



City of Surrey

Council-in-Committee

Minutes

Council Chamber
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
MONDAY, JUNE 23, 2008
Time: 4:02 p.m.

Present:

Chair - Councillor Martin
Mayor Watts
Councillor Bose
Councillor Villeneuve
Councillor Steele
Councillor Gill
Councillor Hepner
Councillor Hunt
Councillor Higginbotham

Absent:

Staff Present:

City Manager
City Clerk
Deputy City Manager
General Manager, Planning & Development
General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Finance & Technology
General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture
General Manager, Human Resources
City Solicitor
Manager, Area Planning & Development –
South Division

A. DELEGATIONS

1. **Jamie Vann Struth, Vann Struth Consulting
Eric Vance & Associates and Dragana Vojakovic**
File: 6750-01; 0550-20-10

Jamie Vann Struth, of Vann Struth Consulting, Eric Vance & Associates and Dragana Vojakovic were in attendance to make a presentation regarding the Economic Development Strategy.

Note: See Corporate Report Item C008.

A brief PowerPoint presentation was provided and comments were as follows:

- The Economic Development Strategy (the “Strategy”) is based on significant review/analysis of prior studies and statistical data (Draft Sustainability Charter, OCP and many other studies).
- Principals already established:
 - Diverse, high-value jobs.
 - Efficient use of employment land.
 - Supporting urban character, community image, livability, green community, partnerships and a strong City Centre.
- The study process for the Strategy included sector focus groups (March 26), Stakeholders Committee meeting (April 17, May 21), a Council Workshop (April 28) and key informant interviews.
- Economic Development Objectives:
 1. ***Expand and diversify employment opportunities, including higher-value jobs.*** Expanding employment is key to many of Surrey’s aspirations of improving jobs/worker balance, to intensify land uses and to balance the tax base. The charts provided show Surrey is catching up. (Charts shown: i) Jobs to Working Residents Ratio (1991 – 2006) and Growth in Jobs and Working Residents (2001 – 2006) comparing Surrey to Vancouver,

Richmond, Burnaby, Delta and Langley Township; and ii) Share of Jobs by Pay Level, 2006 and Job Growth Rates by Pay Level, 2001-2006, Surrey - Metro Vancouver.)

2. **Establish Surrey as a premier investment location.** Factors affecting investment appeal:
 - Land availability and cost. When meeting with goods related industries, it was noted that the land supply is not there.
 - Taxation and regulation.
 - Quality and availability of labour. This is a deficit in Surrey and a key challenge in securing the higher value future (chart shown: Residents Age 25+ by Education Level, 2006, Surrey – Metro Vancouver).
 - Transportation infrastructure.
 - Image. There is a need for services-related industries, tourism, etc.
3. **Strengthen Surrey's dual roles as a vibrant urban economy and a centre of agricultural production.** One-third of land in Surrey is agricultural, making Surrey quite unique for the size of the city. (Note: the chart provided listed Surrey as the 12th largest city in Canada with a population of 394,976. This figure was corrected by Council as being 453,000, noting that some of the other cities in the chart were using combined figures.)
 - Strategic priorities suggested for 2008/2009:
 - Ensure appropriate supply of serviced industrial land on a timely basis;
 - Focus on developing City Centre as catalyst for economic development;
 - Continue to protect agricultural land base and enhance viability of agricultural enterprise; and
 - Continue to operate business retention and expansion (BRE) program.
 - Additional strategies include:
 - Education (key to high-value future);
 - Image;
 - Marketing and investment attraction;
 - Efficient policies and regulations;
 - Transportation network; and
 - Growth opportunities in home-based business, tourism, film, entrepreneurship, health services.
 - Success requires strong partnerships, patience and diligence. Surrey is well on its way!

In conclusion to the presentation, the delegation recommended that the *Economic Development Strategy – Final Draft Report*, as presented, be approved as Surrey's official Economic Development Strategy.

Council provided the following comments:

- It appears that education is a bit of an afterthought strategy. Education needs to be a top strategy. There is a strong and well-educated population

within the City. With SFU and Kwantlen campuses in Surrey, there is a real opportunity to build on an educated, future oriented workforce.

