

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

Staff Report to the Regional Planning Committee
Meeting of Wednesday, March 20, 2002

SUBJECT:

Regional Transportation Strategy – Cycling Recommendations

BACKGROUND:

January 17/01: Regional Planning Committee (RPC) recommended that staff work with a cycling subcommittee to provide technical and policy input on cycling into the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS). The subcommittee would be made up of those who volunteered at the Regional Cycling strategy workshop, as well as volunteers from those areas not represented (western Communities, Juan de Fuca Electoral area and Saanich Peninsula) and municipal staff.

February 8/01: First meeting of the new Regional Cycling Subcommittee (RCSC) where members were advised of the RPC recommendations and a work plan was discussed.

June 15/01: RCSC completed its first priority and recommended a draft regional bikeway network for evaluation purposes with total length of about 700 kms.

August 17/01 Regional Planning Committee and ICBC initiate the technical evaluation of the draft bicycle network that included setting up a database for each route, collecting relevant data and adapting the information to the ICBC Bicycle Planning Tool.

Oct. 4/01 Workshop - RPS introduce draft cycling strategies and ICBC introduce their initial findings after evaluating the need for each proposed bikeway route.

Dec.13/01 Workshop - RPS presents amended cycling strategies based on stakeholder input and ICBC outline their recommendations related to route priorities and improvements.

Feb.21/01 RPS presented their report titled – “Recommendations to make cycling a more effective transportation choice in the Capital Region.”

DISCUSSION

After receiving direction from RPC in January 2001, Regional Planning Services initiated a work plan to develop adequate information related to cycling as input into the RTS. The RPS and subcommittee work plan had four major stages that included:

- identifying a possible regional cycling network based on the networks outlined in the municipal Official Community Plans or agency plans;

- using the new ICBC bicycle-planning tool to evaluate the need for all the routes identified and ranks each in order of need, then for the Core (Esquimalt, Saanich, Oak Bay, and Victoria) work with each agency to develop possible improvements and estimates;
- developing potential cycling strategies for consideration by the subcommittee; and
- preparing a report for consideration by RPC as input into the RTS.

The attached report titled – “ Recommendations To Make Cycling an Effective Transportation Choice” - outlines the scale of change needed to make cycling more effective as a transportation choice. The report links the recommendations to the RTS work plan and contains over 40 recommendations that would fundamentally change the role of cycling in this region. The recommendations include a proposed cycling network that would increase the existing municipal cycling networks from 400 kms to 550 in length. This change is in response to the “Transportation – Land Use” connection element of the RTS and addresses many of the continuity issues in existing plans. The report recommends the region and its member municipalities:

- make cycling an equal partner in the decision made about transportation especially at a local level;
- establish a comprehensive Regional Cycling Strategy within one year of adopting a RTS;
- adopting a Regional Bikeway Network;
- act on the priority cycling routes which involves upgrading about 70 kms of the proposed cycling routes within the next ten years; and
- provide at least \$700,000 annually for these cycling initiatives.

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) intends to promote development of a balanced and sustainable transportation system, and proposes cycling as an integral part of the RTS. The report’s recommendations give the region many opportunities to achieve a sustainable transportation strategy. For example, cycling tends to serve many market areas not reached by transit and is one of the least cost options to sustain.

The recommendations also provide a framework to change current trends. For example, over the past ten years, we have seen a major increase in cycling along new corridors such as the Galloping Goose, while during the same period there has been an apparent decline in cycling region-wide. This trend is in part due to issues of safety. The recommended strategies and actions would provide for an environment that makes cycling safer and more convenient for all age groups and all trip purposes.

The proposed strategies and actions are also in keeping with efforts to date and reflect policies already used by a few municipalities. The report simply strives to provide a common approach for all municipalities to manage this resource and provides recommendations to make cycling an integral part of the ongoing planning process.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Regional Planning Committee:

1. receive the attached report on cycling as information;
2. forward it to the Regional Transportation Strategy Project Management Committee (RTS PMC) to guide its development of the RTS, and,
3. request the RTS PMC report to the RPC on its recommendations as related to cycling.

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Regional Planning Services

Mark Hornell, Director
Regional Planning Services

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

W.M. Jordan, Executive Director

Attachments