



RAILWAY COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL

**Tuesday, June 12, 2013 - 1:00 p.m.
Committee Room No. 2 at City Hall**

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Wayne Wright	Co-Chair
Councillor Chuck Puchmayr	Co-Chair
Singh Biln	Southern Railway representative
Natalie Dickson	City Resident
Emily Hamer	Canadian National representative
Bill Magri	City Resident
Doug Younger	Canadian Pacific representative (alternate for Rick Poznikoff) (arr. 1:25 pm)

GUESTS:

Derek Ollman	Southern Railway representative
Troy Litowski	Canadian Pacific representative

ABSENT:

Gary Caroline	City Resident
Richard Wagner	BNSF
Vacant	

STAFF:

Mark Allison, Senior Planner
Keith Coueffin, Manager, Licensing & Integrated Services
Roger Emanuels, Manager, Design and Construction
Jim Lowrie, Director, Engineering Services
Donna Martin, FOI/Committee Clerk (departed – 1:15 pm)
Terry Dunlop, Recording Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 pm

1.0 INTRODUCTIONS

Co-Chair, Councillor Chuck Puchmayr, invited Panel members to introduce themselves and provide an overview of their backgrounds, respective responsibilities and areas of expertise.

Following the introductions, Co-Chair, Mayor Wayne Wright, welcomed the opportunity to work collaboratively with the railway companies on development of a better understanding of the issues and to seek common-sense solutions to the problems faced by all parties involved. The ultimate goal of the Panel is to provide action that will lead to positive resolution of long-standing issues.

2.0 ADVISORY PANEL ORIENTATION AND OATHS

Ms. Donna Martin, Committee Clerk, provided an orientation highlighting the following items:

- Quorum
- Delivery of agenda packages
- Voting (no alternates)
- Community Charter
- Resolutions directing staff (resolutions are required for Council authorization)
- Social media
- Permission Forms

Ms. Martin then administered oaths to all Panel members present and outlined the Terms of Reference.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

The following additions to the agenda were proposed:

- Queensborough and Quayside under City Projects as item 5.3 iii)
- Correspondence to Co-Chairs as items 5 (d) and 5 (e)

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Railway Community Advisory Panel approve the agenda, as amended.

CARRIED.

All members of the Panel present voted in favour of the motion.

3.0 CLARIFICATION OF CAP TERMS OF REFERENCE

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting in conjunction with the Panel orientation.

4.0 PANEL MEMBER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND INTERESTS

Member roles, responsibilities and interests were explained during the introduction process earlier in the meeting.

Procedural Note: Mr. Doug Younger, Canadian Pacific representative, arrived at 1:25 p.m.

5.0 STANDING ITEMS:

a) Whistle Cessation

Roger Emanuels, Manager, Design and Construction, addressed the following:

i) Downtown

The City retained consultants to conduct an audit of rail crossings. The audit was complex due to the presence of four separate railway companies operating within the City. As a first step, it was decided to gain experience in resolving whistle cessation issues in one of four study areas, which included Sapperton, the Downtown, the West End and Queensborough.

The Downtown, which includes crossings of Front Street at 4th Street, 6th Street (street now closed) and Begbie Street, was the initial area selected for whistle cessation. The consultants' findings have been submitted to the railway companies for comment. All potential improvements have been identified in reports and work is now underway on design. The City hopes to finalize agreements with the railways this year for submission to Transport Canada.

In subsequent discussion, a Panel member noted there are significant deficiencies at the Begbie Street crossing, where a considerable amount of work remains to be done. CN Rail currently maintains the crossing. The City acknowledged the problems at this location. Although a suite of improvements has been identified, agreement with the railway companies has yet to be reached. City staff advised railway concerns regarding the Begbie crossing have been provided to the consultants, who will include the concerns in their detailed design work. Although the formal closure of the 6th Street crossing permits cessation of whistling at this location, there are two crossings in close proximity that still require whistling.

ii) Queensborough

Audits are complete and have been delivered to Southern Rail for response, which have in turn been sent back to the City for assessment. There has been a considerable amount of work on Ewen Avenue, where it might be possible to add bells and gates. A Panel member commented that some of the problems relate to the density of crossings, several of which are within 300-500 feet of each other.

- iii) **Sapperton**
Draft safety assessments have been completed. The area is more complex than downtown, especially the Braid Street, Spruce Street and Cumberland Street crossings, where sightline issues have been identified.
 - iv) **West End**
Southern Rail and CP Rail operate in the vicinity of the Twentieth Street crossing. City staff recently met with Southern Rail officials and it appears that the company has a proposal to work on trackage and signalization.
- b) **City Projects and Plans**
Mark Allison, Senior Planner, reviewed projects and plans with the aid of aerial photographs to more clearly define specific locations.
- i) **Westminster Pier Park**
Fourth Street Pedestrian/Bicycle Access – a new bridge connection from Fourth Street, via the parkade, has been designed. The only existing access to the park is via Begbie Street and the waterfront. The new bridge is designed to span rail track from the parkade with required clearances. Staff and contractors will work with the railway companies to prepare a construction management plan to minimize any potential impacts on rail operations.
 - ii) **Port Metro Vancouver – Queensborough Truck Terminal**
Construction of a warehouse distribution facility serving local retail outlets is proposed. The proponent is working with City staff on safe crossings. The facility will likely be an interim use for the site. Port Metro Vancouver has been assembling numerous properties for future development in support of long-term port operations. The Engineering Department will work with Southern Railway on level crossing issues.
 - iii) **Queensborough/Quayside Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing**
The City has studied various proposals, including a high-level bridge and ferries for a pedestrian-oriented crossing, between Queensborough and Quayside, The existing rail swing bridge is close to high-density development on both sides of the North Arm channel. The City welcomed an initiative by Southern Railway, which developed two concepts to provide a low-level connection between the two areas.

Southern Railway and the City have held joint meetings that focused on two concepts. One is a “bascule bridge” (drawbridge) concept and the other involves possible connection of a pedestrian bridge to the existing rail swing bridge. Staff circulated engineering drawings of concepts, noting that 90 percent of river traffic could be accommodated with the swing bridge in the closed position with the bascule concept. With Development Assistance Compensation funding available from the Starlight Casino, it is hoped to have a connection in place by 2016.

In subsequent discussion, the following comments were brought forward:

- Southern Rail expressed thanks to the City for its positive comments on the company’s initiative regarding the Queensborough/Quayside crossing. The company also congratulated the City on its innovative proposal for a bridge crossing to the newly constructed Westminster Pier Park.
- Suggest the term “cross-dock facility” be substituted for “truck in – truck out” at the proposed new Queensborough warehouse facility (which may become intermodal at some future point).
- The Panel will be briefed on future design proposals for the Braid Industrial area, where three local businesses are seeking improved access for their employees.

c) Railway Projects and Operational Issues

Railway representatives commented on the following:

- Southern Railway currently has no projects other than ongoing maintenance.
- Southern Railway’s swing bridge was seriously damaged two years ago after being struck by a river barge. The company has been working on replacement of many components, both inside and on top of the bridge and continues to implement and improve noise mitigation measures.
- CP Rail anticipates replacement of a small wooden trestle within the next year or two.
- CP Rail has implemented operational changes at the Sapperton Yard, leading to more trains proceeding to North Vancouver. Development of the recently opened new Port Mann Bridge provided the opportunity to lengthen trackage in the vicinity of King Edward Avenue.

In subsequent discussion, it was noted that CP Rail has approximately 2 train movements per day in the City. One train per day is loaded onto barges for shipment to the northern coast area from Annacis Island. A Panel member requested provision of more detailed information relative to volumes and goods movement throughout the City.

d) / e) Correspondence

Co-Chairs Wright and Puchmayr introduced two examples of correspondence they have received, respectively, regarding issues and concerns relative to train whistles throughout the community. The Co-Chairs suggested both communications highlight the need for the Panel to develop a greater understanding of the operational and regulatory causes for train whistling and measures and work together to address these.

In ensuing discussion, Panel members noted the defined patterns of train whistling must be followed in accordance with Transport Canada (TC) regulations. The City may enact bylaws related to whistle cessation, but these must comply with the regulations and guidelines set by TC. Safety for operators and the public is paramount.

Liability issues must also be taken into account. Railway Panel members advised that the railway companies and various committees across Canada are working with TC, specifically on safety issues. City staff acknowledged the federal regulations but suggested that the railway companies and municipalities need to work collaboratively with TC to update the decades-old safety legislation. The original safety rules were developed when the nation was mostly rural and may not be appropriate for the modern urban environment in which most Canadians now live.

New Westminster recognizes that the railway companies form an important industrial component in the fabric of the City but both entities need to work together to develop common-sense solutions to the issues and concerns of all citizens.

In further discussion of a specific issue relating to wheel flange noise emanating from the Queensborough swing bridge, Southern Rail advised that flange lubrication is being explored as a noise attenuation measure. There was also reference to possible placement of remotely-activated whistling devices on poles near at-grade crossings rather than loud whistling originating from far-off trains (some examples in the US were cited) but a Panel member suggested this would be strongly opposed by residents living close to such crossings.

A Panel member noted TC is solidifying new regulations that will form part of the technical requirements governing grade crossings. Railway companies may seek changes through the Railway Association of Canada. Furthermore, it was noted that one railway company has developed an insurance rider whereby additional indemnity is provided for both the company and the municipality, with premiums being split between the two parties. This could be explored further through the Municipal Insurance Authority.

6.0 DISCUSSION ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Rail traffic volumes, covering the last three years.
- Timelines and work schedule priorities that may assure the public that railway companies and the municipality continue to work on issues and concerns.
- Develop a *Mission Statement* for the Panel before setting any timelines or schedules for public release.
- Invite a representative from Transport Canada to provide input to the Panel.
- Assemble information that will identify private and public crossings throughout the City.
- Obtain possible sample liability insurance agreements for future consideration.
- Investigate how other municipalities have approached the problems that New Westminster now seeks to address.

7.0 OTHER BUSINESS

No items presented.

8.0 NEXT MEETING(S) – 2013/14

1:00 pm on Wednesday, September 25, 2013 (light lunch to be provided)

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded at 2:55 pm

Mayor Wayne Wright
Co-Chair

Terry Dunlop
Recording Clerk