
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: June 23, 2005
File No.: 0540-20 Roads Task Force
To: Mayor and Council
From: Roads Task Force
Subject: Roads Task Force Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Kelowna City Council approves the work of the Roads Task Force as outlined in the report dated January 25, 2005;

AND THAT Council considers and approves the recommendations of the Task Force as outlined in the report;

AND THAT Council direct their staff to take these recommendations and integrate them into the 2020 Official Community Plan (OCP) and the 2020 20-Year Servicing Plan and Financing Strategy;

AND FURTHER THAT Council releases the Roads Task Force.

DISCUSSION:

The Roads Task Force was struck by Council after receiving extensive community opposition as part of the 2020 Official Community Plan (OCP) approval process in January 2004 to the planned one-way couplet using Water/Pandosy and Richter Streets. Council removed this one-way roadway system from the OCP with the understanding that a Task Force, made up of stakeholders be struck to determine the best community acceptable solution.

The Terms of Reference of the Roads Task Force (see Appendix 1) was approved by Council on May 10, 2004. The mandate was focused on recommending a road network solution that delivered a set traffic capacity to the planned, new Okanagan Lake Bridge (as agreed to with the Province in a special agreement (Appendix 2)) and to meet the community traffic needs of the 2020 OCP. The Task Force was also directed to review the need to four-lane Lakeshore Road from its intersection with Richter Street to Old Meadows Road. Council appointed Bill Redmond as Chair of the Task Force. Six representatives of the various community and business groups impacted by this decision, as well as three community representatives at large were appointed to work together to find an acceptable community solution (Appendix 3). The Task Force was supported by various City staff and consultants.

The Task Force began meeting on May 14th, 2004 and met a total of 22 times (see Appendix 4) in leading to these recommendations, as outlined below. The focus of the Task Force was to become fully familiar with all of the background conditions including basic transportation road capacities, planning, and financing; previously approved City OCP, Neighborhood and Sector Plans; Provincial Okanagan Lake Bridge Plans; present City road network plans and previous options considered. In an effort to reach a decision that considered all factors the Task Force agreed to use the Kepner-Tergoe decision making process, a recognized decision matrix, which was suggested by a Task Force member. Over this time period the Task Force received many presentations from various city staff, consultants, and Provincial Ministry of Transportation staff. Use of independent consultants to audit the work of staff and consultants was also done to demonstrate objectivity.

Recognizing the strong community interest and ensuring that the membership of groups represented by the Task Force members had access to the information and the actions of the Task Force, all presentations and minutes of the Task Force were placed on the City website. Meetings were also open to public attendance.

The Task Force completed its information gathering phase in early September and then held a brainstorming session. Some 19 options were developed (Appendix 5), some being complete solutions and others partial solutions that could be considered in conjunction with others. These solutions were analyzed by traffic consultants to ensure they met the base traffic capacity conditions and were subsequently reduced to 6 viable options (Appendix 6). At this phase all potential options including the original one-way roadway system were considered.

These options and the Rational Decision Making Process criteria were then taken to two Public Open Houses held November 18th and 22nd to receive feedback from the community and also to seek new ideas and solutions that the community may have. Over 600 questionnaires were taken out and 199 returned with comments and suggestions. In addition to many comments, ten traffic solutions were provided, which the Task Force then considered. Results of the community feedback were summarized by a Okanagan University College student (see Appendix 7). One traffic solution from the community, the addition of a fourth westbound lane to the bridge, was retained by the Task Force for further consideration.

The Task Force then firmed up the information of the selected criteria for the Rational Decision Making Matrix (Appendix 8) as well as reached agreement on the scoring process. Each Task Force member then individually or with their stakeholder group scored each criteria and then each option against those criteria. These were then forwarded to Norm Letnick who had them audited by an OUC professor for accuracy. The Task Force then voted unanimously to recommend the preferred solution as well as additional recommendations. The outcome of the Matrix Decision Making process is shown in Appendix 9.

As a result of this comprehensive process the Task Force brings forward the following recommendations. These recommendations not only address the Task Force mandate but include recommendations that the Task Force believes the City should consider in order to enhance traffic within the City and Region.

RECOMMENDATION #1

That Council approves the implementation of Option 19 to provide capacities to meet the Bridge Agreement and the 2020 OCP.

Discussion: Option 19 consists of implementing a two-way Water/Pandosy roadway with dual lefts at Highway 97, as well as other improvements (as outlined in Appendix 10) at an estimated cost of \$ 17.1M. We note that a new connection point between Water and Pandosy has been developed as an option and is recommended as it reduces neighborhood impact to the Abbott Street neighborhood. While this solution does not provide the same level of capacity as a one-way system it does meet the Highway capacity agreement and largely meets the 2020 OCP needs. The Task Force would expect that Council would evaluate financing of this solution as part of the 2020 Servicing Plan update that staff is already undertaking. Due to the short time allotted for the Task Force to develop these options, we also recommend that additional technical evaluation of this option should be conducted by City staff to ensure maximum capacities are achieved.

The Task Force believes that it has addressed the vision and the appetite of the impacted citizens and businesses in this area. From a cumulative impact perspective this is the best traffic solution and is good value for the additional expenditures. The approximate \$3.7M additional cost includes current property and construction costs. We understand the City is conducting an update of the costing of the 20-Year Servicing Plan this year due to the increasing property and construction costs on all its projects.

RECOMMENDATION #2

That Council considers exploring with the Provincial Ministry of Transportation a 4th westbound lane to Okanagan Lake Bridge from Water Street.

