

Excerpt from December 9, 2019 Regular Council Minutes

PRESENTATIONS AND DELEGATIONS

27. Open Delegations

Christopher Bell, New Westminster, provided comments on the budget process including:

- Thanking the Chief Administrative Officer and Staff for extraordinary efforts on providing information on how the declaration of the climate emergency will affect the budget process;
- Would like more information on what criteria, rubrics and framework staff are using to integrate regular programs into the objectives of the climate emergency declaration;
- Citizens need to know what will happen with the list of capital projects that may be on the chopping block; and,
- Would like to see how arts and culture can be explained through the climate emergency lens.

In response, Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer thanked Mr. Bell for his questions and noted:

- Staff's responsibility is to outline and articulate what is in the budget;
- The engagement process will allow citizens to ask questions which will inform the survey and the open house;
- The engagement process will allow staff to create themes which will lead to the evaluation criteria to be used as a lens in the budget process;
- The focus is on identifying policies and principles that are important to citizens without going into granular detail; and
- The process is iterative and evolutionary and will continue beyond the budget process.

Harry Crosby, New Westminster, provided comments on the budget process, noting:

- He is pleased with the seven bold steps;
- He would like to see a budget that looks at what needs to be done;
- The entire budget should be looked at through this lens;
- Land use and development need to be looked at; it does not make sense to build condos at ground level along the Fraser River when sea levels are projected to rise;
- It is difficult for homeowners to ascertain what they can do on a more individual level; and,
- A cultural shift is needed in order to effectively deal with the climate emergency.

Excerpt from January 13, 2020 Regular Council Minutes

PRESENTATIONS AND DELEGATIONS

17. Open Delegations

Note: unless otherwise noted, all delegations are residents of New Westminster.

a. 2020 Capital Budget

Brad Barber, Garey Carlson, HUB, Heidi Braacx, and Robert Wong, HUB, spoke about the need for bicycle routes in the capital plan and voiced the following concerns:

- There is no bicycle route connecting Downtown to Uptown;
- The four high cost segments proposed for bike route development would leave no resources for the development of new bike routes that could link the entire city;
- Council needs to go back to the Master Transportation Plan (MTP) which provides for a complete bicycle route network;
- There is a need to give people a safe bike route with gradual hills;
- Need to prioritize a completely connected bicycle route network before the smaller segments included in the plan;
- The focus at this time should be on safer routes to the high school;
- In order to reach the proposed modal split in the Seven Bold Steps, the rate would have to double the progress of the last five years;
- There needs to be benchmarking and data gathering on available space and this should be done this year so that reallocation of road space can start quickly;
- There is a need to plan for walking, cycling and transit as first priorities;
- Road reallocation to people oriented spaces needs to be aggressive, tracked and implemented;
- Meaningful collaboration with sustainable transportation groups needs to occur; and
- There is a need for mobility lanes that can accommodate bicycles, scooters, mobility devices and even small wheelchair transports which are about the size of a SmartCar.

Chris Bell congratulated staff and Council for the budget consultation sessions at the Anvil Centre and Century House, and requested the comments from the sessions be made publicly available. He suggested that, the online survey should also explore citizens' views of the costs of the steps.

In response, Colleen Ponzini, Director of Finance, advised that the notes from the workshops and the results of the survey will be compiled and be publicly available on the City's website.

Patrick Parkes spoke in support of the climate action steps but disagreed with the description of the plan as bold since there is no targeted reduction of cars or construction of separated bike lanes on Sixth Street. He noted that HUB New Westminster has submitted a proposal that has been endorsed by the School Board and the Teachers Union, and suggested Council consider it.

Catelyn Maki and Sebastian Sajda, Force of Nature, thanked staff and Council for all the work put into the 2020 capital budget, and asked why this budget does not include street space reallocation. They noted the challenge is to create car-free streets that put people and community first, and to undo poor transit planning which starts with allocating more land for public use.

Virginia Ayers spoke of a need to increase permeable surfaces and reduce the concrete used in City buildings and developments. She noted that thinking far ahead will allow for civic conversations to resolve controversy, promote education, and identify what is and is not working.

Brendon Vance advised he was supportive of the budget plan and that it should focus on pedestrian safety.

Avalon Findlay noted there are lots of good ideas in the budget but there is always room for improvement. She suggested that car-free streets, which are included in the Seven Bold Steps, should be in the budget and suggested Uptown may be a good location for the first few car-free streets.