- The City can play a life long role in education, perhaps through School Board liaison meetings, etc. We have the youngest population in the province which could play a key role in the future.
- One of the strategies should be to identify our niche, our world value. We have these higher learning institutions now, education continues to move up it needs to be a strategy. We need to consider how we can position ourselves in the world tomorrow and what our power is?
- Surrey has the least amount of home-based businesses, however the number has been increasing over the past five years. It would be interesting to have statistical data on these increased figures.
- Need to ensure industrial land remains industrial and to make that clear.
- In terms of encouraging hotels, etc. to locate in the City Centre, there needs to be some real strategies. There needs to be a reason for them to be there. What does the landscape need to look like in order for the answer to be yes, going forward?
- With regard to the strategy to pursue transportation system improvements, the Peace Arch crossing expansion should be noted, as it is a very significant expansion of the border crossing at Peace Arch.
- Consideration to how the Strategy will read positively to those viewing on our website should be given, e.g. foster an environment that positions the City to become more attractive to tourism, to investment, etc. There needs to be something that says you should come and visit Surrey for a day, etc.
- When businesses are looking at moving businesses to Surrey, there should also be something that encourages the employees that work for those businesses to move with those businesses to Surrey.
- The “Livability Accord” should not be duplicated, but it should be emphasized in the Strategy – a little more context is required. Surrey is one of the four high growth cities that has been identified in the region. It is expected that, between the four communities, up to 250,000 jobs will be required, what is the strategy towards that? There has to be specific strategies where we look at how many jobs we are expected to provide.
- We most definitely should have partnerships such as the regional Boards of Trade and to become involved with those partnerships, looking at where other cities have a similar expanded program.
- Happy to see that there will be more focus on agriculture as it is a key point that will set our city apart. Surrey can take a leadership role in trying to achieve these objectives by providing an educational tool to educate young people to value the land, etc.
- A little more emphasis should be given to the elder population by providing such amenities as walking, bird watching, etc. and having some areas to emphasize ecotourism.
- There is a definite need for more emphasis on the positives of Surrey.

2. Ron Wall, Pat Humphries & Laurel Mitchell

File: 0550-20-10

Ron Wall, Pat Humphries & Laurel Mitchell were in attendance regarding a proposal to change the NCP for the area bounded by 28 Avenue (north), Highway 99 (west) and 156 Street (east).

Note: See Corporate Report C009.

Comments were provided as follows:

- The subject area is a triangle shaped parcel of approximately 5.7 acres.
- The OCP identifies this area as Suburban and the NCP designates this area as Business Park / Light Industrial with the realignment and continuance of Croydon Drive to run parallel with Highway #99.
- There are two issues with this parcel of land, land use and road alignment (taking away some of Croydon Drive to provide a road straight through to Highway #99).
- The development community has advised that designated (unserved) Business Park / Light Industrial land has a current market value of approximately \$700,000 per acre (e.g. Campbell Heights). The current market value of Suburban zoned Duplex housing situated on ½ acre properties is approximately \$700,000 per duplex on ½ acre lots (\$1.4 million per acre); a value of approximately 200% of Business Park / Light Industrial designated land.
- The owners of these properties have assembled the parcel and marketed it for approximately five years, aggressively during the past three years, with various different real estate companies around both the area and the major commercial houses in downtown Vancouver. The development community have made a number of offers, however there have been roadblocks with the developers coming back consistently noting that the property is not feasible to develop because the combination of the land use and the road alignment makes it economically unfeasible.
- The NCP identifies the majority of lands adjacent to the subject land as a higher and better land-use of Commercial or Multifamily Residential.
- The NCP downgrades of the current OCP land-use from Suburban (Duplex housing) to Business Park / Light Industrial.
- The NCP road realignment further decreases the buildable/developable area due to the fact that the land required for the road realignment is unencumbered versus the current 156 Street and 28 Avenue transportation corridors currently running on Hydro encumbered land. With the road realignment, the property is reduced from over five acres to 1.75 acres of actual buildable property.
- In conclusion:
 - The current land-use is Duplex housing on Suburban land. The majority of the properties are older buildings with “low-rent housing” in varying condition. There has been a history of multiple police visits and investigations of the tenants occupying many of these properties.