Discussion: The Task Force supports this suggestion as it reduces the need for traffic to use Abbott Street to access the bridge and, therefore, benefit downtown pedestrian and City Park activities. Traffic analysis also identifies that a 4th lane will provide additional traffic capacity to the bridge and therefore extending its useful life. Costs for the new westbound lane vary from \$2M to \$10M depending on where it is added. Recognizing the benefit to both the City and the Ministry it is believed cost sharing would be possible. This could be implemented at a later date when traffic demands warrant.

RECOMMENDATION #3

THAT Council complete the four-laning of Gordon Drive (from Old Meadows northward) to reduce the traffic volumes on Lakeshore Road from Old Meadows to Richter, but that Council continue to protect for an ultimate 4-lane Lakeshore Road.

Discussion: Council asked the Task Force to revisit the need to four-lane Lakeshore Road in this zone. Further analysis by the Task Force determined that Lakeshore Rd. continues to have a high traffic demand that will ultimately require 4-laning, likely by 2020. However the Task Force found that Gordon Drive also will need full four-laning which is not in the 20-Year Plan. The Task Force recommends that the 2020 Servicing Plan be amended to incorporate the completion of the 4-laning of Gordon from Mission Creek to Casorso Rd. The Task Force also recommends that the City enhance Lakeshore Road into a 3 lane cross-section (2 travel lanes with center left turn bays) plus an enhanced pedestrian and cycling corridor on the lakeside of

the road to Mission Creek Greenway as a mechanism to maximize its capacity. The 20-Year Plan should continue to 4-lane Lakeshore at a later date when conditions warrant. Costs were not available but should be determined and considered as part of the 20-Year Servicing Plan update.

RECOMMENDATION #4

THAT Council direct staff to work further with the Downtown Kelowna Association, the Chamber of Commerce and property owners to explore the implementation of a two-way traffic on Lawrence and Leon Avenues.

Discussion – Initial traffic analysis suggests that turning Lawrence and Leon into two-way streets is possible though with loss of some parking stalls on those streets. The Task Force believes implementation of two-way traffic flow on these streets may enhance business. However within the mandate and time constraints of the Task Force full review was not possible. As well considerable consultation with property owners is required.

RECOMMENDATION #5

THAT Council implements streetscape enhancements to Pandosy Street north of Highway 97.

Discussion – As outlined in the 2003 Social Economic study of the one-way system, the loss of traffic on this portion of Pandosy would have a negative impact on businesses located there. Streetscape enhancements were proposed as a mitigative measure. Recognizing the proposed solution will result in similar reduced traffic, we recommend implementation of the same proposed measures. It was understood that up to \$1M was identified previously for this enhancement. This work should be in place by 2008 when the new road works are in place.

RECOMMENDATION #6

THAT Council direct staff to move forward with the implementation of a comprehensive integration of traffic signals between the City and Ministry traffic lights.

Discussion - While the coordination of signals is already agreed to by both governments we believe it essential that this be completed as soon as possible. The lack of integration has been raised by the public throughout the process. This would enhance existing and future road capacities. We are pleased to note the City has just received federal funding toward this project.

RECOMMENDATION #7

THAT Council considers the implementation of pedestrian overpasses in the future at both Abbott Street and Pandosy Street.

Discussion - The road solutions proposed by the Task Force do allow for level crossings of pedestrians. However, increasingly, there is concern for the safety of pedestrians due to highway width, high volumes of traffic and movements, and our aging population. A pedestrian crossing at Pandosy could reduce business impacts due to traffic loss. Costs for pedestrian overpasses range from \$350,000 to \$1M each though some may be financed by creative solutions such as advertising. Joint funding with the Ministry may be possible due to the gain in traffic capacity.

RECOMMENDATION #8

THAT Council move forward aggressively with the Province and other stakeholders in the planning and implementation of a second Okanagan Lake Bridge crossing and bypass highway.

Discussion - Implementation of traffic capacity improvements have significant impacts on businesses and residents along the existing highway corridor but also surrounding neighborhoods. Our solution only meets the traffic needs to the 2015 – 2020 period. We strongly feel that future capacity be addressed through a second crossing and related highway network rather than further significant expansions along the existing corridor. Knowing the length of time to go through the planning process, all the stakeholders on both sides of the lake that would have to be consulted, and other factors such as funding, it is essential that this process for a second crossing be initiated as soon as possible. Based on our experience in this Task Force, we believe a Regional Roads Task Force may be an excellent mechanism in working toward addressing this need and reaching community consensus.

RECOMMENDATION #9

THAT Council accelerates the provision of alternative transportation options to reduce traffic growth.

DISCUSSION - There are opportunities to enhance alternative transportation such as transit, cycling, and walking as well as sound community planning including town center development and densification as a mechanism to defer or eliminate costly road expansions. We acknowledge that the City is aggressively working in those areas as identified by the recent Smart Transit Plan, Sidewalk and Cycling Network Plans, etc. However, we note that transit expansion has been delayed due to lack of provincial funding and also that the City's sidewalk requirements for new development are among the lowest in the Province. The City should move forward to address these areas.

With the presentation of this report and its recommendations, we believe this will have fulfilled Council's mandate. We sincerely thank City staff and the consultants for their work and advice throughout the process. This process has been an educational and a meaningful process for every member. Therefore we also seek approval of Council to release the Task Force.

Respectfully,
On Behalf of the Roads Task Force

Bill Redmond
Chairperson, Roads Task Force

Attachments (9)

cc. City Manager
Director of Works and Utilities
Director of Finance
Transportation Manager

For attachments please see the Council Agenda Package for the Public Hearing of January 31, 2005 – agenda item No. 3.1