

MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

5 APRIL 2000

1:30 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair: D. Holmes

Members: M. Bellemare, W. Byrne, R. Cantin, C. Doucet, H. Kreling,
M. McGoldrick-Larsen

REGRETS L. Davis, J. Legendre, M. Meilleur

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the Transportation Committee confirm the Minutes of the meeting of 1 March 2000.

CARRIED

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- Note:
1. Underlining indicates a new or amended recommendation approved by Committee.
 2. Reports requiring Council consideration will be presented to Council on 12 April 2000 in Transportation Committee Report 59.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. 1800 BANK STREET - MEDIAN CLOSURE

- Director Mobility Services and Corporate Fleet Services report dated 25 Feb 00

John Buck, Manager, Operational Studies explained that safety concerns are the main reason staff are recommending the closure of this median break. Despite staff's attempts to limit movements with prohibitive signage, there have been repeated collisions at this location. Mr. Buck confirmed that signs direct motorists to go to either Walkley Road or Alta Vista Drive to make U-turns, both of which intersections provide full protection for such movements. He advised that monitoring of this site before and after the left-turn restrictions were implemented, reveals there were a large number of accidents prior to as well as after the signs were installed. However, despite these efforts, motorists continually disobey the signs. Mr. Buck acknowledged that while this median break may provide some advantages to the businesses at this location, public safety outweighs those benefits and he did not believe closing the median would have a negative impact on businesses.

Suzanne Vignola was present at the hearing and indicated through the Committee Chair her support for the staff recommendation.

Having held a public hearing, that Transportation Committee recommend Council approve:

- 1. the median closure at the access at 1800 Bank Street and associated extension of the northbound left-turn bay at the intersection of Bank Street and Alta Vista Drive (Annex A), and;**
- 2. the immediate implementation of temporary physical measures to close the median break until the permanent closure is in place.**

CARRIED

2. FALLOWFIELD TRANSIT STATION - ROADWAY MODIFICATIONS

- Director, Engineering Services report dated 17 Mar 00

- RCAG comments dated 31 Mar 00

Staff provided an overview of the report. A copy of their powerpoint presentation is held on file. With respect to the proposed bicycle lanes on Fallowfield, Paul Clarke, Project Manager, agreed with the comments submitted by the Regional Cycling Advisory Group that the dashed lines delineating those lanes should not be shown. Instead, the curb lane would be widened to accommodate cyclists.

Councillor Cantin asked whether the station will be able to accommodate light rail if and when such service is extended to Barrhaven. The Environment and Transportation Commissioner confirmed the station will be able to accommodate light rail. Regardless of whether these roads are widened or rail is provided, the councillor questioned whether the safety improvements proposed for Woodroffe Avenue are still necessary. Mr. Sheflin replied to the affirmative. He explained that staff are very concerned that a vehicle can get trapped on the railway tracks and a collision there would be fatal. They have done everything they can in an interim basis, but the signs are not always obeyed. In response to a question posed by the councillor, staff confirmed that widening the throat at Woodroffe and Fallowfield would eliminate the danger of vehicles backing up on the tracks. The Director of Engineering, Jim Miller, added that staff have analyzed this thoroughly and have examined other options to address this issue, including very sophisticated signaling technologies. He maintained that the proposed safety improvements will correct the problem, emphasizing that this is an immediate concern that must be addressed.

Councillor Cantin referred to the Armoury on Tache Boulevard in Hull where a similar situation exists. He noted that a flashing amber signal on the east side of the track heading westbound, turns red approximately 10-15 seconds before the signal at Montcalm Boulevard turns red, thereby creating a stop line for motorists *before* the track. He wondered whether staff have examined this type of signal for Woodroffe. Jim Bell, Manager, Traffic Operations, confirmed that staff have examined that option. However, the difficulty with such signalization is that the trains are travelling at 90 km/h and to activate the signals, several minutes are required for advanced detection of the train. There are only about 17 seconds between the time the railway crossing signs come down and the train crosses Woodroffe Avenue. The detection would have to originate from the VIA signaling devices at Merivale and Slack and be fed back to the Woodroffe and Fallowfield crossing points, which would cost several hundreds of thousands of dollars. He stressed that in this particular situation, the signals would have to be fail-proof to ensure no cars become trapped on the railway tracks.

