

Corporate Report

NO: R158

COUNCIL DATE: July 5, 2004



REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: June 25, 2004

FROM: General Manager,
Engineering FILE: 5400-80
(13402)

SUBJECT: West Whalley Ring Road Extension at Holland
Park

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council support Option 2 as outlined in this report, which calls for the construction of the West Whalley Ring Road along the edge of Holland Park to be deferred until required to deal with congestion and economic development needs in the City Centre.

INTENT

To inform Council of the rationale for the need for the extension of the West Whalley Ring Road at Holland Park and of the results of public consultation, and to seek Council's direction.

BACKGROUND & PREVIOUS STUDIES/PLANS

The West Whalley Ring Road (aka. 134 Street) south of Old Yale Road was classified as an Arterial Road and was added by Council to the City's Major Road Network Plan (the R-91) sometime in the early 1980's at the time of the development of the Revenue Canada Tax Centre. Since that time, the City has reviewed and reconfirmed the need for this road link in various planning exercises as outlined below:

Surrey City Centre Plan

Council adopted the City Centre Land Use Plan in 1991. Fundamental to this plan was the concept of developing both an inner and outer ring road system paralleling King George Highway. Traffic modeling done in conjunction with this plan concluded that the completion of the West Whalley Ring Road would be needed sometime between 2001 and 2011.

Official Community Plan (OCP) and Surrey Transportation Plan (STP)

The OCP, endorsed by Council in October 1996, included a "Major Roads and Phasing Map" identifying that West Whalley Ring Road completion would be required sometime in the 5 to 10 year time horizon. The STP, approved by Council in December 1999, also identified the West Whalley Ring Road as a need within the "Ten Year Servicing Plan Map".

Surrey City Centre Road Network Review

In 2000, the Engineering Department retained CitiWest Consulting Ltd. to conduct an independent peer review of the City Centre road network in preparation for an anticipated update of the City Centre Land Use Plan. A key outcome of this assignment was to prioritize the need of the 44 future road links identified within the City's concept plans. The consultant concluded that although some planned roadway links could be abandoned, the West Whalley Ring Road link at Holland Park was a "required significant link" for adequate traffic circulation for City Centre.

Why is the Road Needed?

- No significant road capacity has been added to City Centre since the advent of SkyTrain, resulting in increased congestion which may become an impediment to attracting new City Centre development.
- A road network review in 2000, further reinforced by the traffic impact study for the Surrey Central Office Tower development, reaffirmed that the West Whalley Ring Road extension was becoming of some urgency.
- The Surrey Central Tower, at full occupancy, will generate peak period traffic equivalent to the need for two new traffic lanes in each direction. Without roadway additions, significant increases in congestion will occur on King George Highway, 132 Street, Old Yale Road, East Whalley Ring Road and 140 Street.
- Traffic looking to access City Centre from the south must funnel into either King George Highway or 132 Street and access Surrey Central by way of Old Yale Road. These roads in particular will become more congested as the office tower fills.
- The one-half mile separation between 132 Street and King George Highway is too coarse a north-south grid to serve the desired development density of a city centre.
- Addition of the Holland Park link, with full occupation of the Tower, will keep traffic volumes on other north-south links in south City Centre at roughly current levels.
- Based on detailed traffic simulation modeling, almost all traffic utilizing the East and West Whalley Ring Roads system would do so to access City Centre, not to bypass City Centre.
- A road along the west side of Holland Park will improve accessibility and security within the park as well as add greater visibility for this major public space.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In light of the proposed redevelopment of Holland Park under the Whalley Enhancement Strategy, and the importance of the Ring Road extension to the revitalization of the park, the Parks, Recreation & Culture and Engineering Departments developed a joint public consultation process to investigate the road and park options concurrently. This process included a number of open houses and meetings to accommodate particular sectors of the public such as at Ted Kuhn Towers.

The initial open house had 73 persons in attendance, resulting in three persons providing written response in favour of the road and 13 opposed. Numerous attendees expressed verbal support for the road but were reluctant to provide written comments. Of those opposed, areas of concern expressed were parking, speeding, increased traffic, security, and tree issues. Investigation of these issues is detailed in the Appendix.

The subsequent open house had 58 attendees to whom three park concepts and two road options were presented for review and comment. Twenty-two households registered opposition to the proposed road and one registered support.

