

Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee - Minutes

Present:

Chair – Councillor Starchuk
A. Fasciani (Youth Rep.)
A. Idemudia (Youth Rep.)
K. Otting
S. Sabharwal
M. Sharma
D. Skaey
J. Young
G. Sahota (Rep. to DAC)
J. Zelazny (Rep. to AFSAC)
S. VanKeulen (AFSAC Rep.)

Regrets:

R. Bains
N. Hogan
G. James

Staff Present:

S. Godwin, Environmental Manager
C. Stewart, Senior Planner, Community Planning
E. Taha, Transportation Planning, Engineering
N. Aven, Urban Forestry & Envir. Manager
L. Luaifoa, Legislative Services

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee Minutes of April 27, 2016 to be approved.

It was

Moved by D. Skaey

Seconded by G. Sahota

That the minutes of Environmental

Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting held on April 27, 2016 be approved.

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

1. **Active Transportation**
File: 5400-03

Ehab Taha, Engineering Assistant, appeared before the Committee and provided a presentation on Active Transportation in Surrey.

The following comments were made:

- The Active Transportation Strategy entails more than walking and cycling. The City is involved with traffic management and various programs such as the Safe and Active Schools Program and working to improving accessibility in Surrey schools. The City is also working towards improving accessibility and transit.
- 60% of carbon emissions are created from transportation. Of 60%, single passenger vehicles make up 64%, 30% are commercial vehicles and only 6% is transit. One of the objectives is to lessen single passenger vehicles by encouraging and supporting walking and cycling.

- In Surrey, 25% of the population are confident cyclists; 50% of the population consists of families and people who are interested in cycling, but have concerns about safety; and, 25% of the population are unlikely to cycle, even when protected off-street cycling infrastructure is available. The City's objective is to try and provide facilities to target the 50% of people who are interested in cycling but have safety concerns.
- Surrey has 275 km of Bike Lanes. Although the availability of Bike Lanes is high, Surrey's modal share could be improved by providing more all-ages and abilities cycling routes. Neighbourhood Bike Routes have proven to be very popular. These bikeways are located mostly along local roads and have lower traffic volumes. Surrey has 50 km of Neighbourhood Bikeway.
- The most popular facility in the City is Multi-Use Paths. These are located along hydro corridors and parkland.
- Cycle Tracks are the highest level of infrastructure in Surrey:
 - In an effort to increase pedestrian and cycling in Surrey's City Centre, an interim pilot project of Cycle Tracks was implemented along 105A Avenue from University Drive to Whalley Boulevard. Currently, the existing cycling network has 1 km of Cycle Tracks which is expected to increase substantially in the future.
 - Cycle Tracks are an exclusive facility for cyclists that include: vertical separation by curb, parked vehicles, bollards or planters, etc. This type of facility accommodates both cyclist users (confident cyclists and "interested but concerned") and taps into 75% of the demographics.
 - A few benefits of cycle tracks include: increased separation between all modes of travel, safety and comfort of cyclists, and, discouragement of cycling on sidewalks. Cycle tracks are also the highest level of an All Ages and Abilities (AAA) facility and are highly recommended by Industry Standards.
 - Cycle tracks in Surrey are proposed on all arterial and collector roads in City Centre; on LRT corridors; and connecting town centres. The tracks will be achieved through development and external cost-sharing. Other opportunities for cycle tracks will be with new arterial road widening projects and reconstruction projects.
- The City's Greenway Plan proposes 350 km of multi-use greenways for all ages and all abilities used for cycling, walking, skateboarding, rollerblading and walking with strollers. These pathways are intended for all ages, all weather and all abilities. Currently, Surrey has 110 km and the proposed goal is 350 km, in which a large portion of which will be constructed through development.

