



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: February 23, 2007
Author: Sylvia Kirk
Phone No.: 604.873.7908
RTS No.: 6468
VanRIMS No.: 13-5000-20
Meeting Date: March 13, 2007

TO: Standing Committee on Transportation and Traffic
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services
SUBJECT: Balaclava Bike Route

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Balaclava Bike Route be implemented as described in this report, at an estimated cost of \$630,000.
- B. THAT \$230,000 be allocated from the 2003-2005 Streets Basic Capital Program (CB1EA2E - Bicycle Network) to supplement the funding approved by Council on February 16, 2006.
- C. THAT, subject to the 2008 Budget review, the Engineering Services Operating Budgets be increased by \$15,000, without offset, commencing in 2008.

COUNCIL POLICY

In 1997, Council approved the Vancouver Transportation Plan which emphasizes the need for developing more bikeways and which ranks cyclists as second priority after pedestrians.

In 1999, Council approved the 1999 Bicycle Plan which established the goal of developing the bicycle network in the City to ensure a grid of bicycle routes approximately one kilometre (1km) apart.

In February 2006 Council approved the establishment of a bicycle route "on Balaclava Street and Carnarvon Street and connecting streets, from Point Grey Road at English Bay to Celtic Avenue at the Fraser River, subject to consultation regarding design details with neighbours abutting the route".

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Council about the issues which arose during the design and consultation for the Balaclava Bike Route and to seek Council's approval to proceed with the implementation of the route. It also requests funding to construct street improvements to accommodate the bike route.

BACKGROUND

The concept for a bike route on Balaclava and Carnarvon Streets evolved out of the design and public consultation for the Blenheim Street collector redevelopment. The proposed local street bike route was developed as a preferred alternative to a dedicated bike facility on Blenheim Street.

DISCUSSION

The Balaclava Bicycle Route will connect directly to the Seaside (3rd Ave), Off-Broadway (8th Ave), 29th Ave and Midtown (37th Ave) Bicycle Routes as well as the Marine Drive bike lanes, the Ridgeway Greenway, the Fraser River trail and a possible future bike route on 45th Avenue. It will provide West Side neighbourhoods with improved bicycle access to:

