

**Delta Planning and Environment Committee
Environment Sub-Committee**

Meeting Report 13 (June 16, 2005)

PRESENT: None

BY EMAIL: Farida Bishay, Susan Jones, Anne Murray, Bob Smith, Mary Taitt and
Wayne Yoshizawa

Only one item was referred to the ESC and only one member and the chair were able to meet on June 16th so we cancelled the face-to-face meeting. Members reviewed the material and sent comments by email to the chair.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Report: **South Fraser Perimeter Road Environmental Assessment Draft Studies**

There were four reports in the package dated this year but: Generally speaking, the 4 reports were completed about 1 year ago and circumstances have changed in the ensuing period. However the reports acknowledge this and disclaim their appropriateness until a final alignment of the SFPR has been approved.

Water Quality Report by Golder Associates Ltd (February 2005)

- Although dated this year, the fieldwork was done in a very short time period between March 10-13, 2004. Obviously much more sampling needs to be done and the report acknowledges that to be the case.
- The current report looks exclusively at water quality and the presence of contaminants, not hydrological flow that should be included in case of accidents involving containers of potentially hazardous materials.
- The QA/QC procedures used should be reviewed, as they don't seem to be really comprehensive (no replicates, no blanks).
- The report notes that there is not much historical water quality data for the SFPR footprint, but that there are regular exceedences of standards in the Fraser River, which will likely have implications for groundwater in the vicinity of the new road.
- The ESC agrees with the study conclusion that "*Due to the lack of historic water quality data and the single season of sampling data collected (March 2004), additional data collection is required to provide an accurate assessment of baseline water quality conditions along the proposed SFPR alignment prior to the start of construction.*"

Recommendation 1: *Since the report appears to be a year old and data was collected over a very short time period, the ESC recommends that a more comprehensive water quality study is needed. Further, unless hydrology is addressed in another study, it must be addressed in this study.*

Noise Impact Assessment by Wakefield Acoustics Ltd. (April 2005)

- Although dated this year, the fieldwork was done in some areas in July 2004 and others in November 2004.
- The Ministry of Transportation Noise Policy is 12 years old (1993) and should be reviewed to see if it is the most appropriate main benchmark for use in this assessment.
- P.1, “Introduction” indicates that any increase in noise level must be audible above background before it is considered to be an issue. It would seem that any additional noise will have at least a cumulative impact on background noise whether or not it is audible itself.
- P.6, Noise monitoring should include some weekend periods as well as weekdays for balance. While noise levels may be lower on weekends, this is also the time that residents would expect more quiet time.
- Sec. 8 “Conclusions” acknowledges that the baseline noise level at some sites is already quite high because of their proximity to industrial/traffic/rail noise. The assumption is that there will be little increase to the existing level at these sites, but it does not take into account that existing noise levels are currently acceptable, when that may not be the case.

Recommendation 2: *The ESC recommends that more sampling be done at the same times and over some weekends. Cumulative noise impacts at certain sites need to be addressed.*

Contaminated Sites Assessment by Geotechnical, Materials and Pavement Engineering

- This assessment is very preliminary (Stage 1 Preliminary Site Investigation) and is therefore based on a search of records to determine Tier 1, 2, or 3 contamination levels. No analytical data has been collected and no interviews/questionnaires involving former and current owners have been conducted
- Sec. 4.7.2 – Fraser Lowlands – A database of information should be established to back up the assumption that contaminants in ground water will have a very short retention time due to tidal action of the Fraser River.
- 512 properties would be affected by the SFPR proposal. Of these 34 are considered Tier 1 (contaminated), 110 properties are considered Tier 2 (may be historically contaminated) and 372 properties are considered Tier 3 (not contaminated). (Page 3/34)
- Of these, 151 properties are in the 80th Street to Alex Fraser stretch of the highway alignment, and comprise 24 Tier 1. sites, 26 Tier 2. sites and 101 Tier 3 sites (page 27/34). A number of River Road industrial and dumping sites have caused problems in the past and are on the existing registry of contaminated sites (page 25/34).
- It would seem prudent to treat Burns Bog as a special case due to the sensitivity of this area.
- The report is generally good, but it is only preliminary.

