
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 12, 2005
File No.: 6140-20
To: Ron Born, City Manager
From: Joe Creron, Parks Manager
Subject: Knowles Park Laneway

Prepared by: Andrew Gibbs

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT the temporary lane closure between Richter and Ethel Streets through Knowles Park be ended and lane access be reopened through the park on a temporary basis;

AND THAT in the longer term the lane be re-aligned at the east end of the lane so that it connects with Lawrence Avenue instead of Ethel Street as outlined by Enclosure I;

AND THAT the realignment of the lane be implemented through the normal budgetary process.

BACKGROUND

In October 2004, in interests of public safety for users of the park, to maximize park use and in response to input from a public open house, Council approved a recommendation from the Parks Manager for a temporary closure of the lane through Knowles Park to determine if the lane could be closed at the east end on a permanent basis. A temporary hammerhead was constructed where the lane was closed so that a garbage truck could turn around.

The lane was closed in November 2004 for one year. Upon closure, signs were installed explaining the trial closure and requesting feedback. Upon closing of the lane the City received opposition to the closure from the First United Church, the Italian Club, and three local residents. We have also received support for the closure from 5 individuals. On October 12th, 2005 the City received a petition from sixteen of the residents of Bernard and Lawrence Avenues requesting re-opening of the lane. This petition represents 11 of the 28 residential lots within this block opposing the lane closure. Those opposing had concerns regarding emergency vehicle access to carriage homes, poor access to home-based businesses, congestion and safety concerns at Richter, especially in peak periods, and social problems resulting from the absence of passing traffic.

The Transportation Division has consistently been opposed to closure of the lane, as it increases congestion and accident risk at Richter Street, where the access is close to the Bernard Avenue traffic signals and directly opposite the Safeway access. Transportation also advises left turns out of the lane are a particular concern, which could be significantly reduced if drivers could simply make a right turn into Ethel Street when heading eastwards. In addition they advise, the extra travel distance is an inconvenience to residents and increases fuel usage and air pollution, while the reduced accessibility could cause delay in an emergency. In addition to the above Transportation advises the congestion and accident risk will increase as Richter

Street becomes busier and significant upgrades are planned for 2006 as part of the bridge east approach work.

Although the Parks Division supports the lane closure at the east end of the lane due to park user benefits, given the Transportation Division's concern we propose to open the lane immediately and at such time as funds are available reroute the east end of the lane to Lawrence Avenue as outlined by Enclosure I.

This Park serves a neighbourhood and open space need and will be an important open space in the future as this area continues densification.

Joe Creron
Parks Manager

Enclosure

Cc David Graham, Director of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Services
John Vos, Director of Works and Utilities
Ron Westlake, Transportation Manager
Harry Thompson, Traffic and Transportation Engineer