

MINUTES
SAANICH BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
COMMITTEE ROOM #2
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2006, AT 4:00 P.M.

Present: Chair: Councillor Derman in the Chair
Members: J. Gaylord, J. Grayson, A. Murdoch; N. Neate, D. DeShane, P. Shatzko D. Wick.
Staff: A. Topp, Manager of Community Planning, Mike Lai, Manager of Transportation; Rae Roar, Parks Manager; Isobel Hoffmann, Sr. Committee Clerk.
Guests: John Luton; Darren Marr, GVCC; Allan Dunlop and Tracy Corbett, UVIC.

MINUTES: February 8 and February 22, 2006

A minor change was made to the February 8, 2006 minutes re Project Updates on page 3, changing reference to the "Blenkinsop Extension" to "McKenzie Bike Lanes".

Members of the UVIC Transportation Committee were present at today's meeting and took exception to the statement in the February 22nd minutes that there are no cycling experts on that Committee. Agreed the Minutes be amended to indicate that "A comment was made by a committee member that there are no experts on the UVIC Transportation Committee." It was also noted the bike lane referred to in the Project Update was on McKenzie (not Blenkinsop), between Borden and Blenkinsop.

Moved by Dave De Shane and Seconded by Neil Neate: "That the Minutes from the Special Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting held February 8, 2006 be adopted as amended"
Carried.

Moved by Alastair Murdoch and Seconded by Pam Shatzko: "That the Minutes of February 22, 2006 be adopted as amended."
Carried.

PROJECT UPDATES

Creekside Development – Richmond at Newton

Mr. Lai stated he will provide a project update at the next meeting.

Blenkinsop Trail

Mr. Roer advised:

- Portions of Blenkinsop Trail were paved yesterday and the traffic lines should be installed within the next couple of weeks. The official opening will be in May.
- A separate ceremony will be held to unveil the public art component for the project which will be located at the Blenkinsop/Lochside intersection.

CENTENNIAL TRAILS UPDATE – Rae Roer

Trail Signage

Copies of the proposed signage were distributed to members and Mr. Roer stated:

- The signs are intended to replace existing signs at key intersections, or enhance areas where there are currently no signs, improve the safety of the trails and meet the needs of the community.

- Trying to be as minimalistic as possible, the signs will include route and distance markers, maps, and hazard signs with tamper-proof hardware.
- Some of the interpretive signs will be simplified based on input received previously.
- The signs will be at eye level, on the right side of the trail.
- The goal is to have the signing completed by June 25 for the Centennial Trail Challenge.

In response to comments or questions from the Committee, Mr. Roer stated:

- There will be reflective tape on the locking posts.
- Saanich will liaise with the CRD.
- It is important for the Centennial Trail to have its own look and feel, so there will be special commemorative signs in these locations.
- Brown signs will be used for the trails; green signs will indicate roads.
- He acknowledged the committee's concerns about the amount of content on the etiquette sign and specifically the suggestions that icons be used instead of words and the concern about the phrase "control your speed". He will take these suggestions into consideration, but noted that other communities were surveyed to ascertain what type of etiquette signs they used.

A brief discussion ensued about the cycle speeds on the trail and some members noted that pedestrians do not move over. Recognizing this is a multi-use trail and not just a cycling route, it was suggested a sign indicating "*This is a multi-use trail – please respect all users.*" Any sign that show bias against one group will cause problems.

Other suggestions from the committee included:

- Consider reversing the "share the trail" and "keep to the right" phrases on the etiquette sign.
- The etiquette sign should be placed at a junction or rest stop where people will take the time to stop and read it.
- Overall the signage looks good, especially the commemorative signs, and they will make a big difference to the trail users.

Mr. Roer thanked the Committee for their comments and noted that what has been presented today is an overall concept, there are still many details to work out. Installation of the signs will be implemented slowly. **He agreed to bring the map and the trail signs back to the Committee when they are ready.**

Councillor Derman advised he will take this information to the next CRD Parks Meeting.

Interurban Trail

Ron Akehurst, UMA Engineering, presented the schematic for the Interurban Trail, which was reviewed at a public meeting held on March 7, 2006. Comments from the public will be accepted until March 24, 2006.

- This is a continuation of Stage 2 of the trail, between Hartland Ave and Wallace Drive, starting at the end of the existing trail following the abandoned railway line.
- A pedestrian crossing with flashing lights is proposed at Hartland.
- The trail runs adjacent to West Saanich Road, and in places where the trail is close to the road, it is proposed to plant trees for screening.