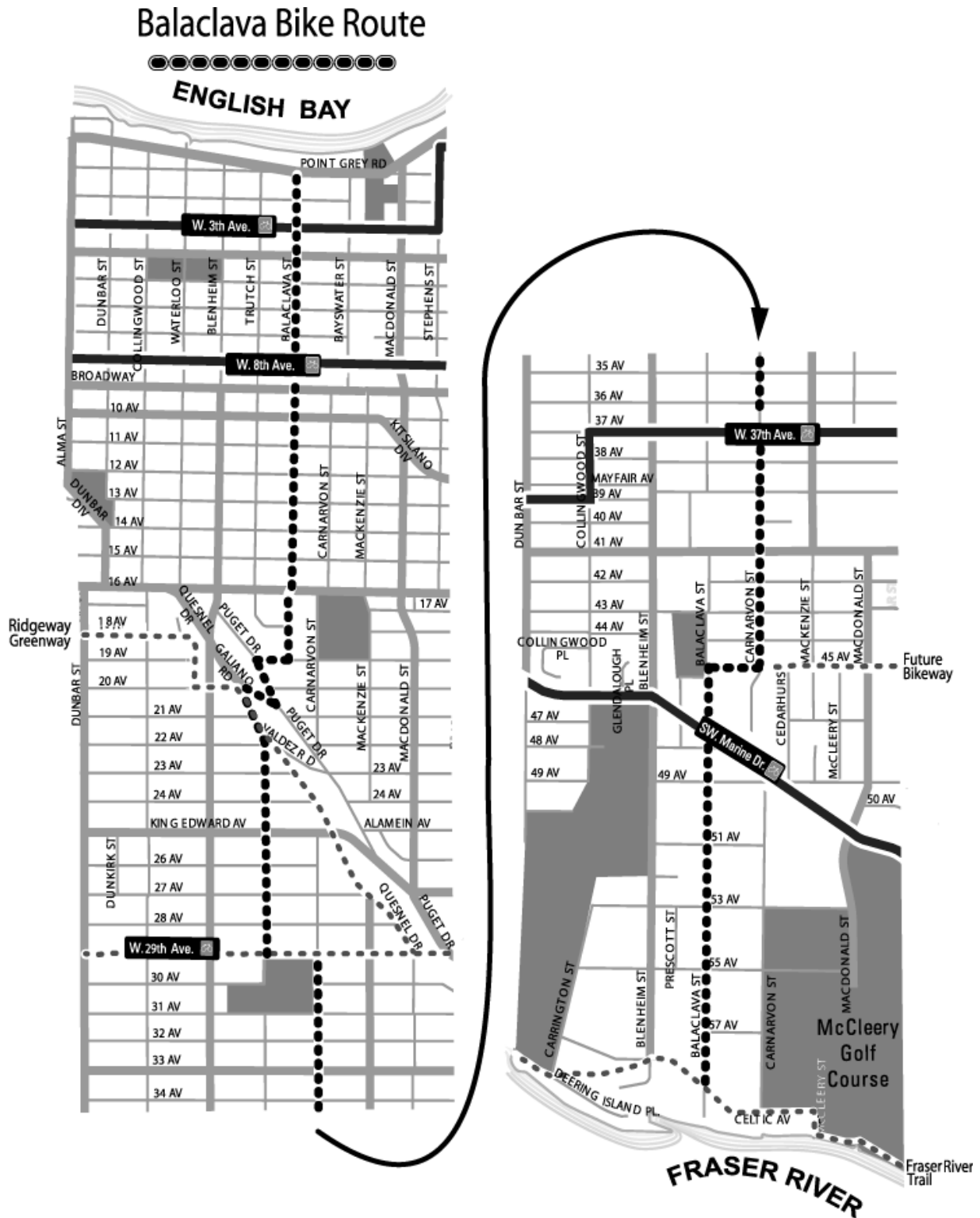
- Jericho Beach, Spanish Bank and Pacific Spirit Parks
- 4th Avenue, West Broadway and Kerrisdale shopping areas
- Bayview, Carnarvon, Lord Kitchener and Kerrisdale Elementary Schools
- McBride, Carnarvon, Valdez, Balaclava and Malkin Parks
- West Point Grey, Kitsilano, Dunbar and Kerrisdale Community Centres

This route is about 1 km west of the approved Trafalgar/Valley Bicycle Route and 1½ km east of the future Camosun Greenway.

Proposed changes to this route to accommodate cycling include:

- new pedestrian/cyclist activated traffic signals at West 4th and Balaclava and at Marine Drive and Balaclava (an existing marked school crossing)
- new corner bulges at West 10th and Balaclava to improve visibility and shorten the crossing distance
- modifications to existing medians at West 16th and at West King Edward to improve bicycle crossings of these arterial streets
- traffic circles to replace north/south stop signs at the following intersections on Balaclava: 2nd, 12th, 14th, 23rd, 26th and 28th
- traffic circles to replace north/south stop signs at the following intersections on Carnarvon: 32nd, 35th, 37th and 43rd
- wayfinding signage and pavement markings

Installation of the traffic circle at Carnarvon and 35th and at Carnarvon and 37th will be subject to design approval by Fire and Rescue Services staff due to the proximity of Fire Hall #21 at Carnarvon and 38th. No changes are proposed on Balaclava between 4th and Broadway in order to maintain emergency response from Fire Hall #12 at Balaclava and 8th.



Public consultation regarding this route began in 2001 when City staff were investigating options to provide cycling facilities on or near Blenheim Street. Consultation with local residents, the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition led to the conclusion that a local street bike route along Balaclava and Carnarvon Streets was the

preferred option. In September 2005, the proposed route was presented at a Blenheim Street open house, to which 2800 households were invited.