- The NCP has decreased the value of the subject land by approximately 50%.
- The current OCP land-use is higher and better land-use than the proposed NCP land-use, which renders these properties economically un-developable. As a result, the current land-use will remain as “low rent” housing on large properties.
- The owners of the subject properties appeal to the City to revisit the NCP land-use and revise it to a land-use equal to or higher than the current land-use such as Mixed-Use Commercial/Residential.

In response to Council’s questions, the following was noted:

- In terms of urban/long range planning, a consultant has not been hired to substantiate that the land could be Commercial.
- It is land-use at least equal to the current use that is being sought.
- The delegation have had meetings with both the Planning & Development and Engineering departments where it was noted that it was the policy (of Council) not to amend the NCP. We were told emphatically, that an NCP amendment would not be supported.
- The challenge is based on price.
- The subject properties are already adjacent to Commercial properties on the south side. (It was noted that the Commercial properties, although close, are not abutting.)
- As unsophisticated land owners, it was not known that Light Industrial / Business Park was valued at a lower price.

Pat Humphries commented that she had owned the land since the early 1980’s and has tried very aggressively to sell her property, noting that the main challenge with her parcel is that the planned road realignment cuts directly through her house and property. Ms. Humphries further suggested that the City consider expropriation of her land.

Corporate Report C009 notes the following:

- The Business Park / Light Industrial designation, as shown in the approved Highway 99 Corridor Plan, is appropriate for the subject site, based on the objectives of increasing the area of land available for employment-generating uses, and of concentration commercial development in “nodes” along major arterials where there is an existing or proposed freeway access or crossing.
- The Croydon Drive connection and alignment shown in the Highway 99 Corridor Plan provides an efficient and direct connection that effectively distributes traffic and separates business/industry traffic from residential neighbourhoods to the east. The alignment of Croydon Drive is also constrained by BC Hydro regulations with respect to locating roads under high voltage power lines. The existing 156 Street ROW may become surplus land when Croydon Drive is connected between 29 Avenue and 156 Street, and, if so, could possibly be purchased and consolidated with other parcels to make a more efficient development site.

In closing, Council advised the delegation of the following:

- During the NCP process for the whole corridor, an analysis and a retail impact study was done (noting that the amount that was presented was appropriate) as well as a series of public meetings generating various alternatives to consider, including potential land consolidation.
- There was significant public consultation with respect to the properties in question.
- There is an NCP application amendment process. When owners feel that the NCP does not address all the things that need to be addressed, including the economic ramifications of land ownership in the area, they can proceed through the NCP application amendment process, which must demonstrate an alternative plan that will work.
- An NCP application amendment has not been received from the delegation. At this point in time, sufficient information to demonstrate that any alternative plan, other than the current one, is a reasonable plan.
- An alternative plan requires significant study to determine what alternatives might be available to satisfy the economic needs as well as the continuity needs for the business development along those corridor lands.
- There has to be a process to look at when considering an amendment and what it will mean to the NCP and the entire property.
- At this point in time the NCP amendment process would be the appropriate course of action for the delegation to follow upon the hiring a consultant to determine an appropriate recommendation.

The delegation was directed to contact the G.M. of Planning and Development for further information regarding the process for an NCP amendment.

**3. Owen Croy, Manager of Parks
Bill Webster, Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants
File: 0620-20; 0550-20-10**

Owen Croy, Manager of Parks, introduced Bill Webster, Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants to provide a PowerPoint presentation on the Parks, Recreation & Culture Draft 10-Year Strategic Plan (the "Plan").

