

REPORT

Engineering Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: May 27, 2024

From: Lisa Leblanc
Director, Engineering Services
File: 05.1035.10
(Doc#2488144)

Item #: 2024-318

Subject: **Queensborough Transportation Plan**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council endorse the Queensborough Transportation Plan.

THAT Council direct staff to undertake and report back on a procurement process for the next five-year operating period for the Q to Q Ferry to enable Council to make an informed decision on future operating funding for the service.

PURPOSE

To seek Council's endorsement of the Queensborough Transportation Plan, as presented in Attachment 1 to this report.

BACKGROUND

Preparation of the Queensborough Transportation Plan has been underway since Fall 2022. The work was completed in four phases:

- ***Phase 1 – Where are we now?*** (Fall 2022 / Winter 2023) - Which identified deficiencies, gaps and opportunities in the transportation network, and included Round 1 engagement with residents, community groups and government agencies.

- **Phase 2 – Where do we want to go?** (Spring / Summer 2023) - Which identified key directions and options.
- **Phase 3 – How do we get there?** (Fall 2023) – Which identified transportation improvements and implementation options and included a second round of public engagement.
- **Phase 4 – Final Plan** (Winter / Spring 2024) – Which identified directions, actions for the preferred options, stemming from public engagement, and an implementation strategy.

An information report was presented to Council on February 6, 2024 providing an update on the process and summary of the second and final round of engagement.

DISCUSSION

The Plan builds on several established City plans and policies including the Queensborough Community Plan, Master Transportation Plan, and Active Transportation Network Plan, in addition to Climate Action Bold Steps 2 and 7, and Council's Strategic Priorities.

Plan Purpose

The Plan will be a guide for the City's transportation decisions in Queensborough and provide a strategic vision for transportation in Queensborough. The Plan's purpose includes:

- Advance the goals and objectives of the Queensborough Community Plan, Master Transportation Plan, and Climate Action Bold Steps.
- Identify projects and policies to address transportation challenges in Queensborough.
- Provide an implementation strategy of prioritized transportation investments to inform decision-making and the capital budget process going forward.

The Plan is one of several community transportation planning documents that identify infrastructure projects. The Plan's directions and actions, along with the City's other neighbourhood area and city-wide transportation plans, will be reviewed and prioritized at a city-wide scale during the annual five-year capital project funding cycle.

Plan Structure

The Plan is organized into sections for walking, cycling, bus transit, intersections, streets, and goods movement network, and inter-neighbourhood access. Each section contains a current context summary, an outline of opportunities and issues, and directions and actions. The Plan also includes an implementation section which identifies next steps,

implementation methods and responsibility and timelines for each direction and action identified in the Plan.

Public Engagement

Two rounds of engagement were completed during Plan development and several methods were used to raise awareness about the project.

- **Be Heard New West project page** – which shared background information and updates on the project, the engagement process, and provided relevant City documents. The project page also included the community surveys, quick polls, mapping tools to identify issues and opportunities, and a discussion forum.
- **Interest Group Outreach** – to over 25 interest groups via email that included a link to the surveys and information about upcoming engagement events.
- **Community Pop-ups** – City staff conducted five pop-ups where staff handed out flyers that included the link to the Be Heard project page.
- **Social Media** – City staff promoted both rounds of engagement on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter).
- **Printed / Digital Media** – City Staff promoted both rounds engagement on the Citypage newsletter, the New Westminster Record, digital signage at the Queensborough Community Centre and on the Queensborough Bridge billboard, posters at the Q to Q ferry terminals, and letter mail out to all 3,939 mailing addresses in Queensborough.

Round 1 Engagement, designed to gather input on current transportation conditions, issues and opportunities, included:

- **Community Survey 1** which collected respondents' transportation experiences, and what strategies would encourage more walking, cycling, and transit use.
- **Interactive Map** – which collected location-specific issues and opportunities.
- **Interest Group Meetings** including the Queensborough Residents Association, community interest groups and government agencies to present findings and collect input.

Round 2 engagement, designed to gauge community support for the preliminary recommendations and options included:

- **Community Survey 2** which collected respondents' option preferences.
- **Drop-in Sessions** held at the Queensborough Community Centre on October 12 and 14, 2023.
- **Interest Group Meetings** - to share the findings from the second round of engagement and collect input.