The councillor thought this type of signal was something that should be explored further, noting that over the long term, the expenditure will be a minimal expense, compared to a grade-separated crossing, which may be an eventuality.

Dick Howey submitted a letter dated 3 April 2000 requesting the cessation of this project because the costs do not warrant an expenditure of this magnitude to facilitate the movement of people from this area. He believed there were ample transfer points already existing to accommodate transit users. Further, there will be other, less costly modes of transportation used in the future, including light rail and hydrogen-powered buses. He was in favour of light rail to move people and he did not want to spend millions of dollars on something that may turn out to be a white elephant in the long run.

Councillor Cantin inquired of Mr. Howey that should the Region not invest in the park and ride/transit station at this location and should light rail be expanded to this area, how would people be brought in to the rail stop. Mr. Howey informed the councillor there used to be a railway station further north and east of Woodroffe where a farm currently exists and he believed that is where the station should go.

Chair Holmes thanked Mr. Howey for his comments and advised that the Region is looking into different kinds of engines and fuels systems for transit such as hydrogen-powered buses. Councillor Cantin indicated there was also a natural gas bus being used in Quebec City and suggested OC Transpo might be able to bring one of those units here for testing. The Commissioner acknowledged there is ongoing and extensive research with respect to these particular vehicles.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen relayed some of the comments she had received from residents, noting there is support for the roadway modifications. One person in particular stressed the need to widen Woodroffe Avenue to four lanes now, particularly in view of the growth in south Nepean. She noted that 40% of the employees of JDS Uniphase on Merivale Road take public transit, making them the highest percentage of employees to do so in Ottawa-Carleton. Based on the experience at other stations, once the park and ride lot is established, more people will be attracted to transit and OC Transpo will be conducting a marketing campaign to attract more ridership from south Nepean. She believed that OC Transpo's plan to provide increased service and improved reliability will further attract more riders. With respect to the safety improvements on Woodroffe, she believed it would be logical to do them at the same time as the modifications related to the transit station.

Councillor Doucet was somewhat nervous about this project because of the size of the roads; he believed that even with the modifications these roads will be at capacity in a few years time and then there may be a need to widen those roads. He concurred with the comments made by Councillor Cantin with respect to the effectiveness of the signal at Tache Boulevard in Hull, noting a similar signal could be installed on Woodroffe at a fraction of what it might cost to provide the proposed safety improvements. Staff clarified that those improvements will cost in the order of \$400,000 which compares very closely to the signal work suggested by Councillor Cantin. When the whole area is improved, however, they would no longer be necessary.

Councillor Cantin disputed this last comment and questioned whether there is a proposal in the future for a grade separated railway crossing on Woodroffe. Staff advised that such a facility is not identified in the 10 year capital program. The councillor was of the opinion that regardless of how many lanes are added to Woodroffe, there will still be motorists stopping on the tracks during periods of congestion. And, in the long term, unless there is a grade separated crossing, the signals would be very useful in stopping motorists from being caught on the tracks. J. Bell added that VIA is reluctant to implement such an application at this location because of the

costs and due to the speed at which the trains travel and the definite possibility of motorists stopping on the tracks.

Chair Holmes suggested staff report back on the pros and cons of providing that signal.

Moved by M. McGoldrick-Larsen

Having held a public hearing, that the Transportation Committee recommend Council approve the preliminary design for the new intersections on Woodroffe Avenue and Fallowfield Road as required to serve the Fallowfield Transit Station, including associated Woodroffe Avenue safety improvements.

