himself and provided an overview of who the “Nanaimo Regional Rail Trail Partnership” (NRRTP) is. The group consists of volunteers from the DNBIA, Tourism Nanaimo, the Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition and the Island Corridor Foundation.

The NRRTP's number one goal is to raise money and awareness and provide support in the community for extension and improvement of the E&N Trail.

The Island Corridor Foundation has a blanket agreement with the Regional District to allow access of the corridor for the building of trail. The group does not want to build the trail; they want to raise money to help the City of Nanaimo build the trail.

Donations can be made to specific sections of trail.

The current section of the trail that has been built is behind the Train Station. There is a development going ahead that is going to build a portion of the trail. The group is going to cost out what the price will be to go from the existing section of the Train Station Trail and connect to the new trail, so they won't be leaving a trail behind. This will be a tough section due to all the road crossings.

Fundraising so far has been successful. Through grants and sponsorships, \$65,000 has been raised. A fundraising website has been donated to the NRRTP that will be launched at the end of February.

NRRTP has completed work on a corporate sponsorship package. The NRRTP is asking for top levels of \$50,000 starting with utility companies. Every corporate donation can be made over a 5 year period.

Working with Newcastle Engineering to get cost estimates on some of the sections that are currently being looked at. Newcastle Engineering is volunteering their time.

Once the costs are determined, they will decide which portion is feasible to do, and then they will put up the fundraising signage on either end of the section.

Two of the major challenges are costs and crossings. The overall cost through the entire region is approximately \$24,000,000. Some of the remaining sections are the more challenging ones due to some challenging intersections like Townsite/Comox.

The regulations for crossings has recently changed, which will require changes such as the below when constructing of the trailway takes place:

- over/under
- signaled crossings
- 30 meters away
- dead-end some minor streets

The NRRTP is asking that the Transportation Advisory Committee recommends that they appear before Council. Once in front of Council, NRRTP will be asking for \$100,000 contingent on NRRTP's ability to do the same thing.

The NRRTP would like to work closely with City staff regarding crossings and trail alternatives.

The NRRTP is asking that the City consider the E&N for future grant applications.

The NRRTP would like the Transportation Advisory Committee to maintain the E&N Trail expansion as a top priority in the Transportation Master Plan. Councillor Anderson advised that earlier in the year the Transportation Advisory Committee had already approved a motion to put priority on the E&N Trail and its importance for alternative modes of transportation.

David Grey expressed that the E&N Trail is a vital part of the proposed bicycle network that is part of the Transportation Master Plan. If we are going to get people out of their cars and onto bikes or walking, the completion of this trail should be first and foremost. The corridor is so central, it is very vital. Mr. Grey also feels that City Council should match the funding that the NRRTP is coming up with.

Councillor Greves asked if Richard Harding specified if the \$100,000 was earmarked for any specific trail. Andre advised that he would be willing to put it towards the E&N Trail.

Leo Boone asked for an explanation as to why the focus for the E&N Trail development seems to be on downtown. Andre advised that it isn't necessarily the focus, but it is the most important section by most people surveyed. The companies that have donated so far definitely have a downtown interest. City staff from Parks, Recreation and Environment are looking at Fifth Street to south of Cinnabar. The downtown segment is currently being used as an informal trail.

It was moved and seconded that the Transportation Advisory Committee supports and recommends that the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission consider allocating up to \$100,000 of existing Parks, Recreation and Environment funding to contribute towards the expansion of the E&N Trail, requisite upon:

- a) *The Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission supporting this motion.*
- b) *The Nanaimo Region Rail Trail Partnership to provide matching or greater funding.*
- c) *The Nanaimo Region Rail Trail Partnership and City of Nanaimo identifying a common priority trail improvement project.*

The motion carried unanimously.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

9. CORRESPONDENCE:

No correspondence submitted.

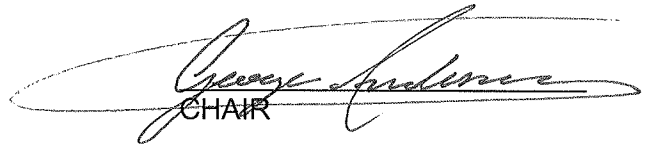
10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

11. NEXT MEETING:

To be determined.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 4:00 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.



CHAIR

