



Council Member Motion
For the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting of December 3, 2015

To: Governance and Priorities Committee **Date:** December 3, 2015
From: Councillors Loveday and Young
Subject: McKenzie Interchange

Recommendation

That the Mayor write to the appropriate Provincial and Federal government ministers expressing Victoria Council's concerns that the proposed designs for the McKenzie interchange do not provide sufficiently for future rapid bus or light rail transit or for bicycle connectivity.

Background

All of the three options put forward for discussion show buses on the highway either ascending (Options 1 and 2) or descending (Option 3) to the level of McKenzie/Admirals, where they would wait at a traffic light, in addition to the time spent at the bus stop itself. Even with some kind of transit priority stoplight this would add to the stopping time for buses at the intersection. Thus the standard of service would be little improved from what would be available right now with a transit priority stoplight.

The consequence of this is that the standard of service for bus riders is actually reduced relative to the standard for single-occupancy vehicles - that is, SOV travel is much improved, while bus riders are in almost the same position as at present. This is the opposite of what our transportation objectives should be.

Under all designs the bus stops for outgoing and incoming buses are separated much more than at present. Going from one to the other requires crossing the highway on an overpass or underpass and waiting through two signal cycles rather than one. This is not of great consequence now, but if a planned McKenzie /Admirals bus route is implemented there would be no possibility of a single station serving all four directions.

The service level for pedestrians travelling through on Admirals/McKenzie is slightly improved with all designs inasmuch as it appears pedestrians can cross the highway on the East side of McKenzie/Admirals as well as the west side. This cannot be a major pedestrian movement since there are no sidewalks on McKenzie near the intersection.

Bicycle riders on the Galloping Goose enjoy some increase in speed in that they can now avoid waiting for the light signal to cross. However, under Option 3 they must now climb the equivalent of one grade separation, giving the same standard of service as is now available at the Switch Bridge. Under Options 1 and 2 they must climb the equivalent of two grade separations, i.e. twice the climb as at the Switch Bridge. One of the main advantages of the Galloping Goose is its low railway-type grades, and some riders will thus consider this time saving of marginal benefit. The designs do appear to show the level of the Galloping Goose being raised with retaining walls to the level of the existing pedestrian bridge west of the intersection, so some of this climb may be saved for those travelling west.

One bicycle opportunity that is not developed is the connection on the south side of the highway between Portage Road (which is a good bicycle route that links with a bicycle connection through the waterfront park on Portage Inlet to View Royal) to the existing bike path on the south side of the highway running beside Colquitz River Park. This link remains at the same standard as before.

What should the intersection deliver?

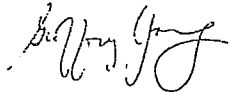
Studies to date suggest that the most cost-beneficial regional transit option for the medium term is a rapid bus system, with light rail becoming more economical in the longer term as traffic volumes rise. The best way to meet medium and longer term goals would seem to be to have an uninterrupted right of way for transit (that is, the same standard as proposed for single occupancy vehicles) that is more or less at grade level (that is, it is built at grades that are usable by rail transit vehicles). A second objective would be to make provision now to allow for a future transit stop to allow for interchange with a future Admirals/McKenzie bus or even LRT route with all four stops close to each other to allow for a smooth interchange (this transit interchange might serve some future university and Peninsula routes).

Finally, the interchange should be bicycle-friendly. A level route for bicycles is preferable, but if an overpass is necessary the total climb required should be as moderate as possible (a simple bike/pedestrian overpass could be added to the existing interchange at a tiny fraction of the projected cost of this project).

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Loveday



Councillor Young

Attachments

Project Design Options 1-3: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/mckenzieinterchange/projectdesign/>