A separate meeting was held with residents of Ted Kuhn Towers with approximately 20 persons attending. A mixed and roughly equal reaction of opposition and support was received.

The Whalley Business Improvement Association was provided the opportunity to comment. In response they initiated a survey of their membership, resulting in a 2 to 1 ratio of support versus opposition.

A 230 name petition in opposition to the proposed road extension was presented at the open house. Analysis of the petition indicated 36 signatures from the 437 living units in Ted Kuhn Towers and representation from 121

households in the immediate area but including only 25 of the 80 single family homes directly fronting either 100 Avenue or 134 Street.

Results of the public consultation indicate strong localized opposition, particularly from those potentially directly impacted. However, a higher than typical level of non-written response combined with numerous verbal indications of support suggests evidence of some broader community support for the roadway extension.

OTHER FACTORS

Air Quality Impacts

Some residents of the Ted Kuhn Towers indicated concern regarding potential air quality impacts of the ring road extension. Although there may be some localized impacts to air quality, the road will be located on average a distance of 60 metres from the complex with a treed buffer in between. This separation will allow for dispersion of emissions and compares to an existing separation of 22 metres from Old Yale Road and 16 metres from 100 Avenue to the residential complex.

Parks, Recreation & Culture Department Input

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department supports the extension of the West Whalley Ring Road past Holland Park due to the joint synergy with park redevelopment. There will be potential for savings through coordinated site clearing, preparation and servicing and shared storm water management. An enhanced park streetscape will be made possible including an entry plaza, lighting, street trees and furniture. Parking on street may be utilized by park users and provides a buffer to traffic. The road extension creates opportunity for clear, safe and accessible pedestrian access points and addresses key principles of crime prevention through environmental design, including natural surveillance of park activity.

Should the road not go through at this time, major tree work will have to be done in the area where the road would have been (i.e., keep large conifers only, remove all cottonwood/alder and underbrush, raise the crowns – remove lower branches for sight lines) and improve the pathway to a 3-4m width, which is necessary multi-use trail standard.

Figures showing the park layout with and without the road are attached.

Mitigation of Traffic Impacts

Constructing the road with one traffic lane in each direction plus parking on both sides with a roundabout at the intersection of 100 Avenue and curb bulges at intersections to the south will serve to traffic calm and partially mitigate some of the concerns of local residents. The proposed alignment will retain a treed buffer area adjacent to the Ted Kuhn Towers and will create a buffer area in front of the residences at 100 Avenue / 134 Street.

DISCUSSION

The technical analysis and overall planning rationale has identified the benefits of opening the road, for increased employment based development in the City Centre. Not opening the road will result in decreased accessibility and increased congestion on other north-south roads in the area over time. This would, in turn, lead to the need to widen these other roads, with resulting property acquisition needs and traffic impacts on these other roads.

Options open to the City may be summarized as follows:

1. Open Road Now

Advantages:

- Completes road and park construction at the same time.
- Minimizes cost and construction disruption.

Disadvantages:

- Road is opened ahead of actual need.
- Local opposition.

2. Defer Road Opening Until Warranted by Congestion in City Centre

Advantages:

- Need for road is more clearly demonstrated to the wider public.

Disadvantages:

- Disruption to the west edge of the park at a later date.
- Somewhat higher cost to build subsequent to park development.

3. Change City Centre Plans to Delete this Road for all Time

Advantages:

- Responds to those residents opposed to the road.

Disadvantages:

- Limits Council's flexibility to deal with traffic growth and development into the future.

From a cost and construction disruption point of view, Option 1 is preferable. However, in view of the opposition by some local residents and the concern about construction, somewhat ahead of immediate actual traffic need, gives Option 2 some advantage. Option 3, which would constrain Council's ability to deal with this issue in the future, has minimal advantage.

CONCLUSION

All the studies indicate that, in the longer term, the extension of the West Whalley Ring Road along the west side of Holland Park is needed to serve future economic growth in the City Centre. With the work proposed on the major upgrading of Holland Park and the improved accessibility and security available from opening the road, there are advantages for proceeding with the road construction at this time. However, the road is not needed immediately to overcome congestion concerns. In view of the need for the road in the longer term, and the fact that the congestion is not clearly seen at this time, Option 2 (Deferred Road Construction) is proposed.

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PH/KZ/BF/brb

Attachment