

May 14, 2012

Shelbourne Valley Action Plan Stakeholders Committee

Attending: Mei Ang; Natalie Bandringa; Marlene Bergstrom; Andrea Gleichauf; Elsie Habbick; Soren Henrich; Caleb Horn; Duncan McClelland; Jean Newton; Tom Newton; Peter Spurr; Harold Stanley; Ray Straatsma; Alistair Wade; Elaine Weidner

1. **Acceptance of Agenda:** accepted
2. **Acceptance of April 18 minutes:** accepted
3. **Role of the Committee:** Harold reminded the Committee of its role as defined in the November 16, 2009, minutes is to “help guide the citizen participation and consultation process including community outreach, mapping and surveys”. While feedback on issues is welcome from the Committee the ultimate goal is to get feedback from the general public through surveys, open houses etc.

Many of us joined the Committee representing special interests that we wished to promote such as cycling, transit, walkability, the Bowker Creek Initiative, or the interests of a community association or neighbourhood. It's important as we start to take positions regarding elements of the proposed Plan that we confine our comments to these interests. This is especially important when speaking as a Committee member outside the confines of Committee meetings now that the results of the consultants' reports are being presented to the public and discussed in the media.

The discussion that followed included the fact that interests often overlap, such as the configuration of Shelbourne St. and its possible impact on Bowker Creek. The interests of others are also included and brought out by some of the Committee members as a result of their own interests. An example would be the Walkability Group's interest in bringing forward the views of seniors regarding their walking challenges in the Valley.

4. **Transportation Study:** Presentations have been made to various groups (Gordon Head Residents Association, Camosun Community Association, Bike Fest, the Urban Development Institute) over the past couple of weeks regarding the options and recommendations of the Transportation Study prepared by Urban Systems. The media has heard about the presentations and, although we're not happy with some of the head lines, have been generally well balanced in their reporting.

Discussion followed about how the vision of the Valley, as shown in the Vision Survey, is being realized through the transportation study. For example bike lanes seem to have been downgraded from their prominence in the Vision Survey to the Transportation Study. Harold replied that while it's true that bike lanes were the number one feature identified in the vision survey that was missing and needed on

Shelbourne, it's also true that it was an open survey and not statistically valid, although one can't dispute the need for cycling infrastructure on Shelbourne or thru the Valley. Other concerns include the need to remember seniors when planning sidewalks and the potential danger of putting sidewalks next to cycle tracks.

Duncan asked what happens if the recommended interim concept is implemented but is problematic, citing seniors and transit users conflicting with cyclists and affects on trees, what then? We'd have "wall to wall" asphalt and concrete which would be unattractive and affect liveability. There's also concern that unless improvements are built "in one go" they're going to take a long time to get implemented. Don't want piecemeal improvements. Can we reduce the width of lanes to get space for a cycling lane?

Concern also that while Saanich calls for a reduction of Green House Gases by 33% by 2020 (including a 45% reduction in transportation emissions) there seems to be no campaign to get people out of cars. As long as we make it easy for people to drive we can't reduce car dependence. Need to get inspired to do something constructive in this regard. Perhaps we should try a 6 month trial period whereby Shelbourne is reduced from 4 to 3 or 2 lanes?

Harold stated that the recommended concepts in the Transportation Study will not entice more cars to use Shelbourne St. given lane reductions at major intersections and the elimination of bus bays. There are also no plans to accommodate more cars for the projected additional population in the Valley's centres and village as well as from areas outside the Valley. Indeed Saanich's Strategic Plan for capital projects shows an increasing share of money going to bike and sidewalk infrastructure as opposed to transportation improvements for cars.

Also frequent transit on Shelbourne is something Council endorsed as part of BC Transit's Transit Future Plan. The Official Community Plan also encourages more density in the Valley's centres and village that can be better served by transit. Hopefully the expected convenience of frequent transit will encourage people to use their cars less.

5. Transit

Elsie was interested in knowing whether changes were going to be made to increase the frequency of bus service, especially regarding the possible return of Route 24 on Cedar Hill X. She notes that several elderly neighbors in her area of the Valley (to the south and west of the intersection of Cedar Hill X and Shelbourne) have moved citing poor transit service as a reason.

