



Corporate Report

NO: R143

COUNCIL DATE: June 13, 2005

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: June 9, 2005

FROM: General Manager,
Engineering FILE: 7903-0444-00
XC: 5400-80(15600)

SUBJECT: Status of 156 Street South of 40 Avenue Amendment
to Rosemary Heights Central NCP

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council support, in principle, amending the Rosemary Heights Central NCP to open 156 Street as a through road to 40 Avenue.
2. That public input be sought prior to Council repealing the Stop Up and Close By law for 156 Street.

INTENT

To provide Council with background on the status of 156 Street south of 40 Avenue.

BACKGROUND

In the late 1990s, the Rosemary Heights Central NCP was prepared. As part of this process, and in response to requests from existing residents, Council directed that 156 Street, south of 40 Avenue, 36 Avenue just west of 156 Street, and 156 Street between 34 and 36 Avenues, be closed to through traffic. The road layout in the NCP, as approved by Council in November 1996, is as shown on the attached Figure I. Under this plan, the through connectivity of 156 Street has been replaced with the new 156A Street which according to the 1996 version, was to swing back over to the 156 Street alignment at 40 Avenue. This road alignment meant that the original 156 Street had to be terminated in a cul-de-sac at this point. Due to a number of factors, this road network was modified in May 1999 and the alignment of 156A Street was shifted to the east (becoming 156B Street) between 36 Avenue and 40 Avenue (please see Figure 2). While this road layout now did not physically require that 156 Street be closed at 40 Avenue, the concept of this road being a cul-de-sac carried over from the 1996 NCP to the modified 1999 NCP.

In 2001, Council approved a 'Stop Up and Close' By-law for 156 Street, following a request from the residents along 156 Street that the road closure as planned in the NCP be put into place. The road was blocked off in the summer of 2002; however, due to the large amount of construction related traffic, it was temporarily reopened that same summer. The road was recently closed again, in accordance with the approved closure by-law, once the traffic calming works on 156A/B Street were substantially complete.

A development application on 156 Street recently had third reading. This development application is for suburban half-acre gross density, which is fully in compliance with the NCP. The proposed subdivision layout, based on the NCP, would entail the construction of a cul-de-sac bulb on 156 Street and, hence, permanently close this street.

156A/B Street

Following numerous complaints, including a delegation to Council, about the speed and volume of traffic on 156A/B Street, the City undertook a traffic calming study. Following this study, which included public consultation, extensive traffic calming works were constructed on 156A/B Street between 32 Avenue and 40 Avenue. These works are now in the final stage of completion. In spite of these works, a number of residents on 156A/B Street still feel

that the volume and speed of traffic is not acceptable and also feel that the situation has been aggravated by the closure of 156 Street and the interim barriers on 152 Street which, for safety reasons, prevent eastbound traffic on 40 Avenue from turning left onto 152 Street, or crossing 152 Street.

The City is faced with the situation where one group of residents believe that the NCP should be changed to permit the re-opening of 156 Street in order to reduce the traffic on 156A/B Street. The residents on the section of 156 Street that would be affected by this change would likely not agree. Factors in favour of amending the NCP primarily relate to increasing the inter connectivity of the road network and increasing the number of available routes for traffic, hence reducing overall burden on all the routes. Factors against amending the NCP include the loss of certainty for those who relied on the plan, and loss of green space that would be created on the section of road that was to be closed.

When balancing these factors there is no clear preference for one set of residents versus the other; however, we believe that interconnectivity and increasing the choices of routes available has the greater overall benefit of diluting the traffic over a greater network would increase the sense of equity. Such an amendment process would likely affect the proposed development on 156 Street. Traffic calming measures on 156 Street could be incorporated into the servicing of this new development before 156 Street is reopened to through traffic. Re-opening to through traffic would also require the repealing for the 2001 Stop Up and Close By-law (By-law 14529).

CONCLUSION

Overall, Rosemary Heights Central NCP has poor interconnectivity with only one two lane road (156A/B Street) in the north-south axis connecting the community between 40 Avenue and 32 Avenue, and only one (34 Avenue) east-west connection between 152 Street and 156A/B Street. The cul-de-sacs are included in the plan at the request of some of the original residents of the area that did not want to develop their properties and who wished to retain their original rural living environment.

However, as the area infills with more density, it does seem counter-intuitive to the new residents that we are closing the older roads. Each closure simply redistributes traffic to a new road, making it fairly contentious. Although we anticipate requests to open the other two closures on 36 Avenue and 156 Street, we will await such requests and assess the traffic pattern changes with the opening of 156 Street before proceeding with any further consideration of changes to the road network.

Based on Council's directive, 156 Street will be re-opened on an interim basis following the approval of the CIC Minutes at the June 13 Council meeting. It is proposed that the affected residents would be informed of the City's consideration for the permanent opening of 156 Street and comments be sought. Public feedback could then be taken into account when Council makes its final decision, and repealing the Stop Up and Close By law for 156 Street. Additionally, notice of the intention of repealing the by-laws would be advertised in the local newspaper in accordance with the Community Charter.

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VL/PH/rdd/amr
Attachment

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