Comments were as follows:

- Now in the final stages of completion of the Plan.
- The Plan has a process of three phases:
 1. Look at the existing delivery system in terms of Parks, Recreation and Culture, which include:
 - meetings with the Working Group (made up primarily from staff from PR&C) and the Steering Committee (made up of senior staff throughout the various City departments) on a regular basis;
 - a communication plan;
 - Council briefing;
 - Parks and facility inventory;
 - background information;
 - demographics and statistics;

- current trends;
 - a workshop with City Council and senior staff; and
 - an overview of existing services.
2. Analyze current and future demand and within that conduct a number of steps that really emphasize the input from the general public, user groups and stakeholder groups, such as:
 - public/web surveys;
 - looking at Best Practices;
 - Staff discussions;
 - agency discussions;
 - stakeholder interviews;
 - community forums; and
 - a Planning workshop with Council.
 3. Prepare the Plan, which includes putting everything together to develop a draft plan (meetings with the Steering Committee, Working Group and Council, open house/public review, etc.) and then presenting the final document to Council.
 - Recent work include: meeting with Council (May) to present a draft report, followed by further revisions to incorporate a greater emphasis on trails, information on mini parks and community gardens, clarity regarding major park improvements and adjustments regarding project priorities.
 - There were two public open houses (May 29 and May 31) with approximately 80 people in attendance and feedback of over 200 written responses (which include the web survey responses).
 - A good number of the responses from the survey spoke of the need for an aquatic centre in South Surrey.
 - It was further noted from the public open houses that the areas of interest include natural areas and the environment, equity in the provision of services (access assistance), continued development of trails, a further aquatic facility (Guildford), tennis/squash courts and lawn bowling, arts/heritage services/ facilities and multi-purpose facilities.
 - Next Steps include:
 - input from Council and staff;
 - consideration of input from open houses;
 - revise draft document;
 - prepare final report; and
 - present final Plan to City Council for approval (July 14).

Council provided brief comment on the need for marketing of the trails as it is felt that the current trails may be underutilized; more is needed to promote the “discovery” our trails.

B. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

C. CORPORATE REPORTS

1. The Corporate Reports, under date of June 23, 2008, were considered and dealt with as follows:

Item No. C007 Delegation Regarding Traffic Operations on 99A Avenue between 154 and 156 Streets
File: 5400-80(09950)

The General Manager, Engineering submitted a report in response to the delegation to Council-in-Committee by Mr. Brian Fowler on March 31, 2008, during which he requested that a gate be installed across 99A Avenue at the westerly property line of the William F. Davidson Elementary School (as shown in Appendix I).

The General Manager, Engineering was recommending approval of the recommendations outlined in his report.

It was Moved by Councillor Hunt
Seconded by Councillor Higginbotham
That Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Authorize the City Clerk to forward a copy of this report and the related Council resolution to the delegation that appeared before Council-in-Committee regarding this matter.

Carried

Item No. C008 Draft Economic Development Strategy
File: 6750-01

The Manager of Economic Development submitted a report to apprise Council of the process to date related to the development of an Economic Development Strategy for Surrey; and to seek Council approval in principle of the draft Strategy.

The Manager of Economic Development was recommending approval of the recommendations outlined in his report.

It was Moved by Councillor Hunt
Seconded by Mayor Watts
That this report be received for information.
Carried

Note: See Delegation Item A.1.

Item No. C009 Delegation Request - Highway 99 Corridor Business Park/Light Industrial Lands
File: 6520-20 (Highway 99 Corridor)

The General Manager, Planning and Development submitted a report to provide Council with background information related to a request for a delegation to Council regarding amendments to the Highway 99 Corridor Plan. On May 12, 2008, Council considered a request from Ron Wall, Pat Humphries and Laurel Mitchell to appear before Council to present information regarding changes to the Highway 99 Corridor Plan in relation to lots in the vicinity of 28 Avenue and 156 Street. Council requested a staff report with detailed information.

General Manager, Planning and Development was recommending that the report be received for information.

It was Moved by Councillor Hunt
Seconded by Councillor Steele
That this report be received for information.
Carried

Note: See Delegation Item A.2.

D. DELEGATION REQUESTS

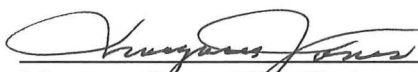
E. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

F. OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

G. ADJOURNMENT

It was Moved by Councillor Hunt
Seconded by Councillor Higginbotham
That the Council-in-Committee meeting do
now adjourn.
Carried

The Council-in-Committee adjourned at 4:59 p.m.


Margaret Jones, City Clerk


Councillor Martin, Chairperson