



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: December 20, 2006
Author: Steve Brown
Phone No.: 604.871.6944
RTS No.: 06462
VanRIMS No.: 13-1400-10
Meeting Date: January 16, 2007

TO: Standing Committee on Transportation and Traffic

FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Waterfront to False Creek Flats Rail Grade Separation Study

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council authorize the City to enter into a contribution agreement with Transport Canada under the Transportation Planning and Modal Integration (TPMI) initiative for completion of the False Creek Flats Rail Corridor Strategy Study.
- B. THAT Council provide its support to apply for funding from Transport Canada through the Asia Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative for cost sharing of the grade separation of up to five locations along the rail line connecting the Waterfront to False Creek Flats.
- C. THAT Council authorise staff to discuss cost sharing options with project partners, the Province and ICBC.
- D. THAT upon confirmation of federal funding, staff report back on any allocation of funds for the City's share of the Waterfront to False Creek Flats Rail Grade separation.

COUNCIL POLICY

In July 2003 Council approved the City's participation in the regional passenger and freight transportation study, including the analysis of the False Creek Flats.

In July 2004 Council approved the work program, Staffing and Budget for False Creek Flats Planning. Within this work program was an amount allocated for Consulting Engineering studies related to the Flats.

In September 2005 Council requested that the Vancouver Port Authority, Gateway Council and Railways begin as soon as possible a more detailed rail operation and network study of the False Creek Flats and Waterfront rail support yards.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to

- enter into a contribution agreement with Transport Canada for funding of the False Creek Flats Rail Corridor Strategy under the Transportation Planning and Modal Integration (TPMI) initiative.
- discuss potential cost sharing arrangements with Vancouver Port Authority and TransLink (participants in TPMI study) as well as the Province and ICBC for the potential design and construction of Rail Grade Separations between the Waterfront and False Creek Flats with contributions from the federal government under the Asia Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative (APGCI).
- apply for cost sharing from the federal government for up to 50% of the project construction costs under the APGCI.

BACKGROUND

In December 2004, as part of the Lower Mainland Rail infrastructure Study, Powell Street was identified as a capacity constraint for the Burrard Inlet (BI) line and False Creek Flats Rail yard's ability to support functions on the Waterfront. Prior to this there were a few investigations into improvements at this crossing but this was the first report that focussed on this line from a regional perspective.

In 2005 the False Creek Flats Planning team was assembled and it recognised that a more detailed Rail operations and network study of the False Creek Flats was needed.

In May 2006 the False Creek Rail Analysis indicated that grade separation of both Powell and Venables would be required to increase the capacity of the BI line between the Waterfront and False Creek Flats.

In June 2006 the City was successful in obtaining federal funding approval as part of the federal Transportation Planning and Modal Integration (TPMI) Initiative for the False Creek Flats Rail Corridor Strategy to develop some preliminary grade separation concepts of up to five locations along the BI line. Council approval is being sought to enter into a contribution agreement with Transport Canada. The study includes partnerships with Vancouver Port Authority, Vancouver Gateway Council, TransLink, BEST, and VACC. Results of this study should be available in late summer 2007.

In November 2006 the City successfully passed the preliminary screening for federal funding as part of the Asia Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative (APGCI). This application was for cost sharing to build the grade separation projects in the TPMI study discussed above. Cost sharing discussions still need to take place with Vancouver Port Authority, TransLink, ICBC, and the Province and the Stage 2 application is due at the end of January 2007.

DISCUSSION

Railways are an essential component of the region's goods movement network and they are vital to the success of port operations in the Greater Vancouver area as well as the provincial and national economies. The market for Vancouver ports has recently experienced significant volume growth and has been recording annual growth rates in excess of 6% in recent years. It is forecast that rapid growth in rail goods movement will continue over the next 15 years. Passenger rail companies VIA, Amtrak, and Rocky Mountaineer are also all considering expansion.

This passenger and goods movement rail growth will place significant additional demands on the rail yards used by Canadian National (CN), Canadian Pacific (CP), and Burlington Northern Sante Fe (BNSF) on the Burrard Inlet Waterfront and in the False Creek Flats. With rail being twelve times more efficient than trucks in terms of fuel consumption, accommodating growth in the movement of goods by rail will be important to further the vision of a sustainable city.

Due to capacity constraints on the Burrard Inlet Line (BI Line) which connects the waterfront to the False Creek Flats, the rail yards located within the Flats are currently limited in terms of their ability to support the activities that occur at the waterfront. One of the main capacity limitations is a number of at grade crossings of the rail tracks.

There are five primary locations where preliminary grade separation concepts will be explored as shown in the Figure 1. Future detailed planning would need to consider structure design in relationship to surrounding community context.

Two of these crossings are arterial streets that provide connections across the tracks for pedestrians, cyclists, goods movement, transit, and other traffic including:

- **Powell Street** - 32,000 vehicles per day
- **Venables Street** - 30,000 vehicles per day

One location is an alternate crossing at **Malkin** to replace Venables/ Prior as an arterial street. This creates a new street network pattern that diverts existing cross-town vehicular traffic away from Prior onto a new street to the south that would cross over the Glen Yard rail tracks and connect to Clark Drive. It is expected that if this location is grade separated then Venables would be downgraded to a crossing with rail priority or closed entirely. This proposal would be subject to consultation with the surrounding neighbourhood.