Recommendation 3: *Since historical information is not perfect, consideration should be given to testing of questionable Tier 2 sites to determine if they should be re-classified to Tier 1. Since the cost of cleaning up contaminated sites on the road alignment is not discussed it needs to be clarified how this will be paid for and whether it is included in the overall \$900 million estimate for the road.*

Socio-Community Study by UMA Engineering Ltd (May 2005)

This report concludes that socio-community effects will be benign but gives little justification for this conclusion. The consultants made no contact with the public but state that there is widespread community support for the project.

The consultants did meet with staff of the Corporation of Delta. Their statement on municipal support is enigmatic and somewhat contradictory: *“Municipal planning documents do not directly support or oppose the proposed SFPR conceptual design. Rather, such documents tend to support the above noted goals though they may identify different options as means to achieve such goals. For example Surrey supports the SFPR and the recent Delta OCP supports it in principle, but not some of the options under consideration.”* (page 5 /47)

Some of the points made in the report could result in significant impacts on communities within Delta and contradict the Livable Region Strategic Plan especially regarding the GVRD Green Zone that is largely contained within Delta:

- SFPR *“will accelerate development”* along its alignment and *“may favour more intensive development mainly in Ladner”* page 45/47.
- SFPR will affect community cohesion; the South Alignment option for example, will result in a *“less direct link between Delta communities of Ladner and Tsawwassen”*.
- 24 Delta parks and related areas (including more than 7 environmental reserves such as sensitive ravines and the Burns Bog Nature Reserve) are directly affected by the proposed highway (page 4).
- In addition to these, Deas Island Regional Park (GVRD) will be directly affected. (Access to the park will depend on new ancillary roads.)
- 5 to 9 trail links and Greenways will be affected in Delta.
- There will be a loss of agricultural land.
- There seems to be no mention of Burns Bog Ecological Conservancy Area in the list of parks and related areas affected by the development, despite the fact that the study area includes a slice of the western end of the bog.
- SFPR is *“primarily a goods movement corridor”* but there are claims that it *“would improve the Lower Mainland’s transportation system”* (surely generally thought by the public to mean people as well as goods) and create *“an efficient alternate route to the congested Highway 99/George Massey tunnel for emergency response teams”* (page 14/47). Presumably coming to the congested tunnel and then coming to a dead stop – since there is no associated improvement of the tunnel.

- Southern alignment of road has greatest total number of impacts on existing roads with “24 full [road] closures, 4 alternative accesses and 11 modifications” (page 4/47).

There are no discussions on:

- Mitigation of impact on parks, trails, on of loss of agricultural land or the affect of the road on agricultural operations and farmers access to fields (these are covered in a separate report, Summit 2005).
- Impact on Burns Bog.
- Impact of accelerated development around Ladner as a result of re-routing the highway – since Highway 17 will still exist as an entrance to the community and would presumably greatly encourage the accelerated development pressures noted in the report. This would put greater pressure on speculator-owned farmland around the community and Highway 17, including land south of the town (see page 45/47).
- Cutting the link between Tsawwassen and Ladner contradicts the stated goal of “*improving community cohesion and quality of life for residents*” (page 14/47).
- Were studies done of traffic between Tsawwassen and Ladner and its role in people’s lives? This is not necessarily rush hour traffic and it includes people traveling for social reasons, commerce (shopping), health (the hospital, specialists, clinics), churches (only RC church for both communities on Arthur Drive, main Baptist church is in Tsawwassen), sports and recreation (Ladner Leisure Centre, etc.), work. What are the implications going to be for people if this link is “*less direct*”?

Recommendation 4: *Since the study did not appear to measure the socio-community effects of cutting the link between Ladner and Tsawwassen and since some of the consequences appear to contradict the goal of the study, the ESC recommends this be addressed.*

Recommendation 5: *Since the study assumes widespread community satisfaction with the project, apparently based on nothing more than short “interviews with representatives from Delta and Surrey” (staff), the ESC recommends that a proper public review process that is statistically sound, be part of this socio-community study.*