In October 2006 City staff held an open house at the Dunbar Community Centre to discuss the Balaclava Bike Route. Invitations were delivered to the approximately 1200 homes which adjoin the proposed bike route (see Appendix A). Comment forms were available at the Open House and written responses are tabulated in Appendix B. In addition to comments received at the open house, staff received a number of phone calls and e-mails. The issues raised are summarized in Appendix C.

Following the open house, City staff met with staff of the Southlands Riding Club and members of both the Friends of Southlands Society and the Southlands Ratepayers Association.

Because the bike route passes by two Fire Halls, Engineering staff have also consulted with Fire and Rescue staff regarding their requirements.

Staff re-rode the proposed route and adjacent streets to assess the viability of alternative routes and treatments proposed during the public consultation. A change to the route between 41st and Marine Drive was made to better accommodate a possible future bike route on 45th Avenue.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost for the work on the proposed Balaclava Bikeway is \$ 630,000:

Traffic signals and cyclist push buttons	\$215,000
Traffic calming (traffic circles, corner bulges)	\$325,000
Bike rack, pavement markings and signage	\$ 35,000
Contingency	\$ 55,000
Total	\$630,000

The estimated cost of \$630,000 exceeds the preliminary estimate of \$400,000 approved by Council on February 16, 2006 ("Blenheim Street Re-classification and Traffic Calming and Balaclava Bike Route"). An additional \$230,000 is required due to increased construction costs, changes in scope and updated design standards. The majority of this additional funding is needed to provide curb drops (wheelchair ramps) at intersections where traffic circles will be installed. Funding for this increase is available within the 2003-2005 Bicycle Program Capital funding. Staff will pursue cost sharing opportunities with TransLink and other agencies. Annual operating funding of \$15,000 will be required to maintain signals, street lights, landscaping, signing and pavement markings.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the proposed Balaclava Bike Route is recommended as detailed in this report. Funding is available within the 2006 - 2008 Capital Budgets.

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ENGINEERING SERVICES
T.R. Timm, P.Eng., General Manager

October 6, 2006

File # 058630

Dear Resident:

RE: BALACLAVA OPEN HOUSE

Please join City of Vancouver staff on October 19 to discuss the Balaclava Bike Route. This new bike route will connect the Fraser River with English Bay, and will be located primarily on Balaclava and Carnarvon Streets (see map on reverse). City Council approved this route early this year, based on recommendations of City staff and consultation with local cyclists and residents.

We now need to confirm the details of improvements to this route and welcome your input. Our plans so far include changes which we expect will be welcome by pedestrians and local residents as well as cyclists. These include:

- New pedestrian and cyclist activated traffic signals at Balaclava and 4th Ave and at Balaclava and Marine.
- Traffic circles to replace two-way stop signs which would stop cyclists on the route.

If you have questions or comments but cannot attend the Open House please contact either David Rawsthorne by phone at 604.873.7343, or by email at david.rawsthorne@vancouver.ca, or contact myself by phone at 604.873.7908, or by email at sylvia.kirk@vancouver.ca.

OPEN HOUSE DETAILS:

