



CITY OF VANCOUVER

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### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: May 27, 2008  
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Meeting Date: June 10, 2008

TO: Standing Committee on Transportation and Traffic

FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Modifications to 5th Avenue between Yukon Street and Cambie Street

#### RECOMMENDATION

THAT 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Yukon Street and Cambie Street be converted to one-way westbound operation for motor vehicle traffic, with two-way cycling and back-in angle parking along the south side of the street.

#### COUNCIL POLICY

The 1997 Transportation Plan identifies cycling as the second-highest priority transportation mode.

In 2005, Council approved the construction and funding of the Olympic Village Station at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue on the Canada Line.

#### SUMMARY

5<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Yukon Street and Cambie Street provides an important connection for cyclists and pedestrians between the Yukon and Off-Broadway Bikeways and the Olympic Village Canada Line Station, the Cambie Bridge and the Seawall. Demands for this connection are anticipated to grow once all of these facilities are complete and as the attractiveness of cycling as a transportation mode continues to increase.

As well, the Vancouver Police Department’s need for short-term parking near Headquarters has recently increased because parking lots they were previously using in the Southeast False Creek area are being redeveloped. To enhance bicycle connections, safety, intersection legibility at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Cambie Street, and to increase available on-street parking adjacent to VPD Headquarters, staff are recommending that 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Yukon Street and Cambie Street be converted to one-way westbound motor vehicle operation, with two-way cycling permitted.

**PURPOSE**

This report seeks Council approval to convert 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to one-way operation for motor vehicles between Yukon Street and Cambie Street. Two-way cycling would be permitted, and back-in angle parking would be established along the south side of the street, as illustrated in Appendix A.

**BACKGROUND**

The Off-Broadway Bikeway, located along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the west of Cambie Street, jogs northward along Yukon Street and continues eastward along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Yukon Bikeway, between 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue, is currently under development as a parallel alternative to cycling along Cambie Street. The Cambie Bridge and Seawall are significant components in the City’s bicycle network and connections between these facilities and the Off-Broadway and Yukon Bikeways are heavily used by cyclists. However, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Cambie Street and Yukon Street is not currently a designated bike facility, as illustrated below in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Existing and planned bikeways near the south end of the Cambie Bridge

The new Olympic Village Station will be an important destination for cyclists wishing to connect with rapid transit for multi-modal travel to or from downtown and locations to the south. To accommodate cycling connections to the station and Cambie Bridge, staff are

planning a new off-street cycling pathway along the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue between Ash Street and Cambie Street (also illustrated in Figure 1). This pathway will provide an attractive connection from the Off-Broadway Bikeway on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue via Ash Street to the Olympic Village Station, the Cambie Bridge and the Seawall. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue east of Cambie Street is a natural connection between these facilities and the planned Yukon Bikeway and the Off-Broadway Bikeway east of Yukon Street.

Vancouver Police Department (VPD) Headquarters, located at 2120 Cambie Street, generates a significant amount of short-term parking by its members visiting Headquarters during their shifts, and by the media and other visitors for some events. To date, short-term parking for squad cars has been accommodated with six designated Police parking stalls on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The VPD has previously used vacant City-owned parcels in the Southeast False Creek (SEFC) area for some parking. However, as part of the redevelopment of SEFC and the Neighbourhood Energy Utility, these parcels are no longer available for VPD parking. This has increased the demand for short-term parking near Headquarters, and the number of squad cars parked on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue now frequently exceeds the six designated spots. As well, some events at VPD Headquarters generate significant parking demands, including squad cars, the media and other visitors. This reduces the number of undesignated parking stalls available to the general public.

## DISCUSSION

Staff have been working on bicycle connections in this neighbourhood as part of the Canada Line Station precinct planning for several months. Through this process, it has been recognized that the corner of Cambie Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue/5<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be an important meeting point for several bicycle and pedestrian routes, including the proposed off-street pathway along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, the east pathway on the Cambie Bridge, the Off-Broadway Bikeway, the Yukon Bikeway, and the developing promenade linking City Hall to the Seawall. At times, this location could accommodate significant volumes of pedestrians and cyclists waiting to cross 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, so a large area is needed for mixing and queuing.

### *Intersection Geometry & Operation*

Currently, motorists travelling eastbound on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue can make a gentle right turn on to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue via a “slip lane” without difficulty (Figure 2). This facilitates high speeds and volumes on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, with recent data collection counting over 2,200 eastbound vehicles per day. Westbound motorists on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue are legally required to turn right on to eastbound 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (Figure 3). However, staff have observed motorists turning illegally from westbound 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue through the eastbound “slip lane” on to the Cambie Bridge. Bicycle accommodation at the intersection could be improved (Figure 4), and the existing five-leg intersection geometry can be confusing for all users.



Figure 2: Eastbound right turn “slip lane” from 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue



Figure 3: Westbound 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue approaching Cambie Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue



Figure 4: Cyclists using pedestrian crosswalk to cross 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

To enhance safety and cyclist accommodation, clarify intersection operations and increase available on-street parking (see next section), staff recommend that 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue be converted

to one-way westbound operation for motor vehicles, with two-way cycling permitted. This approach is used on other bikeways, such as 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue east of Yukon Street. Westbound motorists would continue to be restricted to right turns on to eastbound 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue approaching Cambie Street. To reinforce this one-way operation, and to improve pedestrian and cyclist connections to Canada Line, the Cambie Bridge and the Seawall, staff are recommending implementation of a large curb bulge on the southeast corner of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Cambie Street. This would include closure of the existing right-turn “slip lane” and provide a large enough sidewalk area to accommodate mixing and queuing pedestrians and cyclists on the southeast corner. The proposed configuration is illustrated in Appendix A.

The reconfiguration of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be coordinated with the proposed connections to the Olympic Village Station and Cambie Bridge, including proposed crossing improvements across 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Cambie Street. This block of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue would also become a designated bicycle route and signed as such.

### *Parking*

Conversion of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to one-way operation will allow angle parking to be developed on the south side of the street. This will increase the total number of parking stalls available on the street and address some of the existing Police parking issues. Back-in angle parking is proposed to ensure safety for eastbound cyclists, who would be facing motorists pulling out of the angled parking on the south side. The parking configuration is illustrated in Appendix A.

### *Consultation*

Staff distributed letters to all registered property owners, business operators, and residents in the area between Cambie Street and Alberta Street, including all properties facing 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The letter explained the proposed changes in the area and invited feedback.

Staff heard from four respondents regarding the proposal to convert 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. One of these respondents expressed concern about the conversion, indicating that 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a primary access route to his business located on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue east of Yukon Street. Staff reviewed access to this area and note that vehicular access remains unencumbered for businesses east of Yukon Street. A second respondent expressed significant concern about VPD parking in the area and its impacts on his family’s property on the north side of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In addition, both of these respondents voiced opposition to changes to accommodate additional parking for VPD Headquarters on the street while private property owners are required to supply sufficient parking off-street to accommodate their businesses. Both feel that a long-term solution to VPD parking near Headquarters should be pursued for fairness and equity, and to free up parking on-street for local business patrons. Staff note that the proposed conversion will increase total parking, which should increase available spaces for businesses on the north side of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Staff also met with representatives of the Insurance Corporation of BC (ICBC), who own the property housing VPD Headquarters and operate a claim centre in the same building. ICBC staff expressed some concern about wayfinding for their customers with one-way operation, having recently completed a process in cooperation with the City to improve wayfinding signage for its claim centre. In the event that this proposal is approved, ICBC has requested some lead-time to allow notifications to be prepared and wayfinding to their claim centre to be adjusted.

The Bicycle Advisory Committee has also endorsed the proposal to convert 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to one-way operation except bicycles.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the permanent conversion of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to one-way operation will be requested from Council as part of a broader project involving the re-design of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue through the Olympic Village Station precinct.

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Staff propose to implement this project on a temporary basis by closing the eastbound entry to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue until other modifications along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue are implemented as part of the street restoration after Canada Line construction. The permanent bulge at the southeast corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Cambie Street would be constructed at that time. Short-term implementation would include changes to VPD parking on the south side of the street.

### CONCLUSION

The conversion of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Yukon Street and Cambie Street to one-way westbound motor vehicle operation, with two-way cycling, would enhance cyclist accommodation and safety, improve intersection legibility at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue/Cambie Street for all users, and allow for additional short-term parking for VPD squad cars. An improved cycling facility will significantly improve connections between the Off-Broadway and Yukon Bikeways and the Olympic Village Canada Line Station, the Cambie Bridge and the Seawall.

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