Engagement summary reports, documenting what was heard, were completed for both engagement rounds and posted on the Be Heard project page.

Implementation

The recommendations in the Plan will be realized through a variety of approaches, including but not limited to the following:

- **Quick-build Treatments** - To facilitate walking and cycling facilities in Queensborough in the shorter term.
- **Coordinate Projects with other Capital Infrastructure Projects** – To include, where possible, implementation of Plan projects with other infrastructure projects, such as sewer and water line upgrades, or dyke system maintenance, that are being completed by the City or other government entities to achieve economies of scale.
- **Coordinate Projects with Development Sites** – To include, where possible, implementation of Plan projects with completion of development applicants' off-site improvements, as required through the City's Subdivision and Development Control Bylaw.
- **Collaboration** - The City will need to work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, TransLink, the Port of Vancouver, Southern Rail, neighbouring municipalities, and others, to implement improvements identified in the Plan. Through collaboration and partnership, there may be opportunities for these organizations to cost-share or fund Plan projects.
- **Pursue Funding** – City staff will pursue funding through the federal and provincial governments, and TransLink, and actively stay attuned to new funding sources for which transportation projects would qualify.

Q to Q Ferry

The current five-year operating term for third-party operation of the Q to Q Ferry expires at the end of 2024.

- In 2023, annual ridership was 63,775 with an average daily ridership of 182.
- Total annual operating cost in 2023 was \$727,500, with an average cost per ride of \$11.50 (before fare revenue).
- Net of revenue, the ferry cost the City \$606,100 to operate in 2023 at an average cost of \$9.50 per ride, and the net cost in 2024 is expected to be approximately \$700,000.

Recent operating costs have been higher than anticipated due to increasing fuel and labour costs and, given a lack of interest from third parties to offset the cost to the City to deliver the service, future operating costs, and the amount of funding needed from the

City to sustain the service, are uncertain but anticipated to be significantly higher than in previous years. Without additional information and analysis, it is challenging to assess operating budget needs beyond the current year.

Subject to Council's direction, staff will undertake a procurement process to assess the market for potential operators with the necessary qualifications to operate a safe, reliable and efficient service, and to better understand potential future operating costs; the results of this process will inform the City's 2025 budget process and enable Council to make an informed decision on continuation of the service.

It is important to note that the procurement process staff propose would not commit the City to a future operating agreement with any potential proponents, and undertaking the suggested procurement inquiry does not imply that staff, at this time, recommend that Council commit to ongoing operation of the service.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Implementation of the Queensborough Transportation Plan will contribute toward achieving the City's transportation and sustainability goals, as outlined in the Master Transportation Plan and the Seven Bold Steps toward Climate Action.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Plan endorsement would provide Staff with strategic direction for future neighbourhood improvements and investment. Transportation infrastructure improvements are typically funded through the City's Five-Year Financial Plan.

Implementation of the Plan, consistent with other Transportation Plans and initiatives, will also help leverage other funding sources including:

- **Regional (TransLink)**, such as Bicycle Infrastructure Capital Cost Sharing Program (BICCS), Walking Infrastructure to Transit (WITT), Bus Speed and Reliability (BSR), and Major Road Network & Bike Cost Share (MRNB) programs.
- **Provincial**, such as Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant program (previously known as BikeBC), Union of BC Municipalities' Community Works Fund, and ICBC's Road Improvement Program.
- **Federal**, such as Infrastructure Canada and Green Municipal Funds.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

The Plan has been developed with input from several departments and divisions, including Planning and Development, Parks and Recreation, and Engineering Operations.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. THAT Council endorse the Queensborough Transportation Plan;
2. THAT Council direct staff to undertake and report back on a procurement process for the next five-year operating period for the Q to Q Ferry to enable Council to make an informed decision on future operating funding for the service; and
3. THAT Council provide alternate direction to staff.

Staff recommend Options 1 and 2.

CONCLUSION

The Queensborough Transportation Plan provides a framework to help the City achieve its targets for sustainable transportation, in alignment with the Master Transportation Plan and Climate Bold Steps, specifically within the Queensborough neighbourhood.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Queensborough Transportation Plan

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Erica Tiffany, Senior Transportation Planner

This report was reviewed by:
Mike Anderson, Manager Transportation

This report was approved by:
Lisa Leblanc, Director, Engineering Services
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer