

Bay Ward Council

Meeting Notes

November 4, 2009

Attendees: Lillian Robinson, Joe Hager, Rich Nelson, Bill Fenton, Wendo Blondeau, Bert Foulds, Dave Grosvenor, Julia Goodman, Brian Payne, Matilde Hahn, Vivi Chi, Dennis Gratton, Dan O'Hagan, Councillor Alex Cullen.

Associations in Attendance: Belltown Neighbours Association, Park Place Condo, Crystal Beach-Lakeview Community Association, Glabar Park Community Alliance, Woodroffe North Community Association, Lincoln Heights-Parkway Community Association, The Conservatory Condo, Britannia Village Association.

Police Services Report

Cst. Maria Keen was unable to attend the meeting because of other duties. She will resume her regular reports next month.

Recent crime and policing statistics, including recent activity reports, are available on the Ottawa Police Services website.

Each month since 2004, the STEP program (selective traffic enforcement program), part of the Integrated Road Safety Program (IRSP), has been profiling and enforcing two initiatives that target specific traffic safety priorities.

The STEP program chooses a different priority each month. STEP priorities for the month of November are improper use of reserved transit lanes/yielding to buses, and red light running.

In 2008, the inappropriate use of reserved bus lanes resulted in 33 collisions and 3 injuries. Failing to stop at a red light resulted in 833 collisions in 2008, causing 4 deaths and 375 injuries, 15 of them life threatening.

Additional information about the reports referred to above, and other information, can be found on the OPS website. Crime statistics can be analyzed using the new Google based crime analysis tool available to the public through the OPS website (www.ottawapolice.ca). This tool uses the crime statistics compiled by OPS and allows anyone to do an analysis of the crime statistics in their part of Ottawa. This tool is now available for use, and will be updated as new statistics are available.

Special Presentation on the Downtown Ottawa Transit Tunnel – Vivi Chi and Dennis Gratton

Vivi Chi, Manager of Transportation Planning with the City, and Dennis Gratton, gave an update on current planning for the Downtown Ottawa Transit Tunnel (DOTT), which is the central element in Phase 1 of the plan to extend Light Rail Transit.

The alignment for Phase 1 of the plan extends from Tunney's Pasture in the west to Blair Station in the east, and includes 13 stations and a maintenance facility in the east end of the City close to the LRT corridor.

The Downtown Segment of the project, running from west of the escarpment (Bronson Avenue) in Lebreton Flats to south of the existing Campus Station – toward Lees Station – just after Mann Avenue (Tunnel portal), involves construction of a tunnel across the downtown core. Four underground stations are included as part of the project design (all other stations will be above ground and located on the route of the present transitway):

- Downtown West Station - under Albert, east of Bay
- Downtown East Station - north of Albert Street, between Bank and O'Connor
- Rideau Station - south of Wellington Street, between Confederation Square and Sussex Drive, with connections to both west and east sides of Rideau Canal
- Campus Station - approximately where the existing Campus Station sits today, with connections to the University of Ottawa, Sandy Hill and Golden Triangle (via the Corktown Footbridge). It is not yet clear whether the station will be located east or west of Nicholas Street

It is expected that a motion requesting approval to start the formal environmental assessment for this project will go to Transit Committee on December 16, and to Council on January 13, 2010, with an Open House to describe the EA process and details of the issues and areas under condition scheduled shortly after this in mid January, followed by a launch of the EA process later in January.

A complete copy of the PowerPoint presentation made to Ward Council is available on the Councillor's website at www.alexculen.ca, and more detail on the engineering details for Phase 1 of the project, together with details on the choice of preferred rail technology and updated cost estimates, as well as a timeline for the project, are available on the City's website.

Community Associations Update

Because of the length of the Downtown Ottawa Transit Tunnel presentation and the discussion which followed, no community reports were done this month. Community reports will resume in December.

Councillor Cullen's City Hall Report

Councillor Cullen gave a quick update on the City's planning for H1N1. Six H1N1 flu assessments centres were set up in November to take pressure off hospital emergency rooms, which were seeing an increase of people needing diagnosis. These clinics (locations are available on the City website and additional sites may be opened if needed), will run 7 days a week until the need for them has diminished. The Councillor also noted that H1N1 vaccination clinics are continuing to process priority groups. Ottawa Public Health hopes to be able to offer flu vaccine to the general public in the near future. Locations of clinics are posted on the City website, and additional temporary clinics are opened from time to time and noted on the website. The City has gone to a wristband approach to process those being vaccinated, and the City website contains regularly updated reports on which clinics are full and which are still accepting new arrivals.

As outlined in the staff presentation, work on the Environmental Assessment for the Western LRT corridor, which will include plans for the extension of the LRT system past Tunney's Pasture and out to Baseline Station, is expected to begin in early 2010, and take up to 2 years. The environmental assessment process for this project will be designed to meet both Provincial and Federal guidelines for environmental assessment of large infrastructure projects. It also incorporates public consultation, both from identified stakeholders and interested members of the public.

The Statement of Work for the EA, which was approved by Council earlier this year, includes an examination of all reasonable alternative corridors from the Ottawa River Parkway in the north to the Byron Avenue corridor to Carling Avenue in the south. Once a rapid transit corridor is identified, the Study will examine a range of alternative design options, and identify both construction and operational impacts of the project on all aspects of the environment.

Other significant decisions which will affect the process of evaluation and rollout of the LRT system will take place later in November. The most important of these involves the final choice of the specific rail technology to be used for the project.

On June 19 and 20, 2009 the City hosted a LRT Technology Forum to discuss light rail transit technology options in the development of the new transit vision. The Forum brought together representatives of manufacturers and transit agencies from across North America to discuss various types of transit systems, best practices and lessons learned, with the objective of identifying optimal rail technology solutions for Ottawa. The result of this technology forum was the identification of two rail technology options appropriate for City of Ottawa for further consideration: Light Rail Transit (LRT), which uses overhead wires, and a Light Metro technology similar to that in use in Toronto, which uses a powered rail. To determine which rail technology will best serve the City's future transportation needs the City commissioned Delcan to undertake a study to examine the two rail technology options and also to consider whether the systems should incorporate a driverless or driver-based operational control technology. The results of this study will be presented to Transit Committee on November 18 for approval and to Council in early December.

The Councillor also noted that in late October, the City Treasurer presented updated estimates on the cost and affordability of the LRT project, including the Downtown Ottawa Transit Tunnel portion (DOTT). These estimates update the high level estimates contained in the Transportation Master Plan of 2008, and, with some modifications, will form the basis of the formal funding request to be made early in 2010 to Federal and Provincial governments.

The highlights of the Treasurer's report, which is available on the City website, include the following:

- The current estimates for the DOTT project, based on the most recent functional design choices and some necessary additions to the project cost (inclusion of land acquisition costs, changes to the Campus station design, firm estimates for the cost of the Project Office, some design refinements and the addition of a sum for contingency) bring the total for the DOTT project to \$2.1 billion.
- With the City's AAA credit rating, the City should be able to afford its share of the project through borrowing and without raising property taxes.
- The report assumes that each of the other two levels of government will contribute one third of the total design and construction costs of the transit project. It should be noted that some Ontario municipalities, including the Region of Waterloo and the City of Toronto, have received funds beyond this level for their transit projects, and City officials will be making the case, beginning in January, for funding beyond the one third level from both Provincial and Federal governments.

More details, and a copy of the Treasurer's report, are available on the Councillor's website at www.alexculen.ca.

The Councillor also updated the meeting on the most recent report on the West Transitway Extension from Bayshore Station to Moodie Drive. The Report on Assessment of Effects and Comparative Evaluation of Route Alternatives (AECERA), was conducted by McCormick Rankin (the study consultants) on behalf of the City, and was tabled with the Transit Committee on October 26.

The report documents the assessment of effects and comparative evaluation that has been used to determine a recommended route for the extension of the West Transitway between Bayshore Station and Moodie Drive

Based on a comprehensive review of the study area and in recognition of existing constraints within the Queensway corridor, four potential route alternatives were identified: the Former Railway route (most northerly and closest to the community); the Queensway North route; the Queensway Median route; and the Queensway South route. The recommended route which emerges from this report is the Queensway North route, which would run close to the north side of the Queensway.

The full report is available on the Councillor's website.

The Councillor updated the meeting on the NCC's Greenbelt Master Plan Review, which is designed to update the current Master Plan, which dates from 1996, in light of economic and demographic changes, changes in environmental priorities, and changes in government policies with respect to the Greenbelt and other public lands since the last reworking of the Plan.

The NCC will be holding a National Public Forum at the National Arts Centre on the evening of November 25th at which the Greenbelt Master Plan will be explained, the review process outlined, and feedback from the general public will be recorded. This will be followed by a National Vision Workshop at which national and international Greenbelt experts, stakeholders and NCC officials will discuss possible directions for the Greenbelt, document the inherent strengths and characteristics of the National Greenbelt, and begin to define the vision for the National Capital Greenbelt for the next fifty years and beyond.

The National Public Forum between will take place from 7:00 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. at the National Arts Center (Panorama Room). Members of the public can go to the NCC website at www.canadascapital.gc.ca/greenbelt for background documentation and copies of presentations by a number of specialists who will be at the Forum and the Workshop.

The Councillor updated the meeting on the City's 2010 Budget process.

During late October and early November each of the City's standing committees will review and discuss programs and priorities for the coming year in their area of responsibility and prepare draft budgets. Starting November 17, the committee budget estimates will be discussed at the Audit, Budget and Finance Committee (ABFC), which is a new committee of Council composed of the chairs of all Council committees and chaired by the Mayor. The goal is to have a consolidated 2010 draft budget tabled at Council by December 9. Council discussion of the budget, beginning with Committee of the Whole, at which delegations and presentations will be heard, will begin on January 25. Final Council debate on the budget, with approval of the 2010 budget, will take place on January 28 and 29. More details on the 2010 budget process are available on the City website.

The Bay Ward meeting on the budget will be held on Thursday January 14, 2010, at 7 pm, at the Ron Kolbus-Lakeside Centre, in the main hall. Details on the draft 2010 capital and operating budgets will be distributed at this meeting, but will also be available through the City's website in advance of this meeting.

A major aspect of the 2010 budget will be the transfer of recycling programs from the general property tax to identifiable charges for the service. This change will affect the way residents pay for the blue and black box programs and for the upcoming green bin program, which will start collecting organic compostable matter from Ottawa households in January 2010.

As with water charges now, the fees for these programs will be set at a rate which will recover costs but return no extra revenue to the City beyond what it needs to run these programs. The fee for the green bin program is set in the draft 2010 Budget at \$1.55 per pickup. With 44 pickups per year, this would be shown as a separate charge of \$68 per year for a residential taxpayer with curbside collection. The blue and black box programs will also be moved from the general tax base to a rate based program, and will be shown as a separate charge of \$0.79 per week or \$41 per year for a residential taxpayer with curbside collection. This change is seen as a fair and

transparent way for the City to recover the costs of these programs, since the costs are moved off the general tax bill and stated as separate charges so that the cost of these programs can be easily understood. It should also be noted that an additional element of fairness is incorporated in the fact that rural homeowners and businesses who do not receive these services would not have to pay for them, and rural charges for these services are also set lower. These changes are part of the Planning and Environment Committee's 2010 Draft Budget Estimates, as presented to the ABFC in November, and will form part of the 2010 budget if approved by Council in January.

Finally, Councillor Cullen noted that a motion to accelerate the rollout of the Cycling Plan will be incorporated in the 2010 Budget, if approved by Council in January. Council had previously approved the sum of \$26 million to be spent over 5 years to implement the Cycling Plan which is included in the Transportation Master Plan. Unfortunately the rollout of this plan was delayed due to staff layoffs in 2009, part of the most recent budget process. As a result of a motion by the Councillor, staff will be directed to report back with an accelerated plan which will outline how the Cycling Plan is to be implemented, with an estimate of necessary staff resources to implement this on a priority basis. More details on this, and what it means for cyclists, is available on the Councillor's website at www.alexcullen.ca.

Next Bay Ward Council Meeting:

Next Bay Ward Council meeting will be held Wednesday December 2, 2009 and will start at 7:00 p.m. at the Ron Kolbus-Lakeside Centre in Britannia Park.

This document and related information is also available on the Councillor's website (www.alexcullen.ca). If you need to have this material in hard copy, please phone our office (613-580-2477) and let either Sheila or Lara know.

If you wish to be added to our mailing list, or if you know someone else who should get this material, please phone, or email me (alex.cullen@ottawa.ca) and let me know the e-mail addresses. We will add them to our Ward Council e-mail list.