- Because parts of the trail cross through farmland and marshlands, there are long sections with retaining walls between 2' and 5' high, with the trail on top, providing a good viewing area.
- One of the difficult areas is near the Red Barn Market on West Saanich Road, particularly at the entrance. This is a busy location with many vehicles turning left into the market. Concrete posts may be used to provide security for trail users together with stop and/or yield signs on the trail.
- Remarks were noted at the Open House about the danger to cyclists at the driveway to the Barn, and a raised crossing is a possibility.
- A retaining wall will be needed just past the Barn; drainage courses will have to be maintained.
- A parking lot for about 10 vehicles is proposed at the end of this trail section near Wallace Drive. The parking was not located on the other side of the street because it would be a problem getting people safely across the road.
- Regarding the crossing at West Saanich/Interurban and Goward, the intent is to move traffic away from the intersection as much as possible.
- A crosswalk, with flashing lights, will be installed on Interurban at Goward.
- Five formal parking spaces will be provided in this area.

Committee comments were noted as follows:

- Regarding the proposed parking area at Wallace Drive, it is unsafe for cyclists to have a trail going through a parking lot.
- 50% of the trail traffic will be crossing Wallace drive at this point, and putting the parking area on the north side of Wallace makes more sense, or at least reduce the number of parking spaces available.
- The area could be made into a rest stop, with additional spaces provided on the south side if necessary.
- If the popularity of the trail continues then 10 spaces may not be sufficient.
- Perhaps a pedestrian activated crossing should be considered.

In response to this and other general comments Mr. Akehurst noted the following:

- The trail cannot be located behind the Barn because the ground is too marshy; there are also riparian area concerns, land acquisition challenges and conflicts with the Red Barn use of the back area as well.
- Moving the parking area to the north side raises more safety issues: people drive down Wallace at high speeds and crossing the road could be hazardous.
- There is a high volume of traffic turning from Wallace onto West Saanich, which is why we do not want the trail crossing at West Saanich Road.
- It is unknown at this stage if the area would be a designated park and ride.
- He acknowledged it is important that cyclists on the trail heading up Interurban are able to easily access the bike lanes.
- Engineering will ensure the push buttons at crosswalks are located at appropriate heights for cyclists and equestrians.

Mr. Roer stated these comments will be taken into consideration prior to finalizing plans and as per the Committee's request, he will bring the trail sign plan back to the Committee for review.

Mann Avenue at Colquitz Trail Crossing

A schematic of the proposed trail crossing was displayed and Mr. Lai stated:

- The intent is to add a marked crossing on Mann to connect the Colquitz Trail, which forms a link through to Brydon Park, to West Saanich Road, and under the highway.
- Mann Avenue is a collector road, carrying 1100 vpd between Wilkinson and Glanford, with a pavement width of 11 metres and sidewalks on one side.
- There is a difference between the grade of the trail and the road and it is planned to construct a curb bulge to accommodate this at the crossing location. The north side in particular needs to be ramped up to street level.
- The width between the bulges would be 8 metres, 4 metres in each travel lane at the choke point, shared with vehicles and cyclists as a minimum standard under the TAC guidelines for a collector road.
- Parking is permitted on both sides of the road presently.
- It is acknowledged that Mann Avenue is identified as a commuter bike route, but there is no striping to delineate a cycle path as yet.

The Committee was very concerned that the curb bulges would jeopardize the bike lanes on Mann because it forces cyclists into the car lanes. It was suggested that parking be removed from one side of the street to allow for sufficient width for bike lanes. On-street parking is a hazardous environment for cyclists.

While acknowledging these comments, staff responded:

- The bulge is for a short section; it is a priority to provide a safe crossing for trail users. Widening the entire road to accommodate bike lanes is not an option.
- Eventually, bike lanes will be marked on Mann, but there cannot be a "designated" bike lane in the 4m width section through the curb bulge.
- In order to accommodate all users of the road and the trails, compromises must be made because we have limited right-of-way and limited funds.
- Delaying the work would affect project timelines and budget allocations.
- Perhaps we need to consider the best solution "for now".
- The project is not going out to tender; the work will be done "in house".

Councillor Derman thought the plans should be reconsidered; many cyclists use Mann Avenue and he is hesitant to accept the proposed plan without further examination.

Mr. Roer stated he will take the committee's comments to the staff group working on the project and see if we can come up with a better solution. Perhaps the work needs to be delayed until the bike lanes can be striped. He will report back to the Committee.

CYCLING 2010 – An Infrastructure of Excellence – Darrell Wick

Darrell Wick, Neil Neate and John Luton formed a working group, and submitted a report on the proposed outline, with some guidelines and targets.