CARRIED

3. **MODIFICATIONS TO GREENBANK ROAD FROM STRANDHERD DRIVE TO A POINT APPROXIMATELY 380 M NORTH OF STRANDHERD TO ACCOMMODATE THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A CANADIAN TIRE STORE**

- Director, Mobility Services and Corporate Fleet Services report dated 16 Mar 00
- RCAG comments dated 31 Mar 00

Having held a public hearing, that the Transportation Committee recommend Council approve the installation of traffic control signals at the intersection of Greenbank Road and the Canadian Tire Site Access and the construction of associated roadway modifications on Greenbank Road from Strandherd Drive to a point approximately 380 m. north of Strandherd Drive as described in the report, subject to the proponent, Canadian Tire Real Estate Limited:

- a. **funding the total cost for the roadway modifications plus any associated utility relocations and the installation of traffic control signals which would include paying the annual maintenance costs until such time they meet the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario installation warrants and Council approves the assumption of these maintenance costs, and;**
- b. **executing legal agreements with respect to the above.**

CARRIED

COUNCILLOR'S ITEMS

4. LAURIER AVENUE BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION -
AMENDMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY
- Councillor D. Holmes' report dated 28 Mar 00

By way of background, Chair Holmes explained that when the Regional Headquarters building was constructed, the NCC stated the Festival Plaza always remain open space and be used in conjunction with Confederation Park for festivals. Complaints had been received from the Lord Elgin Hotel and others, however, about the difficulties these businesses encounter by the closure of Laurier Avenue during times of festivals. In order to avoid having to close the road during these periods, it was suggested that an examination be conducted of providing a pedestrian crossing under the road. However, in order to make such a crossing accessible to all users, a large portion of the park and the plaza would be required to construct a ramp to the tunnel. Such massive land-taking presents a major problem for both the NCC and the Region. She advised that local community associations and women's groups were opposed to any kind of underground facility, siting isolation and safety considerations. To address these concerns and in the interest of saving money, she requested committee's approval of her recommendation. She also expressed concern about the terms of reference for transportation items not coming to the Transportation Committee for verification.

The Commissioner advised that one of the requirements of an Environmental Assessment Study is an examination of some level of every idea put forward.

Councillor Cantin thought that security cameras would provide some element of safety, but the Commissioner advised that according to surveys, 2/3rds of the women and 1/3 of the men believe such links are unsafe to use. This is an important factor to consider, because if people do not feel safe, the tunnels will not be used. The councillor thought that if the tunnel were only used during festivals, it might be appropriate to have cameras during those times. However, the Commissioner explained that it is the access and egress points and the actual size the tunnels would have to be in order to be deemed safe enough by the public to use.

Councillor Byrne noted that some underground pedestrian facilities are not always deemed to be safe and she referred specifically to the tunnels at Carleton University and the safety aspects related to those facilities. With respect to the issue at hand, she stated that the distance to cross Laurier Avenue to get to Confederation Park is very short and for the amount of time required to go under and through a tunnel, she believed pedestrians would probably opt for expediency and go across the street. She also agreed that the costs associated with constructing a ramp to an underground crossing or for a pedestrian overpass would be inordinately expensive.

That the Transportation Committee recommend Council delete the examination of a below grade or above grade pedestrian link across Laurier Avenue between Confederation Park and the Regional Plaza in front of the Regional Headquarters.

CARRIED

INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED

1. TRAVELWISE PROGRAM UPDATE

- Director Mobility Services and Corporate Fleet Services memorandum dated 28 Mar 00

Councillor Doucet expressed his appreciation to staff of Mobility Services for preparing this update. He requested a copy of the draft cycling map *prior* to it being printed for circulation.

INQUIRIES

Paint Markings

Councillor Doucet distributed photos depicting well-worn pedestrian crossing markings on various streets in his ward. He commented on the quality of the paint used for these markings and believed they should last at least a year in a clearly visible way. He asked that staff develop some criteria for using better paints on the traveled portion of the intersection and to identify those intersections that should receive higher quality paint markings.

Sightline Difficulties at Innes and Anderson Roads

Councillor Cantin advised that he would be meeting with staff to examine the intersection of Innes and Anderson and the difficulties for motorists travelling westbound and turning south. There is a crest in the road approximately 75 feet from the intersection which prevents them from seeing oncoming traffic. He further noted that the intersection of Bearbrook and St. Joseph is of similar design and is a particular hazard during inclement weather.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

CO-ORDINATOR

CHAIR