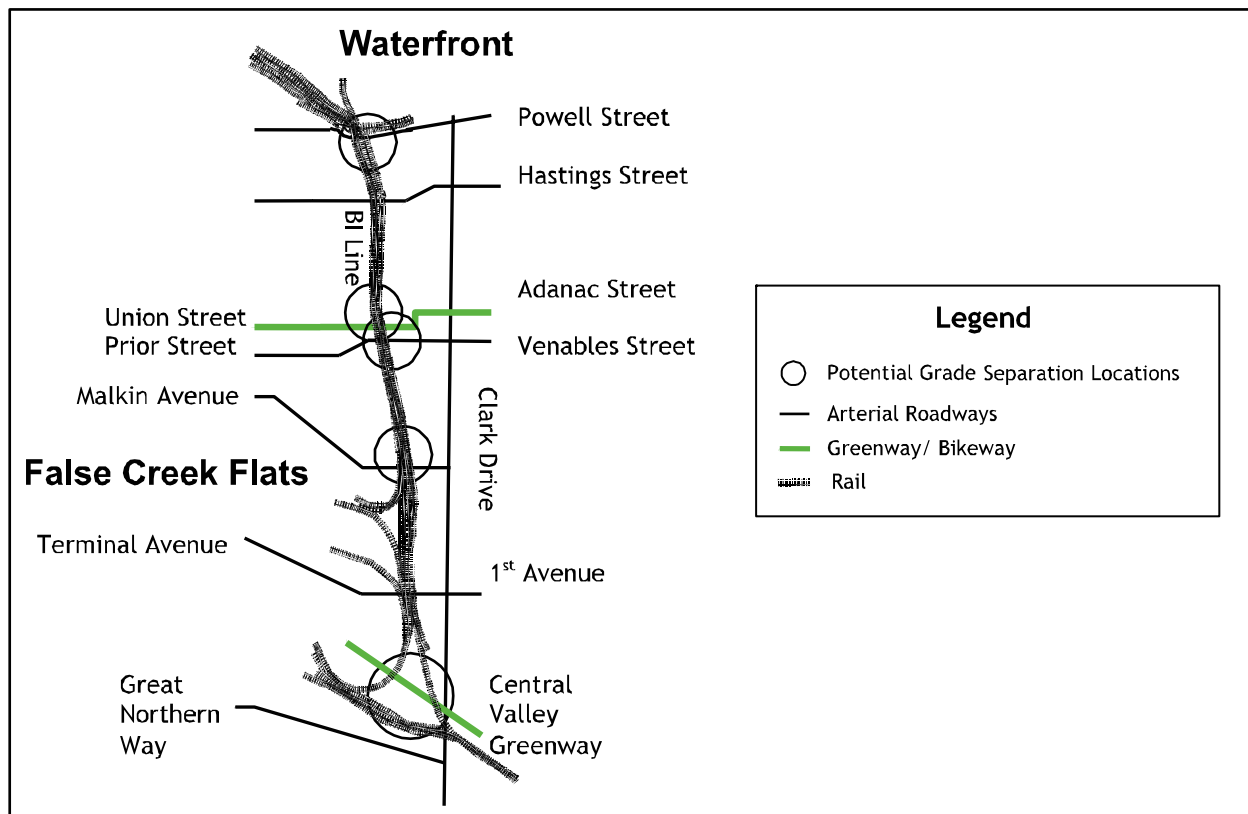
In addition to pedestrian/ cycling facilities that would be incorporated into any new vehicle overpass, two other crossings focus solely on pedestrian and cyclist movements across the tracks. These structures would be designed to ensure pedestrian and cycling comfort and convenience is not negatively impacted. These crossings include:

- **Adanac Bikeway**- crossing the tracks at Union Street, this is one of the city's busiest bike routes
- **Central Valley Greenway**- will provide a virtually flat, continuous 25 kilometre route linking key residential, employment and shopping areas, schools and post-secondary institutions in Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster. This crossing would be located in the vicinity of Great Northern Way.

There are also three other locations that will be examined to determine how they should be treated, but would not warrant grade separation. These locations include

- Cordova Street
- Raymur Street north of Hastings
- Parker Street/ Glen Drive

Figure 1: Potential Grade Separation Locations



FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The City's contribution to the TPMI study is in the form of staff time and funding for consulting services. Both of these have already been allocated as part of the work plan for the False Creek Flats Planning Study.

Any City contribution to the design and construction of the grade separations under the APGCI would be determined in early 2008 if the application for cost sharing is accepted by Transport Canada. Funds would be required for design and construction starting in 2011 and completion by 2014.

Some consultation regarding the rail separations may take place as part of the work program from the False Creek Flats Planning Study, however it is anticipated that if the application to the federal government is successful further funding would be required for Public consultation in late 2008.

CONCLUSION

The City was successful in obtaining cost sharing from Transport Canada as well as engaging participation by Vancouver Port Authority, Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, TransLink, Transport Canada, BEST and VACC in the False Creek Flats Rail Corridor Strategy. This study will develop preliminary concepts and refine the cost estimates for up to five grade separation locations between the waterfront and False Creek Flats.

The application under the APGCI provides an opportunity to obtain up to 50% funding from the federal government to complete these grade separations by 2014. This will help to complete these projects in a shorter time horizon than would otherwise be attainable. These separations could provide benefits to Asia Pacific Trade as well as for the surrounding communities, transit and goods movement.

Following the completion of the False Creek Flats Rail Corridor Strategy staff will report back to Council with the benefits of the rail grade separation.

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