
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 15, 2004
File No.: 6140-20
To: City Manager
From: Parks Manager
Subject: Knowles Park Laneway

Prepared by: Andrew Gibbs

RECOMMENDATION

THAT access to and from the east end of the lane connecting Richter Street and Ethel Street, between Bernard Avenue and Lawrence Avenue, through Knowles Park, be closed and that a hammerhead turn-around be developed in its place;

AND THAT the closed portion of the lane be restored to provide a continuous park space between the north and south portions of Knowles Park;

AND THAT the required works be implemented through the normal budgetary process.

BACKGROUND

Knowles Park is a 1.52ha (3.1ac) neighbourhood park located adjacent to Ethel Street and bounded to the north by Bernard Avenue and to the south by Lawrence Avenue. An established 6.0m wide lane bisects the park on a west-east axis as outlined by Option A. The lane provides off-street access to approximately 30 properties that have access off the lane, including the First United Church. Traffic counts conducted at the halfway point of the lane conducted by the Transportation Division in June 2002 revealed that the average daily use of the lane, excluding Sunday, was 213 vehicles, with a maximum two-way flow of 24 vehicles per hour (two every five minutes). On the Sunday sampled there were 36 westbound trips (between 9 & 10am) and 24 eastbound trips (between 11am & noon). The mean speed of vehicles was 28km/hr, while the 85th percentile speed was 38.5km/hr.

Development of the park began in 1998, and was completed in 2002, based on a master plan prepared in consultation with KASAN and local and city-wide residents. Included in that plan, but not yet executed, was the closure of the east end of the lane where it is bounded on both sides by Knowles Park. In response to queries by local residents regarding the closure of the lane, Parks conducted an on-site public information open house June 2, 2004. The open house featured 4 alternative approaches to dealing with the issue as follows:

- Option A – Leave the lane as it is
- Option B – Close the lane and provide a cul-de-sac turn-around
- Option C – Close the lane and provide a hammerhead turn-around
- Option D – Close the lane and re-align it to the south, to connect with Lawrence Ave.

Survey forms were provided to attendees at the open house. The Parks Division received 87 completed survey forms and results are summarized as follows:

Preference for options:

- 47% Option C Hammerhead (67% support Option C if you only include local residents).
- 39% Option A Straight through (14 of the responses for this option were from local residents and 16 were from attendees of the church at the west end of the lane)
- 13% Option D Re-alignment to the south
- 3% Option B Cul-de-sac

Respondents used the lane for different purposes:

- 41% Private/residential
- 33% Church
- 13% Other
- 12% Business

Respondents tend to enter/exit the lane at different ends:

- 57% East end
- 43% West end

The Parks Division supports Option C, the closure and hammer-heading of the lane. In Parks' opinion it improves safety in the park by eliminating a road bisecting the park and provides a contiguous green park space in a manner most supported by residents that attended the open house.

The Transportation Division is opposed to the closure of the lane. A summary of Transportation's reasons are as follows:

- Closure of the east end of the lane would significantly increase turn movements at the west (Richter) end of the lane. Left turns in particular will be difficult to prevent and would likely create safety concerns and increase congestion close to the busy Richter/Bernard intersection. The access to the Safeway parking lot could cause further potential conflicts with traffic to and from the lane. With the possibility that Richter Street may in the future need to be 4-laned or made into a one-way road, adding to the traffic at this location is viewed with concern.
- Closure of the east end of the lane would increase travel distance and time for residents using the east end of the lane and increase the amount of traffic passing homes at the west end of the lane and also increase fuel usage and air pollution; and
- Creating a long cul-de-sac (350m) is not considered desirable, as it increases travel distance for emergency and service vehicles.

In addition to the above, the Parks and Facilities Committee supports the lane closure and hammerhead option.

Joe Creron

Parks Manager

cc Director of Parks and Leisure Services

Director of Works and Utilities

Enclosures