

# Multi-million dollar road program approved

Despite misgivings about financing and the possibility of public protest over certain aspects of the plan, Burnaby council Monday gave preliminary approval to a massive three-year road building program that could cost anywhere from \$8 million to \$18 million in public funds.

By RENEE BLACKSTONE

"It's only a beginning," Mayor Dave Mercer said after convincing aldermen he needed their unanimous support before the municipality could begin negotiating with senior governments for the lion's share of funds that will build the roads and overpasses needed to ease Burnaby's harrowing traffic problems.

Given the formidable title of Comprehensive Transportation Plan Implementation Strategy, the program depends primarily on senior government financing for its success, a factor that caused worried aldermen to insist it was only a guideline in case Victoria or Ottawa prove less than cooperative.

The provincial ministry of highways has confirmed that Burnaby's ambitious road program is eligible for revenue sharing capital grants, but no commitment has been made as to the amount of money that is available.

Approval of the implementation strategy puts in motion a series of recommendations made by council's transportation committee last year following three years of intense exam-

ination of Burnaby's biggest headache — an explosion of commuter-traffic from outlying municipalities that threaten to turn many quiet neighborhoods into noisy thoroughfares.

The implementation strategy was tabled in February so that the transportation committee could arrange road improvements according to priority, but the delay has held up even minor road work, Mercer pointed out.

Now that the committee has set priorities, council must act quickly for its share of provincial funds, Mercer said, adding that the provincial government would "be perfectly happy" to hear that council is divided on the issue "because they could then save

themselves a lot of money" by doing nothing.

"If we think we can spend three more months debating this and at the same time try to convince the provincial government we're serious about it, then we're kidding ourselves," Mercer warned the aldermen.

Major municipal road projects given top priority for the years 1981-83 are the BNL overpass at Sperling, and the realignment of Kensington Avenue between Sprout and Laurel Streets. The work is expected to cost \$8.6 million, with provincial and federal shares pegged at \$5.8 million.

Medium and low-priority road work for that same period could cost another \$10 million, of which council hopes

senior governments will pay \$8 million.

Ald. Vic Stusiak said he balked at giving the program blanket approval because it could take away council's flexibility in making decisions on any particular road project.

"There are elements (in the plan) that are not going to be acceptable to the public, and when, for example, you put a major truck route through, you'll be able to sell tickets at the council chamber doors.

"I object that we must accept this plan as a whole or not at all," Stusiak said.

But Mercer assured him any major objections to proposed alignments con-

tained in the comprehensive transportation plan would be dealt with as projects come forward.

Any part of the plan can be altered by future councils, the mayor said.

"Not everyone is totally in the plan, but if nothing else done by the transportation in its three years of existence helped allay fears of many groups because they now know of what's to happen in the future, Ald. Doug Drummond said.

A copy of the plan will be made available to Victoria and a meeting arranged with highway ministers to discuss its contents in the next four to six weeks, he said.

## Planner's powers rapped

Burnaby Ald. Vic Stusiak wants to take away some of the powers held by municipal planner Tony Parr.

Burnaby Today has learned Stusiak put forward a notice of motion at an in-camera meeting of council to strip Parr of his authority as approving officer for Burnaby.

The notice of motion has been referred to the mayor and the municipal manager for study and should come back to council by September.

Stusiak refused to comment on the specific reasons why he put the motion, except to stress that it is not a personal attack on Parr.

"It isn't fair for me to harass a civil servant through the press. Once I've given my opinion to open council, I will be happy to discuss it with you," Stusiak said.

Approving officers are appointed by council to give legal approval to subdivisions covered by zoning by-laws. There are no appeals to his decisions.

"He has very broad interpretive powers," Stusiak said. "I will say that I think it may be a conflict of professional interests, no matter who the approving officer is," Stusiak said.

The approving officer is empowered to make demands of developers which may drive up the cost of developments, Stusiak said. For instance, he may demand underground wiring, sidewalks, land dedications or other levels of servicing which go beyond what the public either wants or requires, he said.

"He is the guy who says what goes. That type of responsibility should be moved around. No matter who the approving officer is, the engineer or the clerk, I firmly believe there should be a counterweight at other levels. I feel strongly about that," Stusiak said.

"My motion is not aimed at Parr. It's aimed at the approving officer," he said.

Parr was not available for comment.



Planner Tony Parr.



TAKES THE CAKE: Burnaby's Wildlife Rescue Association celebrated its first anniversary on the weekend, and some of its rescued feathered and furry friends were guests of honor. Above, Otus, an owl saved by the group, takes a lead on the anniversary cake being cut by association vice-president Joley Aldam, shortly before surprising everyone by hopping onto the cake. Photo by Craig Hodge

## Improved bus system carries hefty price tag

The Greater Vancouver transit system will require about \$167 million in capital improvements in the next five years to increase efficiency and prevent deterioration of service, the GVRD transportation committee was told Thursday.

The committee received staff reports outlining a conceptual plan and complete capital budget detailing the improvements which can or should be made in the next five years.