Harold contacted BC Transit Planner James Wadsworth and received the following info. Right now transit service on Cedar Hill X is limited to the #17 Cedar Hill Special which operates 2 times a day. The #24 service was cancelled in 2007 and rerouted to University Heights. The long term plan is to provide a

local community bus service on Cedar Hill X but there are no immediate plans to implement this service due to lack of funds.

The Shelbourne Corridor is a regional transit corridor that provides transit service from Royal Oak to UVic and Gordon Head to downtown Victoria. The designation of Shelbourne as a frequent transit corridor in the Transit Future Plan was endorsed by Saanich Council. This means that BC Transit will make future investments in additional future service, transit priority measures (to improve trip time, reliability and efficiency and in turn increase ridership) and enhanced customer amenities such as shelters and real time information.

6. Jane's Walk

The May 5 Jane's Walk on Shelbourne St. was attended by about 20 people who, splitting into 2 groups, walked both sides of Shelbourne from McKenzie to Browning Park. People were asked to observe what they saw and experienced and to count the trees that might be affected by recommendations made in the Transportation Study as well as driveways, buses, benches and places identified as attractive.

As might be expected the experience wasn't good from an aesthetic point of view and there are many obstacles affecting walking as well as cycling. Jean said that the physical experience of walking Shelbourne was emotional especially counting the number of trees that might be affected by the concepts recommended in the Transportation Report.

7. Update on Land Use/Urban Design Plan

Planning staff are finishing their review of the consultant's Land Use and Urban Design Plan. Once the review is finished the plan is to do a presentation to the Stakeholders and then begin preparations for the 2 planned Open Houses, which will include a review of both the Transportation Study and the Land Use and Urban Design Plan.

A question was asked about how the land use Plan will be presented. The way the consultant has shown land use is by number of stories and land use (townhouses, commercial etc.). These categories (by use and height) are then colour coded onto a map of the Valley. They are not assigned a land use zone as per Saanich's Zoning Bylaw. Drawings of how the centres and streets might look with the recommended design guidelines are provided showing setbacks etc.

8. Planning for Cedar Hill Rd. and Richmond Rd.

Mei enquired as to why there's no mention of Cedar Hill Rd and Richmond Rd in the Transportation Study. Traffic is heavy, housing is rundown and crime is a problem along Cedar Hill Rd. Also a x-walk is needed across Cedar Hill to Church. Questioned whether the area is a good place to locate seniors, whereupon it was noted that there are many medical offices, coffee shops and other services seniors find desirable.

Harold noted that many of the issues affecting Shelbourne, such as narrow right of ways and lack of sidewalk and bike facilities, also affect Richmond and Cedar Hill. The land use plan suggests the possibility of redeveloping much of Cedar Hill Rd with multi family housing which should help facilitate the construction of sidewalks and cycle lanes, as is happening north of McKenzie. There are no plans to widen the roads for more traffic as they are collectors and not designed to carry more traffic than already exists.

9. Open Houses

Two open houses are planned prior to the Action Plan going to Council. Feedback from the first Open House, gathered through surveys given to attendees, would be used to refine options and recommendations for the second Open House. Surveys will ask for the respondent's name as well as where they live, so we can get an understanding of how the Plan might impact them.

Discussion followed about the integration of the Land Use and Urban Design Plan with the Transportation Study for the Open Houses. Ideas include superimposing the interim and ultimate recommended concepts from the Transportation Study over an air photo of the Shelbourne Corridor to see how they would impact properties adjacent to the street. Cross section views of the options and recommendations could also be displayed along with the pros and cons of each. Maps showing where increased density is recommended and illustrations showing what proposed development could look like would also be shown.

The consultants from Landeca and D'Ambrosio Architecture and Urbanism will help with the displays and facilitation of the 2 Open Houses, including getting people's reactions to the options and recommendations presented. The feedback received will then be used to further refine the options and recommendations for the second Open House.

An important role of the Committee will be to help get word out about the Open Houses. Among the stakeholders who should be included are School PACs. Another important stakeholder is the City of Victoria. Harold has been in contact with the City of Victoria regarding their plans for Shelbourne between North Dairy and Hillside (4 lanes with bike lanes on either side) and plans for the expansion of Hillside Mall.

10. Gaps and Needs in Centres

We ran out of time to address this item, which can be included in another meeting.

11. Next Meeting

Suggestion was made that we meet again on Monday, June 18.