Date: Thursday, Oct 19th

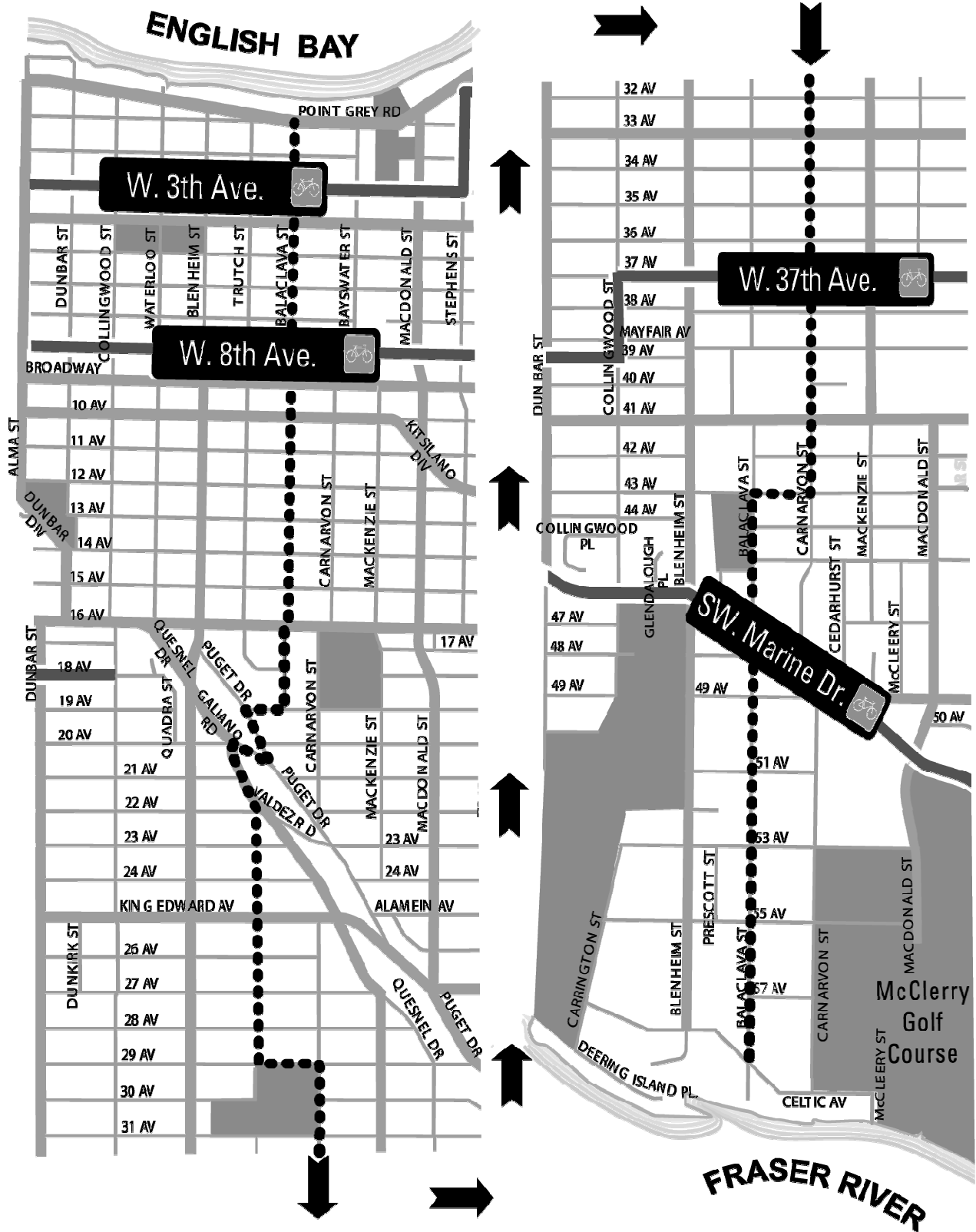
Time: 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Location: Dunbar Community Centre, 4747 Dunbar Street, main entrance lobby area

A map of the route is shown on the reverse side of this letter.

Yours truly,

Sylvia Kirk
sylvia.kirk@vancouver.ca
453 W. 12th Avenue Vancouver BC V5Y 1V4
Phone: 604.873.7908



 CITY OF VANCOUVER	NEIGHBOURHOOD TRANSPORTATION BRANCH	MEETING COMMENT FORM
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Balaclava Bike Route Open House (Oct 19, 2006)

We appreciate you taking the time to complete this comment form. You can return it in the box provided, or return it to us directly. You can also fax it to (604) 871-6192.

Please provide your name and address. Individual responses will remain confidential as per the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (see reverse). If you have any questions, please call Sylvia Kirk at (604) 873-7908. This form is intended to help City staff gauge the level of support for the bikeway within the community.

