

February 20, 2010

Mayor and Council
Saanich Municipality
770 Vernon Ave
Victoria, BC V8X 2W7

Re: Saanich Engineering Final Decision on the Interurban-Wilkinson Traffic Plan

Strawberry Vale Residents' Association Executive Board received Saanich Engineering's Final Decision regarding the Interurban-Wilkinson Traffic Plan on February 18, 2010, and have reviewed this final plan. Strawberry Vale Residents' Association Executive (SVRA) Board included community input and Saanich web site information in our review. We wish to commend the persistence of Strawberry Vale area residents, who through their diligence, communication, and meeting participation, have ensured that the area residents' concerns have been heard. The Strawberry Vale Residents' Association Executive (SVRA) Board views the limited time between the release of the final report and scheduling of Engineering's budget presentation to the Committee of the Whole inadequate and unfortunate.

SVRA Board agrees, in principle, with Saanich Engineering's final decision recommendations, especially that Saanich recognizes the need to implement the plan using less permanent solutions. We also agree with the goals of the project. However, SVRA Board acknowledges that this plan is a short term solution to what is the regional traffic problem, i.e. the need to construct the overpass at MacKenzie and Highway #1. We, therefore, expect Saanich Municipality to support the construction of this overpass by including it in their strategic plan, and working in concert with the federal and provincial governments to ensure funds are available and construction is underway within the next five years.

Many Strawberry Vale Area residents expressed a concern about being restricted from leaving their local area, 24 hours a day 7 days a week, due to the proposed permanent restriction of Hastings traffic movements, for what was seen as a problem limited to peak traffic periods. In SVRA Board's opinion, Saanich Engineering's proposed time restricted prohibition of the Hastings traffic movement during peak periods (Monday – Friday and Saturday afternoon), is a viable solution to try. This restricted movement from Hastings will provide an opportunity to coordinate the lights at Santa Rosa and Interurban facilitating a larger number of vehicles moving into the north flow of traffic on Wilkinson Road from Santa Rosa, and will enable green time to be maximized on each approach to the intersection at Wilkinson and Interurban. SVRA also supports the installation of left turn advance phases to reduce traffic wait times and tailpipe emissions at peak periods. We trust that these plan recommendations will be assessed on an ongoing basis to determine their effectiveness, and that they will also provide actual traffic flow and volume data on the effectiveness and efficiency gained by removing Hastings Road from the light cycle.

We agree with priority and access being given to the buses during the peak period to facilitate an efficient movement of the buses through the area.

Safety has been a major concern expressed by area residents including the need for safe bike and walking routes, reduction of vehicle speed and volume, installation of pedestrian controlled crosswalk light signals, night time street lighting, winter weather street maintenance, and assurance that streets affected by the proposed plan (Santa Anita, Santa Rosa, Hastings, Dunsterville, Roy, and North) meet ICBC safety audit standards. SVRA Board supports the enhancement of safety to pedestrians and cyclists on area streets through the plan's recommended creation of bike lanes and sharrows, timely construction of sidewalks on Interurban, North and Santa Anita, closure of Dunsterville to thru traffic, and the installation of pedestrian controlled solar powered flashing lights at cross walks.

SVRA Board expects ICBC safety audit recommendations to be incorporated in the plan and implemented at its outset. SVRA will be checking with Saanich on the 3, 6, and 9 month monitoring of traffic volume, speed and vehicle type and expect Saanich Engineering to be diligent and timely in its determination, placement and installation of traffic calming tools to facilitate the reduction of speeding through the area, and further deter out of area short cutting commuters, especially on the Santa Anita, Santa Rosa, North and Roy roads.

Strawberry Vale Residents' Association also acknowledges the winter weather hazards that the opening of North road and restrictions on Roy Road presents, and expects Saanich Public Works to be proactive, timely and vigilant in maintaining North Road during icy and snow conditions.

Concerns about the lack of street lighting and parking around Rosedale Park were raised by residents during the review process, and as much as these items are not within the purview of the traffic study, SVRA Board will be consulting with Saanich staff on the policies and available funds for these improvements.

Many Strawberry Vale residents expressed a concern about the volume of unsafe commuting traffic through the area, and are in favour of continuing to deter out of area short cutting commuters. The North Road barriers have demonstrated that they are an effective deterrent to out of area commuters evidenced by a large reduction of this commuter traffic since the barriers were installed. However, to improve the efficiencies and safe movement of traffic through the Wilkinson/Interurban intersection, traffic modeling statistics predict that substantial improvement in the number of cars per hour will result if Hastings is removed from the light cycle. During the review process, it was identified that the time restricted prohibition to through and left turn traffic at peak periods posed a challenge to local residents' ability to travel west and north out of the area. To facilitate another option for local resident's movement in and out of the area the plan recommends that the North Road barrier be moved to the North end at Interurban and restricted movement out of Roy Road be incorporated. This option

includes the installation of channelization on Roy and medians on Interurban, to restrict traffic exiting the neighbourhood to turning right onto Interurban only. SVRA Board expects that this will continue to deter commuters from travelling on the North Road area roads but also recognizes the deterrent poses a new challenge to North Road area residents wanting to travel west on Interurban. As a further deterrent to commuter traffic and to prevent vehicle accidents, SVRA Board supports the installation of medians on Interurban preventing traffic from turning left at the Knockanback parking lot and gas station. The posting and enforcement of "no left turn" signs on Burnside and Granville, to restrict turns between 7-9 am Monday to Friday, is seen as a deterrent to commuter traffic. However, SVRA Board is only confident the deterrents on Burnside and Granville and Interurban at Roy will be effective with frequent, random and continuous police enforcement (i.e. one morning a week at least every one to two weeks). Council will need to ensure the police budget has funds dedicated for this enforcement.

We are aware that Saanich has been consulting with View Royal through their review process, and any opportunity to partner with View Royal to enhance opportunities to deter traffic, and move it onto appropriate corridors is supported. However, we also find it very unfortunate that View Royal will be undertaking water main, trestle replacement and beautification projects on the Old Island Highway over the next eighteen months which, due to construction closures of that corridor, may result in skewed data on traffic volume changes in our area.

In conclusion, to ensure the success of the outcome of these current experimental/temporary plan solutions to the ultimate satisfaction of local area residents, we expect continuing dialogue between local area residents', Strawberry Vale Residents' Association and Saanich Engineering staff, including community meetings, as necessary, and especially if major temporary solutions are to be altered, such as the Hastings time restricted prohibition. We commend Saanich Engineering on its communication with area residents and their efforts to include residents input on their final decision.

Sincerely,

Sue Henry
President
Strawberry Vale Residents' Association

CC. Colin Doyle, Director of Engineering, Saanich Municipality
Paul Butterfield, Senior Engineering Technologist, Saanich Municipality