



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: May 3, 2007
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VanRIMS No.: 13-1400-22
Meeting Date: May 15, 2007

TO: Standing Committee on Transportation and Traffic

FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Construction of an Eastbound Left Turn Bay on 12th Avenue at Heather Street

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT an eastbound left-turn bay on 12th Avenue at Heather Street be approved for construction at a cost of \$665,000 with funding from the following sources:
 - \$100,000 from the 2007 Streets Basic Capital Budget for Geometric and Safety Improvements on Arterials
 - \$70,000 from City Wide Development Cost Levies (DCL) allocated to the 2007 Streets Basic Capital Budget for Geometric and Safety Improvements on Arterials
 - \$450,000 from developer-funded contributions from Vancouver General Hospital
 - \$45,000 from ICBC in cost-shared funding contributions.
- B. THAT the Streets Operating Budget be increased by \$4500 for Horticulture and by \$200 for Signage and Pavement Marking without offset commencing in 2008, subject to annual Budget Review.
- C. THAT staff pursue alternative access options for the proposed Heather Commons Parkade, including an access from 12th Avenue when the affected sites redevelop.

COUNCIL POLICY

The Vancouver General Hospital Precinct Policy Statement was approved by Council in June 2000, as a policy framework to guide subsequent rezoning and development, and in November 2006 Council approved a Public Realm Plan for the site.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval for the construction of an eastbound Left Turn Bay on 12th Avenue at Heather Street.

BACKGROUND

The Vancouver General Hospital Comprehensive Development District (CD-1) zoning was amended in November 2001, providing for residential, medical technology and commercial uses in addition to hospital and related uses previously provided for in the CD-1 zoning. Conditions put on the rezoning included funding obligations for off-site improvements, such as the left turn bay at 12th Avenue & Heather Street.

DISCUSSION

The Vancouver General Hospital Master Plan has been through an extensive public process, leading to the current design that attempts to balance increased density with open space and pedestrian realm improvements. The plan has been to Council at several stages of its process. Most recently Council approved the Public Realm Plan in November 2006.

The area is in the process of significant redevelopment, both within the hospital precinct and in the surrounding blocks. The Master Plan includes a phased replacement of the surface parking in the precinct with underground parking. Although the density will increase significantly, a focus on traffic demand management will allow the hospital to have a relatively small increase in parking supply.

The hospital occupies a "mega block" bounded by Oak Street, Heather Street, 10th Avenue and 12th Avenue, therefore access into the area is limited. For eastbound vehicles on 12th Avenue, the only access options are the 12th and Heather intersection, the 10th and Oak intersection, and the 12th and Ash intersection. During the Master Plan process, a traffic impact study was commissioned by the hospital, which identified the need for a left turn bay at 12th Avenue and Heather Street to allow better access and to reduce impacts to 12th Avenue. Improving traffic conditions on 12th Avenue could also help reduce the potential for short-cutting on nearby minor streets. Partial developer funding (75%) of the left turn bay was approved as part of the CD-1 text amendment.

A traffic calming plan was developed for the neighbourhood south of 12th Avenue to help address previously existing traffic concerns and any new impacts of redevelopment in the hospital precinct. Council approved this plan on November 30, 2004 and permanent measures are now being constructed. At the intersection of Heather at 12th Avenue, a right-in right-out diverter has been approved and construction of this traffic calming measure is being completed with the utility and other construction in the area.

Heather Street is a bike route between 7th Avenue and 37th Avenue, connecting the Off-Broadway, 10th Avenue, 29th Avenue, and the Midtown Bikeways. Staff presented the proposed left turn bay to the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) on February 21, 2007. The BAC opposes the left turn bay and has expressed concern about increased vehicle volumes on the Heather Bikeway (see BAC motion in Appendix A). While there was extensive public process on the Master Plan, there does not appear to have been direct consultation with the BAC in the past.

Staff have evaluated the traffic conditions on the 10th Avenue and Heather Bikeways using a draft guideline developed with Staff and BAC input. Traffic volume on the Heather Bikeway is within the acceptable range for cyclist comfort on a local bikeway. With the left turn bay constructed and the traffic diverter made permanent, the future traffic volume on Heather Street is expected to remain within the comfortable range. Additional turning movements to parking facilities and redeveloped sites may require a higher level of facility for cyclists.

Traffic volume on 10th Avenue, however, is significantly above the recommended high limit and is high enough to suggest that changes to the street be considered. With construction of the left turn bay, drivers will have more direct access to locations within the Hospital precinct from the arterial street network, which could help to reduce traffic on 10th Avenue. Tenth Avenue is the only east-west street providing local access through the precinct and therefore traffic volumes are expected to remain above the high limit. Staff will investigate options to help improve cyclist comfort and safety in the area, including roadway modifications to both Heather Street and 10th Avenue. Where possible these modifications will be coordinated with any reconstruction occurring in the area.

The Master Plan includes the Heather Common Parkade, which would be located below grade on the western side of Heather Street between 10th Avenue and 12th Avenue. At full build-out, the parking facility is expected to have approximately 1000 spaces that will replace existing on-site parking. The first phase is expected to be completed in 2009, with full build-out in 2012.

The Master Plan envisioned the primary access to the parkade off Heather Street, approximately a half block south of 10th Avenue, with an additional access off of 10th Avenue midblock between Willow and Heather Streets. Staff recommend that alternative access options for the proposed Heather Commons Parkade be pursued, including an access from 12th Avenue, when the affected sites redevelop.

Construction of the left turn bay (shown in Appendix B) would take place in the summer or fall of 2007, to coordinate with waterworks construction along Heather Street and construction of a new sidewalk on the southwest corner of the intersection. This coordination would minimize the overall cost and disruption of the work.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the left turn bay and related work, including a raised median on 12th Avenue to the east of Heather Street, is estimated at \$665,000. A cost breakdown of the major components of the work is included below.

Item	Estimated Cost
Left Turn Bay	\$425,000
Raised Median & Horticulture	\$70,000
Traffic Signs and Road Markings	\$5,000
Overhead and Contingency	\$165,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$665,000</u>

The VGH funding would contribute approximately \$450,000 to this work and is expected in 2009. The remaining funding would be from the 2007 Streets Basic Capital Budget, Development Cost Levies and cost-sharing from ICBC as shown below. ICBC will provide funding upon completion of the project.

Funding Source	Contribution
2007 Streets Basic Capital Budget	\$100,000
Development Cost Levies	\$70,000
VGH (based on 75% of eligible work)	\$450,000
ICBC cost-sharing	\$45,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$665,000</u>

Staff recommend that the Streets Operating Budget be increased by \$4500 for horticulture and \$200 for signage and paint markings annually, commencing in 2008, subject to annual Budget Review.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that a left-turn bay on 12th Avenue at Heather Street be constructed as outlined in this report.

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BAC Motion

At its meeting on Wednesday, February 21, 2007, the Bicycle Advisory Committee approved the following:

RESOLVED

1. THAT the Bicycle Advisory Committee does not support any accesses for parking off Heather Street and 10th Avenue.
2. THAT when planning access to new parking facilities bike routes should be avoided as a direct access route, and measures should be taken to discourage their use as approach routes.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Proposed Geometric Design