Name: _____	Address: _____

1. Other Comments

Your comments are collected under the authority of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)* for the purpose of gauging support for traffic calming measures along the proposed Balaclava Bikeway. Your responses will be treated as public information, but any information that may be used to identify you will not be disclosed to the public, except in accordance with the FOIPPA or as required by law. Questions about how the FOIPPA applies to this information can be directed to the Manager, Corporate Information and Privacy, 453 W 12th Ave, Vancouver BC V5Y 1V4, (604) 873-7999.

The following written comments were received at the October 2006 open house and generally support the bike route proposal:

It's a great plan!! Plenty of negative comments noted in the meeting however - I've no doubt a thorough study has been done. Also bicycle routes are not so hard to get used to unlike say, a freeway, sky train route etc. I am a cyclist I must say. I further suggest (if not having done so already) to consult with the City of London (UK) their bike route program is very impressive, as I have just spent time living there.

I found the bicycle route entirely satisfactory with one glaring exception: there is no protection for cyclists crossing 10th Ave. This is an intersection with poor sight lines. In order to cross safely, cyclists have to push out past the parking lane. This puts them in the way of cars turning left off 10th or right off Balaclava. While this can be done fairly safely in daylight, it is downright scary when it is dark and especially when it is also raining. I cycled this route from Pt. Grey Road to 24th for 15 years and this was the crossing I dreaded the most (after 4th Ave, which is being signalized) Broadway was more comfortable to cross than even before the signal was converted to bike/pedestrian activation.

I think the plan is very good. It is definitely needed as I have been forced off Blenheim twice riding my bike - so a safer route is definitely preferred. Many people at the meeting objected to aspects of this plan - in almost every case they were concerned about their house and two blocks on either side. I am upset that they cannot see the benefit of this cycle route to the entire community. Maybe with a good cycle network people will let their children ride to school - instead of being driven.

Please give consideration to opening a left turn on King Edward at Carnarvon to lessen the traffic from King Edward to Balaclava Park along Balaclava - this would take traffic south along Carnarvon rather than on your proposed bike route on Balaclava. I support replacing the stop signs along Balaclava with traffic circles and adding traffic bumps along the way.

The speed of the traffic needs to be calmed - if not for the sake of the residents then for the safety of the cyclists.

Great idea - will use route for access to beach and Fraser River. Get Ridgeway done too! Suggest putting route through Balaclava Park - need bike rack on road so I can use washroom. Dogs and "T" ball diamond are not problems.

Sounds great, I don't see why not. Hopefully, no tree/tree trunk roots will be cut down or damaged.

Great display! The bike route will provide an incentive for me to ride "farther afield" in the city. Thank you for considering the steepness of the uphill sections. Some concerns about safety for cyclists and pedestrians are the very congested 41st & Carnarvon intersection south of 41st. Many cars (not local traffic) cut through from S.W. Marine to turn left on 41st towards UBC. This adds to morning congestions for everyone - cyclists, pedestrians and local traffic.

Interested in the proposal in the Southlands area - generally have no concerns with it - I welcome people to come and enjoy our unique area - it should be seen as a sort of park for all Vancouver residents. I particularly support the pedestrian light at Marine & Balaclava - I am concerned about the lack of public notification about the open house - Southlands Ratepaying Association, Southlands Riding Club and Friends of Southlands should all have been notified. I live ½ a block from Balaclava and was not notified. I am the secretary of Friends of Southlands (approximately 300 members of people who support keeping this semi-rural and Equestrian nature of the area - not all residents of the area.) You can contact Friends of Southlands through me at 263-5263. I would only become truly concerned about the proposal if traffic circles were proposed or if filling in the area ditches was proposed. Horse trailers cannot be driven around traffic circles, making them incompatible with the Southlands neighbourhood. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to comment!