- Saanich and Greater Victoria has developed good infrastructure for cycling.
- We need to take advantage of the fact that Victoria is recognized as the Cycling Capital in Canada; the 2010 Olympics is an opportunity to showcase Victoria.
- He hopes eventually to have a model to pass on to other municipalities and also hopes there will be funding to complete some of the projects.

- The report included an outline on the concept, current infrastructure and improvements needed before 2010, participating agencies and funding options.
- Saanich has set the standard for “best practices” – we need to have continuity between each municipality.
- He suggested the concept be formalized through the BAC and eventually Council, funding sources and timelines for the projects be identified.
- He has already met with some groups regarding funding, but the concept needs to be championed by the politicians.
- Mr. Wick noted that Pam Shatzko has some ideas about funding sources.

The Committee generally supported the concept, noting it was a good starting point. The following comments were noted:

- The report could be separated into two components:
 1. Educational and informational; perhaps a manual could be created.
 2. Projects to be completed – and the required funding and sources.
- The goal of the project needs to be defined as well as the overall concept.
- Perhaps separate into specific projects and potential projects; eg: the E&N Railway might be available for trail development.
- This could grow into a regional project – but it was recognized this makes it harder to manage.

Next Steps: The working group to report back at the next meeting identifying goal-oriented projects and funding sources.

CO-OPERATIVE STUDY WITH UVIC

Further to discussions at the February 22nd meeting where it was noted that UVIC's Traffic Demand Management Programme has seen a reduction in single occupant vehicle use and an increase in transit riders, but there was also a decrease in bicycle use. Perhaps there are some infrastructure improvements that Saanich could make to improve and/or encourage bicycle use to and from UVIC. It was also suggested that the BAC and UVIC's Transportation Committee liaise and share information and perhaps conduct a survey. Implementation of the RGS will see changes throughout the region over the next five to fifteen years. The Travel Choices component refers to a change in the modal shift – and UVIC is an important node.

Ms. Corbett, UVIC Transportation Committee, stated:

- Part of the reason for the low cycling and pedestrian counts is the methodology used because it is evident that these are both well used forms of transportation to and from UVIC.
- Bike racks are well used and placed in strategic locations and the cycling budget has tripled to allow for showers and change room facilities in new buildings and retrofitting existing buildings.
- Cycling did decrease from 6.9% in 1996 to 5.5% in 2000, probably because the UPass was introduced. The rate is back to 6% now.
- UVIC continues to invest in education campaigns and workshops throughout the year and sponsors the Bike to Work Week.
- In terms of infrastructure improvements, she noted the key access roads to UVIC are problematic, particularly McKenzie and Shelbourne.

General discussion ensued and it was agreed it would be very beneficial to work together as a group, and also that a survey would be useful, involving Oak Bay as well.

FOLLOW-UP REPORT – Change to format and updates

Copies of the report with the latest updates and amendments was distributed. After discussion, a few more changes were made in an attempt to make this a usable and cohesive document. It was suggested that the Committee set aside some time at each meeting to review and prioritize a few items on the list, ascertain if they are still relevant and/or the project's current status, with the intent of establishing a work plan.

Agreed the matter be placed on the April Agenda for further discussion; the secretary make the changes as discussed and distribute amended copies accordingly.

SHOWER/CHANGE ROOM FACILITIES

Report from the Director of Planning dated March 6, 2006 recommending the off-street parking section of the Zoning Bylaw be amended to include the following:

7.3(e) The number of required off-street parking spaces may be reduced by two (2) where shower and change facilities, available to males and females, are provided within the building.

Anne Topp stated:

- The intent is to provide a "bonus system" whereby if a developer or business can provide shower and change room facilities, they can apply for a reduction of two parking spaces under the current Zoning Bylaw requirements
- Saanich does not have pay parking or parkades like the City.
- We need to ensure we have a balance with all transportation modes.

Discussion noted that while this is an excellent idea and the concept is supported in principle, there are some issues:

- Some businesses have very few parking spaces to begin with – perhaps there needs to be a trigger level and some bare minimum requirements.
- Reducing parking spaces may result in an increase to on-street parking – which is always a hazard to cyclists.
- We need to recognize initiative to encourage other modes of travel rather than the single occupant vehicle, and it is a good idea to formalize this in the bylaw.

Next Meeting: The next BAC meeting will be held on **Wednesday, April 26, 2006** at 4:00 p.m in Committee Room No. 2.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Councillor Vic Derman, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are a true and accurate recording of the meeting.

Recording Secretary