

Report

Date	September 30, 2014	File: PL000243
To	Council	
From	Brian Green, Manager of Planning and Sustainability	Endorsed:
Subject	Trans-Canada Highway-Corridor Management Plan: Boys Road to Beverly Street	

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the Proposed Trans-Canada Highway (TCH) – Corridor Management Plan: Boys Road to Beverly Street.

Background

On March 22, 2013 Council adopted a Terms of Reference report setting out the process and timescales for producing a Local Area Plan for University Village, working collaboratively with the City of Duncan.

In May, 2013, following a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, Stantec Consulting and their Community Design Team were appointed to prepare the University Village Local Area Plan (UVLAP). Following an extensive public engagement process, in accordance with the Terms of Reference report, the Proposed Plan for how this important area should redevelop over the long term was prepared and is currently with Council for consideration.

In October 2013, part way through the UVLAP process a further study, using additional funding from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) was undertaken by Stantec to consider enhancements and potential upgrades to the Trans-Canada Highway corridor between Beverly Street and Boys Road, acknowledging the significance of the TCH to the entire urban area. Given the importance and significance of the TCH to this planning area, it was considered essential that some work be given to how this road corridor could be improved to ensure that a full spatial planning analysis was being undertaken for both the UVLAP study area and the TCH corridor, given the obvious synergies between the two.

Discussion

The main purpose of the TCH Corridor Management Plan was to undertake, review and consolidate previous studies which have been undertaken on the TCH and to develop a clear set of new recommendations for addressing transportation, visual aesthetics and safety issues identified through the UVLAP process and earlier studies undertaken. As a result, staff in collaboration and consultation with local residents, land owners and other stakeholders has prepared a clear plan to guide how the TCH functions and looks like over the short medium and long term. The main objectives of the plan, which can be found in Attachment A of this report, were to address the following issues:

1. Safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists along the corridor;

2. Traffic congestion for local traffic and truck traffic travelling through the DNC and CoD between the cities of Nanaimo and Victoria;
3. Accessibility for emergency services;
4. Sustainability of local business and economy;
5. Affordability of future infrastructure projects.

A summary of the primary recommended infrastructure improvement projects identified in the Corridor Management Plan are as follows:

- Upgrade pedestrian indicators at signalized intersections to include count-downs;
- Extend sidewalk and add curb, gutter, and boulevard on west side of the TCH from James Street/York Road to Beverly Street;
- Construct a multi-use pathway along the east side of the TCH between Boys Road and Beverly Street complete with curb, gutter, and boulevard where feasible;
- Construct attractive and functional gateways near Boys Road and Beverly Street to welcome people to the urban area and prevent unsafe pedestrian TCH crossings;
- Install permanent radar speed signs and changeable messaging signs to encourage motorists to reduce speeds before entering the urban area;
- Install temporary pedestrian activated signals at Cowichan Way and near University Way with future full signalized intersection at Cowichan Way and a pedestrian overpass near University Way;
- Improve local roadway network connectivity and parking opportunities to facilitate phasing out direct access off the TCH;
- Undertake a detailed traffic analysis to determine improvements to corridor intersections in terms of signal timing, number of turning lanes, and turning lane lengths;
- Construct a multi-use pedestrian bridge over the Cowichan River;
- Realign James Street/York Road intersection.

The report set out in attachment A of this report lays out in detail the process and results of this review, consultation, option development, planning, recommendations, and implementation strategy, including estimates of probable costings of these improvements.

In addition, it should be noted that the main recommendations relating to the TCH within the University Village area have also been incorporated into the UVLAP to ensure there is a comprehensive plan for this area.

Since the plan was prepared, staff from North Cowichan and the City of Duncan has written a joint letter setting out the next steps and prioritizing further, Stantec's recommended improvements for the TCH and to begin the next steps of seeking funding to implement the plan. A copy of this letter can be found in Attachment 2 of this report.

Public Engagement

A key component of the TCH Management Plan, as with the UVLAP has been public involvement and engagement. A Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) was established comprising representatives from a

number of organisations in the area including the following groups; The City of Duncan, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), Vancouver Island University, James St Neighbourhood Association; School District 79; Cowichan Green Community; Somenos Marsh Society; Cowichan Tribes, , Safer Futures and Community Policing. This group formed the main platform for feedback at key stages in the plan and helped refine the wider public consultation plan which was then undertaken at the three key stages in the plan development.

The following engagement activities have been undertaken as part of this local area planning process:

- Sounding boards placed at various locations in the study area for 2 months
- Five Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings held;
- Three Public Open Houses held at the three key stages in the process with over 300 people attending;
- A half day workshop/meeting with business owners located on the TCH
- Newsletters sent to every resident and landowner and businesses in the area and along the TCH to promote and make people aware of the project and advertise the open houses;
- Meetings with key stakeholders including Cowichan Tribes, School District 79, Vancouver Island University;
- Presentations to ICBC Safety Committee;
- Three presentations to Cowichan Tribes;
- 1600 website hits to the dedicated Placespeak project website;
- All materials and information posted on this website.

The extensive public consultation plan which was developed for the UVLAP provided a significant opportunity to combine the two plans from an engagement perspective and to also inform, consult and engage members of the public and stakeholders on the TCH – Corridor Management Plan.

Options

Council has the following options:

1. That Council support the plan and adopt the plan by resolution, (Recommended by Staff);
2. That Council do not support the plan;
3. That Council refer the plan back to staff and the consulting team for further work and revisions to the plan. Should this option be pursued, staff would recommend holding a further information session on the proposed amendments being proposed as part of the UVLAP consultation exercise which Council has directed staff to undertake.

Implications

The TCH - Corridor Management Plan offers significant opportunities to recognize and respond to social, economic and environmental issues in a comprehensive, systematic and integrated way.

The TCH Corridor Management Plan has been created to set the stage for the sustainable long-term growth of this area. Effective implementation will require a coherent, consistent and comprehensive approach to ensure the plan is fully implemented.

Adoption of the plan will begin the implementation of this plan, and assist in securing third party funding from external partners, particularly from MOTI who have assisted in the funding of the plan and who have shown an interest in implementation.

Recommendation

That Council support the proposed Trans-Canada Highway Corridor Management Plan outlined in Attachment 1 of this report and approve the plan by resolution.

Attachment(s):

Attachment 1: Trans-Canada Highway – Corridor Management Plan.

Attachment 2: Letter to MOTI on next steps.