I have some concerns re: the N.S. bikeway south of Marine Dr, but do support the bikeway concern. A. This is an equestrian area with two ponies and children riding facilities near Balaclava. Signage in Southlands please. B. The intersection of 49th and Balaclava is a two way stop north and south on Balaclava, bikes go in south. In the past, ignore the stop sign at the bottom of the hill, riding at a high rate of speed past the Southlands Nursery. A 4-way stop could be installed making the intersection much safer. C. Balaclava and Celtic Ave. - the Balaclava Rd allowance south of Celtic Ave could be restored to be a bike entrance, equestrian, walker, entrance to the river front walkway. Celtic Ave, from Balaclava to Blenheim St is presently used by many horse riders going to the Balaclava Equestrian Trail (west side of Balaclava St.) The community agreed upon the plan of a multi-use trail on the south side of the city owned property in the location, could now be a reality to move forward with.

I support the bikeway and greenway system strongly, in principle, and for the most part I agree with the chosen route and accept that most objections would be repeated just as strenuously if the route were on Carnarvon, Blenheim and/ or other routes. I also believe there are probably some minor changes (I overheard) which could be possible. But I think the way this evening has been conducted is very very weak. For what they're worth, here are my complaints: 1. Don't just put up details of the selected route with site specific treatments. 2. Do put up effective map of the bikeway system in the west part of the city (not the city map - not even display). 3. List the objectives for route. 4. Outline the decision making process with dates. 5. Indicate the alternate routes and treatments rejected and why. 6. Post examples (1 or 2) of other city bikeways and give a point form summary of how they've worked out (usage, traffic, accidents, vandalism, public reactions, etc) 7. When people are raising specific points, make an effort to take notes! 8. If there were specific suggestions made by residents at meetings a year or two ago, indicate those you've addressed and not addressed and why. It seems to me staff have been on the defensive throughout the evening and this might have somewhat lessened if some of above material was posted so that there is tangible evidence of the amount of work and thought that has gone into the planning of routes. Even the bulk of objectives are not new to staff but that's the way it seems.

The bike routes in the city are a good idea. A bike route along Balaclava/Quesnel/Carnarvon is a good idea, especially because it links schools and parks. My concerns are: 1. the speed of vehicles along Quesnel between 22nd and 20th - traffic must be calmed or cyclists will be injured or killed. 2. The left turn cyclists must make proceeding from Galliano onto Quesnel. Traffic on Quesnel does not stop for the stop signs. The shrinkage of the intersection may help. A cyclist activated light may be a second help. 3. A similar crossing of traffic onto Quesnel from 22nd Ave. 4. The amount of space available on Quesnel between 20th and 22nd. Currently, there is room for 2 cars to pass parked cars on the northeast side. Where is the room for the cyclists? It would help to focus discussion if we were asked to give written feedback on; 1. What we like about the proposal. 2. The problems we who live in the area and along the street see with the proposal. 3. The solutions we suggest for each problem. It would help if staff told us what alternatives were considered and why each was rejected. It is imperative that staff view the data on earliest bike routes so picture impact is clear. Otherwise people's fears rise and staff has nothing to calm them. The primary function of these meetings is advertised as consultative but staff is defensive and doesn't listen. Staff does not make notes - why?

The following written comments were received at the October 2006 open house and generally oppose the bike route proposal:

You do know that Balaclava is a dead-end at its south end don't you? Why make the cyclists ride down a street that ends at Celtic Avenue? Cyclists would find Carrington the useful road to join up with to the existing river trail and the bike paths on the endowment lands. The projected river trail is along the south end of the Southlands area is a long way from completion since the 12 lots have not yet sold. It seems a waste of money to put signs and pictures of bicycles on Balaclava. Why not spend the money in Carrington which will take cyclists directly to existing trails which cyclists are already using.

Planners come to defend their ideas rather than listen to the ideas of others.

I am very concerned that the City representatives here cannot answer questions with data. They should know what effect the similar bike route has had on 37th Ave. I think it has increased volume and speed of car traffic there. I understand you say you'll monitor for impact but you should guarantee that you'll make changes if there are effects. I'm not hearing satisfactory guarantees of this having been thought out. I want assurance that the Blenheim work to improve surface will occur before the bike route goes in. Be aware there are kids that run out of the parks to get balls and your route travels behind several parks. The cars will go more quickly along them if they have not had to stop. I vote for an alternative to Quesnel for the bike route. Thank you.