- One significant project of the City is a 5.5 km route called the Fraser Heights Greenway, connecting Port Mann Bridge to Tynehead Overpass. A portion of the project included 154 Street, a road that was closed off to vehicles, as a part of the Highway 1 expansion. The City decided to keep the road open to cyclists and pedestrians. Initially, the road did not feature high pedestrian and cycling volumes. The City created lanes to separate walking and cycling and added trees on both sides of the boulevard as well as pedestrian lighting. Ultimately, the holistic vision is to connect Port Mann Bridge to Tynehead Regional Park to Golden Ears Bridge. The City received nearly \$ 600,000 in external funding from the Ministry of Transportation and the City intends to monitor the usage before and after the project.
- In response to questions from the Committee, staff made the following comments:
 - The City avoids tree removal whenever possible when creating paths; and, if trees need to be removed, the City facilitates re-planting where possible.
 - The City is in the process of developing a Regional Bike Monitoring Program to measure the successes of the various facilities. Currently, a count of people using facilities such as cycle tracks has been completed.
 - Through LRT design, the City is working on incorporating secure bike parkades at skytrain stations. Users are required to be registered in the system. Currently, there are two parkades in the Lower Mainland - Vancouver and Surrey at the King George skytrain station.
 - Ultimately, the City would like to achieve cycle tracks or bike lanes on almost all arterial and collector roads.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. Draft Streamside Protection Zoning Bylaw and Draft Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Areas

Stephen Godwin, Environmental Manager and Carla Stewart, Senior Planner, Community Planning, provided an update on the Riparian Bylaw - Draft Streamside Protection Zoning Bylaw and Draft Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Areas.

The following comments were made:

- Surrey's Streamside Protection Bylaw was created to guide development near watercourses and establish appropriate setbacks from those watercourses to

manage the values and liability the City has. The goal is to create a streamlined, transparent process to manage for environmental values and liabilities while understanding a sites development potential

- Previously the *Federal Fisheries Act* and the *Provincial Fish Protection Act* through the Riparian Areas Regulations were aligned. With changes in the *Federal Fisheries Act*, the two pieces of legislation are no longer aligned which has caused difficulties in administering development in and around watercourses.
- A significant reduction in Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) staff affected the support that was provided to local governments; in particular, with the Environmental Review Committee (ERC).
- The emphasis of the *Federal Fisheries Act* shifted from the protection of the fish habitat to protection of a specific fishery like Commercial, Recreational or Aboriginal. The new benchmark was to ensure “No Serious Harm” was being caused to fish as opposed to not causing “Harmful Alteration Damage Destruction”. The new regulations focussed on poaching (illegal fishing) and some gravel extraction in watercourses. The changes were criticized for not including terrestrial habitat protections and since the language changed, no variances to setbacks under the Riparian Areas Regulations are allowed.
- The City decided to develop setbacks that conformed within the RAR and that were specific to Surrey’s watercourses. The DFO Land Development Guidelines for a setback from the top of the ravine or edge of the ditch was 15 m or 30 m, depending on the density of development. Slope stability, drainage and flood plains were also taken into consideration. Any application to vary the setbacks was reviewed by the ERC which was made up of staff and a DFO representative. Once the cutbacks to DFO occurred, this process was eliminated due to the lack of a DFO representative to the City.
- The City has then followed an interim process where an application adjacent to a watercourse would require the applicant to hire a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to do a detailed Riparian Areas Regulation Assessment. The Provincial methodology determined what the setback would be based on physical traits of the watercourse (steepness, width, whether fish were present, etc.) and determined the zone’s sensitivity, ultimately a Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area (SPEA) is defined which determines the limits of development while meeting the RAR.
- In addition, there are 8 measures that need to be applied to protect a SPEA area:
 - Hazard trees
 - Wind-throw
 - Slope stability
 - Protection of trees within SPEA
 - Preventing encroachment into SPEA
 - Erosion and Sediment Control
 - Stormwater Management
 - Floodplain concerns

- A few of the examples of the issues with applying only RAR are as follows:
 - RAR only protects fish habitat and not private property, community values or liabilities.
 - Hazard Tree Management – Narrow riparian areas are less resilient to wind-throw.
 - Encroachments – Narrow riparian areas are viewed as insignificant. The Parks Department has done a lot of inventory work on this and it is a challenge.
 - Beavers: Flooding – Beaver dams may raise the water and causes flooding to adjacent homes and infrastructure.

