
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 16, 2009
File No.: 0230-20
To: City Manager
From: Director, Regional Services
Subject: Public Transit Funding Agreements

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive the report of the Director, Regional Services dated July 16, 2009;

AND THAT Council support an application to the Union of BC Municipalities for funding under the Public Transit Agreement and the Public Transit Infrastructure Program for \$1.125 million for infrastructure related to transit priority and transit communications systems through central Kelowna;

AND THAT Council support an application on behalf of all local partners in Kelowna Regional Transit for general bus stop improvements;

AND THAT Council support an application on behalf of all local partners in Kelowna Regional Transit for transit station shelter on the UBC Okanagan campus;

AND THAT Council authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an agreement with the Union of BC Municipalities for funding under the Public Transit Agreement and the Public Transit Infrastructure Program for this infrastructure;

AND FURTHER THAT the 2009 Budget be amended to include funding from this source for the subject projects.

BACKGROUND:

Funding is available through the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for public transit projects across the province. This funding is both federal and provincial. For the Kelowna Regional Transit system, approximately \$2.3 million is available subject to approval of the partners, BC Transit and the UBCM. The deadline for using the funds is March 31, 2010.

To fully utilize these funds, a number of projects have been considered. The final projects selected for funding application are:

1. Technology infrastructure (\$1.124 million)
2. Bus stop improvements throughout the transit system service area (approx. \$1 million)
3. UBC Okanagan On-campus Shelter Facilities (approx. \$200,000)

These individual projects are further explained in the following sections.

Technology Infrastructure

The Central Okanagan Smart Transit Plan (2005) outlines the vision for a higher order of transit service operating between the Westbank Town Centre and the UBC Okanagan campus. This higher order service is referred to as bus-rapid transit (BRT) service which would operate primarily along the Hwy 97 corridor.

The City of Kelowna has been working with the two senior governments since 2005 on the development of appropriate technology to support the proposed BRT service through the congested core of Kelowna. This is section of Hwy 97 from downtown Kelowna to Hwy 33. Joint technology planning initiatives have included:

- Traffic Signal Integration Project (2006)
- Central Okanagan Smart Transit Plan Funding Study (2006)
- Intelligent Transportation Systems in Public Transit (2008)

These above initiatives will lead to various technology deployment projects for the local transit system in the years ahead. Some of these include:

- Traffic/Transit signal priority
- Automatic vehicle locations (AVL)
- Real time schedule information for passengers
- Video surveillance on-board buses and at transit exchanges
- Trip planning and customer service information systems

The above applications will need basic infrastructure to support them. These include telecommunication along the BRT route and a control centre for receiving and transmitting information. The first funding application that is being made therefore includes a telecommunications conduit along Hwy 97 and a traffic operations centre at the Main Fire Hall. These two initiatives account for \$624,000 and \$500,000 respectively.

The telecommunications conduit is being installed as part of the current project to widen Hwy 97 between Gordon Dr and Banks Rd. The work takes advantage of the ongoing construction along Hwy 97 and integration of six BRT stations being built with the Hwy 97 project.

The proposed traffic control centre is the first step in organizing traffic control, data recording, database management and deployment of technology for the various transit facilities.

General Bus Stop Improvements

Bus stops throughout the transit service area could benefit from improvements like paved pullouts, wheel chair accessible pedestrian pads, lighting, shelters and signage. These infrastructure investments would strengthen the gateways to our shared transit network. Access to senior government funding provides a one time opportunity to upgrade these facilities.

Kelowna is in the process of updating the inventory of bus stops throughout the transit catchment area. The inventory will include a cataloguing of the condition and features of existing bus stops. It will now take a coordinated effort to identify and prioritize bus stop improvements. In this regard, a cross-municipal team of staff is needed to effectively take on this work and expedite the improvements.

The subject funding source will not cover land acquisition. It will also not cover ongoing maintenance of these improvements. These responsibilities would fall to the individual local government jurisdiction. The cross-municipal team could also be tasked with setting up efficient ways to work together to minimize ongoing operating costs of the improvements.

UBCO On-Campus Shelter Facilities

UBC Okanagan has implemented a U-Pass for all of its full-time students within the catchment area of our transit service. This program has brought many new riders to our transit system and stands to see significant transit ridership growth in the years ahead as the university grows. In 2008, over 40% of all student trips to and from campus were via Kelowna Regional Transit. The campus transit hub also serves many non-UBCO riders as it is an exchange point for 5 routes serving a large catchment area - the #97 Express, #8 University, #23 Lake Country, the #90 Vernon and the #7 Glenmore.

The campus is currently served by four small transit shelters which are insufficient to handle the current and projected passenger volumes in comfort. The transit exchange is entirely on university lands. A partnership has been proposed with the University administration to cost share a structure estimated at \$200,000 - \$250,000 (depending on choice of vendor and options selected). As a joint initiative, it has been proposed that UBCO provide the site at no cost, pay all cost of underground utility servicing of the structure and take on all ongoing maintenance of the facility. The local partners would get recognition through signage as contributors to the facility.

INTERNAL CIRCULATION TO:

Fire Chief
Director, Financial Services
City Clerk
Director, Civic Operations

FINANCIAL/BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS:


Funding for the telecommunications conduit is not currently in the 2009 Annual Budget and therefore Council will need to amend the budget with the funding coming from federal/provincial contributions. The funding agreement with the province for the Hwy 97 widening project will be brought forward for Council's consideration once a resolution has been passed for execution of the subject agreements.

The funding for the proposed traffic control centre and communications tower is currently in the 2009 Budget with the subject federal/provincial funding.

Considerations that were not applicable to this report:

LEGAL/STATUTORY AUTHORITY; LEGAL/STATUTORY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS; EXISTING POLICY; PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS; TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS; EXTERNAL AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENTS; COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS; & ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION.

Submitted by:



Ron Westlake, P.Eng.
Director, Regional Services

Approved for Inclusion:



Attach: Letter from BC Transit
Letter from District of Lake Country

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July 7, 2009

File: KEL.1

Mr. Paul Taylor
Relationships and Communications Advisor
UBCM
545 Superior Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1T7

Dear Mr. Taylor,

Subject: Public Transit Project Proposal

BC Transit supports the proposal that the City of Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan, and the District of Lake Country use \$1,123,694.00 of the Public Transit Agreement and Public Transit Infrastructure funds towards the Traffic Management Centre and Radio Tower, and the Highway 97 communication conduit (\$500,000 and \$623,694 respectively).

Should you have any questions please call me directly at 250-995-5687.

Yours truly,

Megan Hill
Senior Business Analyst

*Copy: Steve New, Steve Harvard, Graeme Masterton, BC Transit
Ron Westlake, City of Kelowna
Harold Reay, Regional District of Central Okanagan
Stephen Banmen, District of Lake Country*



Memorandum from the Administrator

July 22, 2009

*To: Ron Westlake, Director of Regional Services
Public Transit Capital Funding Applications*

Ron

Thank you for presenting to Council last night. It is good to have the person directly involved in the service providing the information and answering questions.

I confirm that Council adopted the recommendations outlined in your report of July 15, 2009. Council views the work as regionally significant and beneficial for all the communities in our region.

Council's decision was based on its understanding that the committee will be ensuring transit shelters are provided in each community in strategic locations.

Thank you.

Randall Rose
Administrator