The following summarizes a number of questions and issues which were raised through public consultation, including written and verbal comments made at the open house as well as phone calls and e-mail correspondence:

- Q: Why not keep the bike route on Balaclava its entire length, instead of diverting onto Carnarvon in the middle of the route?
- A: That was the original concept. However, when we looked at it in detail we found two problems with this route. The problem first was at 41st where Balaclava connects to this wide arterial street with two tee intersections about 70m apart. Crossing 41st at this location would have required a new traffic signal and other changes, would have cost an additional \$100,000-200,000 and would not have been as safe for cyclists as the crossing at Carnarvon. The second problem existed at Balaclava Park, where a path through the park passes beside a dog run area and a baseball diamond which at times is very busy with pedestrians, ball players and spectators.
- Q: Currently 30km/hr signs are posted in the Southland area. However, many vehicles exceed this posted speed. How will the City address this?
- A: Staff will conduct speed checks in areas that have been identified as potential problem areas. 7100 block of Balaclava (south of 55th) was identified at the Friends of Southlands meeting. Traffic speed checks taken after the meeting indicate some speeding is occurring and this location will be included in our annual speed hump program.
- Q: Would the Bike route hinder any future traffic Calming for the Southland area?
- A: No. In fact streets designated as a bike route have a higher priority for traffic calming when compared with non bike route streets.
- Q: With the future development of the Celtic Shipyards, the intersection of Celtic & Balaclava may become busier. How will the City handle this situation?
- A: Once the development is completed studies may be conducted to see if further traffic calming is necessary.
- Q: Why so many traffic circles?
- A: We are proposing traffic circle at a number of locations where existing stop signs would require cyclists on the bike route to stop. By replacing stops signs with traffic circle, we can make the route more convenient for cyclists without creating an attractive shortcut route for drivers. As an added benefit, traffic circles have been found to decrease the number and severity of accidents at local street intersections.
- Q: Has the City considered 4-way stops at all intersections along Balaclava?
- A: The City of Vancouver installs 4-way stops when the existing 2-way stop is no longer adequate or efficient. When installing 4-way stop signs to improve safety, the decision is made based on a number of factors including the accident history at the intersection. We then follow Canadian guidelines to determine if 4-ways stops are justified. When deciding to install 4-way stop signs, vehicle, cyclist and pedestrian safety must be considered. Because right of way is less clearly defined at 4-way stop sign locations, drivers are sometimes so concerned about other vehicles and whose turn it is to go, that they are unaware of pedestrians or bikes. For this reason they are usually not recommended near schools or other high pedestrian areas. They also don't

work as a calming device. Nearly 60% of all drivers fail to come to a complete stop at a stop sign. At 4-way stops, they also tend to assume that they have the right to go as soon as they have slowed or stopped, increasing the risks for pedestrians and cyclists. Studies conducted after this meeting indicate that 4-way stops were not warranted for the intersections along Balaclava at 48th, 49th, 51st, or 55th.

- Q: Would the proposed pedestrian signal at SW Marine Dr. & Balaclava create back-ups along Marine Drive and thereby promote shortcutting?
- A: No. The proposed pedestrian actuated signal will be synchronized with the existing signal at Blenheim and SW Marine so that no additional delays should be created along Marine drive.
- Q: Will the City be adding signing to better indicate the unique equestrian nature of the Southland Area.
- A: "Welcome to Southlands Maximum Speed 30 km/h" signing already exists. City staff will determine if additional signing is appropriate for the bike route.
- Q: Won't bikes on the roadway scare horses.
- A: This has not been the case in the past and is not expected to be a problem in the future. In our discussions with the Southland Riding Club and the Friends of Southlands Society, they are all in support of the proposed bikeway
- Q: What do local neighbourhood groups think of this plan?
- A: The City has received support from the Blenheim Neighbourhood Group, Friends of Southlands Society and the Southlands Ratepayers Association. The vision statement of the friends of Southland specifically names cycling as one of their goals.