- The Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area (SEDPA) was developed to deal with Surrey's challenges regarding streamside Protection and will be included in Surrey's new Official Community Plan (OCP).

- SEDPA identifies the overall area requiring protection and identifies how development will be managed and adjusted from two perspectives: the Green Infrastructure Areas (defined by the Green Infrastructure Network in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy) and Streamside, as defined in the Zoning Bylaw.
 - **Green Infrastructure perspective:** The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) is the document that identifies Surrey's specific ecosystem values and biological assets. It also identifies hubs, sites and corridors that combine and formalize into the Green Infrastructure Network (GIN). The BCS also provides GIN protection, specifications that detail Ecological Value, Risk of Development and Width of Protection (as part of development). These specifications are used as a guide when developing new policy documents such as land use plans and when proposals are being developed for applications.
 - **Streamside perspective:** Surrey's Stream Classification System is the determining factor that triggers the property and if it requires a development permit or not. If a project falls within 50 m of any of the following class types, then it would require a Development Permit (DP):
 - Class A (fish)
 - Class A/O (Fish over-wintering)
 - Class B (food/nutrient)
 - Class C (conveyance)

A DP is required for a subdivision, construction, alteration, addition, road or trail construction, or soil disturbance. It also includes vegetation clearing or soil disturbance.

As part of a DP, the application needs to clearly define the Streamside Protection Areas using the Zoning Bylaw setbacks.

- A Development Variance Permit (DVP) is required to reduce the SEDPA beyond the Zoning Bylaw setbacks and Flex Allowance. A Streamside Impact and Mitigation Plan is required and must prove that the proposed

setback reduction will not cause negative impacts such as: increased flooding, unstable soil conditions, inability to access for maintenance, riparian habitat destruction and destruction of critical habitat etc.

- Adjustments to the Tree Bylaw are required in order to be consistent with the DP areas and are as follows: replacing the ESA map (with BCS GIN and 30 m within streamside from Class streams A, A/O and B) and adjusting the penalty fees to include vegetated area disturbed and not just single trees.
- A Targeted Stakeholder Information Session is scheduled for June 16 between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm. Specific scenarios will be provided to demonstrate the processes. More information about what happens to in-stream applications once the bylaw is enacted will be provided. After review of the stakeholder feedback, a report to Council will be submitted for endorsement of the following recommendations:
 - Amending the OCP to add Sensitive Ecosystem DPAs
 - Amending the Zoning Bylaw to add Streamside Protection section to bylaw
 - Identify future amendments to the Tree Protection Bylaw
 - Identify future amendments to the Soil Removal and Deposition Bylaw to update maps to be consistent with the BCS

Staff will adjust the internal documents and finalize the process.

In response to questions from the Committee, staff made the following comments:

- An existing non-conforming (to RAR) house cannot be re-built in the same location unless it was demolished by a fire.
- If a ditch is marked Class A (red), fish are present or potentially present and are protected under the *Fisheries Act* and RAR, the City cannot permit anything that is contrary to the legislation. Some ditches are classified as having fishery values and therefore have fishery protection. If it is proven the watercourses are not considered streams under RAR or the *Water Act* then COSMOS is amended.

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

There were no items referred by Council.

F. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

G. INFORMATION ITEMS**1. Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee (AFSAC) Update**

- Due to water shortage of the Serpentine & Nicomekl, the government is cracking down on illegal irrigation. People were unaware that drawing water from ditches requires a *Water Act* License. Staff noted that people with water licenses are guaranteed a certain volume of water and when there are other users without licenses, the system becomes over allocated. Staff also noted that the *Water Sustainability Act* will manage ground water and surface water.

2. Development Advisory Committee (DAC) Update

- No report due to the meeting being cancelled.

H. OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair recognized Youth Representative – Antonio Fasciani for his contribution to the Committee and wished him well in his endeavours.

I. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 29, 2016** at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall, in room 1E Committee Room B.

It was Moved by D. Skaey
Seconded by G. Sahota
That the Environmental Sustainability
Advisory Committee meeting do now adjourn.
Carried

The Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Jane Sullivan, City Clerk

Councillor Starchuk, Chair