



Corporate NO: R270

Report COUNCIL DATE: January 8, 2001

REGULAR COUNCIL			
TO:	Mayor & Council	DATE:	January 3, 2001
FROM:	General Manager, Engineering	FILE:	1700-902
SUBJECT:	Road Network in West Fraser Heights		

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

INTENT

To apprise Council of results of a public consultation process to resolve perceived traffic issues in West Fraser Heights at the 110 Avenue access to Highway 1.

BACKGROUND

The original Fraser Heights local area plan contemplated the construction of a cul-de-sac on 108 Avenue at 154 Street, and the closure of 154 Street between 108 Avenue and 110 Avenue (please see Figure 1, attached). The timing of the closure was dependent on the establishment of alternate routes in conjunction with the development of lands in the western portion of Fraser Heights. The property for the cul-de-sac was dedicated in conjunction with the development of lands along the south and north sides of 108 Avenue dating back to 1989 and 1994 respectively. The recent development of other lands in this area has expedited the construction of 110 Avenue to arterial standards from 154 Street to 156 Street, resulting in alternate routes, whereas previously 154 Street was the only road connecting 108 Avenue and 110 Avenue.

As a result of increased development of communities south of the Fraser River, and no net increase in road capacity across the river, congestion on Highway 1 has reached the point where drivers are seeking shortcuts as a means to jump the queue of traffic. As a result, traffic is exiting the highway at 176 Street and making its way through Fraser Heights to regain access via the 110 Avenue access to the 152 Street interchange. Field measurements indicate that about 30% of vehicle traffic using the 110 Avenue access does not originate from

Fraser Heights and is, therefore, considered shortcutting traffic. Residents in the immediate vicinity of the access have expressed a number of concerns about this traffic including speeding, queuing and driver disregard for pedestrians.

To respond to requests from homeowners in the immediate vicinity of 108 Avenue at 154 Street, and to address their concerns for safety on the curved alignment at the corner of 108 Avenue and 154 Street, the closure had been planned for 1998, along with conversion of the closed section of 154 Street to a walkway/cycle path. At that time, 110 Avenue and 156 Street between 108 Avenue and 110 Avenue were substantially developed to arterial standards, including the elimination of direct driveway accesses, thereby providing an alternate route for through traffic, whereas the existing route was to local road standards and involved driveways with vehicles backing into traffic.

Prior to proceeding with the cul-de-sac, signs were posted advising of the proposed closure. In response to this notification, numerous telephone calls, some letters, and three petitions were received. A number of the calls and letters and two of the petitions opposed the planned closure and cited the traffic difficulties in the Fraser Heights area, primarily related to the fact that its access points are all regularly blocked by Port Mann Bridge traffic back-ups. In contrast, one of the petitions and some calls supported the closure, referencing that homes were purchased in anticipation of the planned closure.

Staff met with the Fraser Heights Community Association and formed a task force to work on an overall review of Fraser Heights roads and traffic issues (short and long term). The Province (MoTH) commissioned a study of the Port Mann Bridge and the task force confirmed Fraser Heights local area road plans and identified traffic issues as input to the MoTH study. A public information meeting, organised through the Fraser Heights Community Association, was held on September 8, 1998, to seek a consensus and position on the proposed closure and related issues. At this meeting, it was apparent that it was not possible to achieve consensus within the community as to how best to resolve the issues.

Concerned residents were advised that the proposed closure was postponed indefinitely, pending further public consultation and reaching a consensus on the issue from the overall Fraser Heights Community.

Subsequently, staff met with the Community Association on two occasions, January 19 and February 16, 1999 in an effort to resolve the issues. Discussions were held to determine a feasible course of action but, again, no consensus was achieved. A public Open House was held on March 15, 2000, at which time five options were presented, including a "Do Nothing" option, and again no consensus was achieved.

DISCUSSION

One of the outcomes of the Provincial study was a recommendation to, in the long term, permanently close the 110 Avenue connection to 152 Street, reconfigure the 152 Street/Highway 1 interchange, and construct a new interchange and underpass at 156 Street. The new interchange would have a westbound on-ramp and eastbound off-ramp only. The Province has recently commissioned another study that will look at this recommendation in more detail. The results of this study are anticipated in winter of 2001. Given that the Province has a study recommending the closure of the 110 Avenue access, it would not be prudent to construct the proposed 108 Avenue/110 Avenue connector road (see Figure 1) until such time as the Province clearly defines its intentions for the future of the Highway 1 corridor and access to this corridor.

Subsequent to the March 15, 2000 meeting, a letter and survey card were sent out to residents of West Fraser Heights (north of Highway 1, and west of 160 Street) soliciting their opinion regarding road options to mitigate the impact of traffic. The options were:

1. Do nothing.
2. Traffic calm adjacent local roads and close 154 Street between 108 Avenue and 110 Avenue.
3. Complete closure of 110 Avenue access to Highway 1 and 152 Street from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., Monday to Friday, and close 154 Street between 108 Avenue and 110 Avenue.
4. Closure of the Highway 1 access from 110 Avenue during the a.m. peak but keep access to 152 Street open, and close 154 Street between 108 Avenue and 110 Avenue.

A total of 1,000 letters were sent out and a total of 423 survey cards were returned for a 42.3% response rate. This is considered to be an excellent return. Of the 423 returned survey cards:

- 277 respondents (66%) stated “Do Nothing”
- 34 respondents (8%) asked for the traffic calming and closure of 154 Street
- 16 respondents (4%) asked for the complete a.m. closure of 110 Avenue access
- 96 respondents (23%) asked for the closure of the Highway 1 access from 110 Avenue during the a.m. peak

The results of this survey were surprising in that, for the first time, there was a clear consensus from the community as to the preferred option (i.e., Do Nothing). Based on written submissions, e-mails and telephone conversations, the community did not want any changes because of the impediments that would be created to accessing Highway 1, considered to be an attribute of living in Fraser Heights. The results of the survey were plotted on a map of the area and it was observed that there was no geographical pattern to the responses (i.e., no one sub-area in Fraser Heights voted for any particular option other than the Do Nothing option).

Subsequently, staff presented the results of the survey to the Fraser Heights Community Association on October 17, 2000 and to the community via an Open House on November 1, 2000. At each meeting, residents were solicited for viable options that could be considered for the area but none were submitted. Generally, opinions expressed at each of these meetings confirmed the results of the survey.

CONCLUSIONS

After an extensive public consultation process which has occurred over the past three years, the community has presented a clear consensus as to a course of action: Do Nothing based upon the options offered. Given the uncertainty with the future of Highway 1 and access to this facility, it is not prudent to further invest in the 108 Avenue/110 Avenue connector until such time as the Province clearly defines its plans for the Highway 1 corridor. Upon receiving the Province's official plans for the Highway 1 corridor, expected in late 2001, the Engineering Department will re-evaluate its transportation investment program for Fraser Heights and make recommendations to Council. Until that time, the Engineering Department is recommending that no further action be taken regarding the road network in West Fraser Heights.

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General Manager, Engineering

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Attachment

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