The suggested \$167 million in improvements does not include the additional expenditure of \$265 million to \$58 million for construction of light rapid transit, which will be considered by the regional board in September.

The reports note that while the bus system has not been significantly improved in the last five years, demand for transit has continued to grow.

Rush-hour bus travel is increasing at about four per cent a year, said GVRD transportation planner Doug Spaeth, noting that 24 per cent of travellers during rush-hours now use the bus system.

He said the fastest growth in peak period travel during the next five years will be across the Fraser River (eight to 10 per cent a year), while travel from the Coquitlam-Port Coquitlam-Port Moody area is expected to increase seven per cent a year.

To improve the efficiency of the system in the face of growing congestion,

By LORNE SMITH

more buses will have to be ordered and improvements made to take buses out of traffic jams and speed the general flow of traffic, he said.

If the bus system slows down by one per cent, annual operating costs will increase by \$1 million, with corresponding cost increases for additional slowdowns, he warned.

The regional board recently approved \$41 million in short term transit improvements contained in the capital budget, of which \$3.3 million in work has been authorized for this year.

Additional expenditures proposed in the complete budget released Thursday include \$57.7 million for the purchase of articulated diesel and trolley buses (which "bend in the middle"), \$18.2 million for new standard diesel buses and \$39.1 million for acquisition of rights-of-way along all planned light rapid transit routes.

The impact of the proposed capital improvements on regional taxes will not be known until later this week when a separate report is to be submitted to the committee, along with a proposed new fare policy.

In addition to LRT and the items included in the capital budget, another \$76 million to \$78 million in long range transit capital projects are being considered by the GVRD.

The long range shopping list includes \$35.5 million for construction of a commuter rail system to connect the northeast sector of the region to downtown Vancouver.

## Research park court challenge threatened

Burnaby council may become embroiled in another court battle, this time over the high technology research facility planned for the B.C. Institute of Technology.

Burnaby resident Clark Roberts, a Simon Fraser University field worker,

By LESLIE GILLET

said Monday he wants to challenge the Willingdon rezoning on the grounds that council violated the Municipal Act by approving a last-minute amendment to the rezoning application.

The amendment places the development under a development permit area which council feels will give the municipality greater control over both short and long-term construction and park uses.

Roberts said his appeal would be based on the fact that a public hearing into the rezoning was governed by the original bylaw, not by the amended procedure.

"What the people were presented with then is not what's becoming a reality now," he said. "It turns the whole public hearing procedure into a farce."

He said the challenge is intended to spark a moratorium on further development of the provincial government's high technology research park until more detailed information can be obtained on costs, types of research, and enforcement of safety standards.

Roberts said he has the support of a number of community groups in his efforts to slow research park development, but he refused to reveal their identities until he has had the opportunity to discuss the appeal with them.

He said opposition to the Willingdon rezoning is not directed against the concept of a research facility. "I'm well aware of the benefits involved. It's the possible dangers that I feel have not been pinpointed, nor do I feel that adequate safeguards have been set up."

Roberts said recent changes against a number of community groups dumping toxic wastes into the River show that enforcement of environmental controls are "inadequate".

"We are looking at a development (at Willingdon) three times B.C.V.T. and we haven't received information from them as to the overall impact it will have on the community," he said.

Roberts, who has successfully challenged a rezoning application for a development permit area which council feels will give the municipality greater control over both short and long-term construction and park uses.

Roberts said a decision of the appeal will be taken to be expected by the end of this week.



Mayor Dave Mercer.

## Strikers want public police

Leaders of the union striking the Canadian Kenworth truck manufacturing plant in Burnaby have asked the attorney-general's ministry to conduct a public inquiry into RCMP actions related to the strike.

Roger Crowther of the Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers said Thursday a meeting of the day before with Burnaby RCMP did not satisfy the union that the Mounties acted properly in dealing with the company's delivery of 23 new trucks from behind a union picket line to Edmonton on June 29.

Crowther said the trucks were driven from Burnaby to a weigh station just west of Hope before they were insured.

He said two of the vehicles were oversized without the necessary permits to be driven on a Sunday, and did not have necessary clearance lights.

"Either the RCMP are nincompoops or they conspired with the company to violate the laws of B.C. and to break a strike," Crowther said.

Sgt. Paul Starek of Burnaby RCMP said he assured the union that RCMP officers did not help move the trucks out of the plant, adding that

police in no way conspired with the company.

Starek said RCMP are investigating whether the issuance of a coverage retroactively can be cut.

He said RCMP officers responded to a report the trucks were oversized and the vehicles continue once established they were being used by the purchaser. Union members on strike at the plant in weeks.

## Father arrested after son shot

A 19-year-old Burnaby man taken to hospital and his father taken into custody following a family last Thursday afternoon.

Burnaby RCMP said Kentin Nordin received a single gunshot wound to his leg during a dispute at the family home at 7823-16th Ave. The man's father, 41-year-old Eldin Nordin is in police custody.