

TO: CITY MANAGER APRIL 26, 2000

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING OUR FILE: 08.230.3.5

SUBJECT: LAKE CITY STATION - GOVERNMENT ROAD PARENTS AND RESIDENTS DELEGATION

PURPOSE: To respond to issues raised by a delegation representing the Government Road Parents and Residents concerning safety and security issues related to the Lake City SkyTrain Station.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** staff be authorized to advertise and hold a public meeting with the Government Road community with the purpose of developing a mitigation plan to address safety and security issues related to the future Lake City Station on 2000 May 31 at Seaforth School.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to Mr. Mark Kaustinen, Mr. John Galbraith, Ms. Sonia Rosa, and Mr. R. Bruns of the Concerned Government Road Parents and Residents; Deborah Kerr, Principal, Seaforth School; Mr. Henry Kojima, Superintendent, Burnaby School District and Mr. Larry Ward, Vice-President, Planning and Service Contracts, TransLink .

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 2000 March 06, Council heard a delegation on behalf of the Concerned Government Road Parents and Residents outlining their concerns related to the development of the SkyTrain station at the north-west corner of Lake City Way and Lougheed Highway.

The delegation expressed its serious safety and security concerns about the location of the SkyTrain station in relation to the existing Seaforth elementary school and the wooded area at Charles Rummel Park.

Arising out of the discussion, Council requested that staff prepare a report on the issues raised that also included an outline of the process to be used in meeting with the residents. As well, Council requested that staff consult with TransLink, the School District and law enforcement agencies with respect to any difficulties encountered by schools located close to SkyTrain stations and any actions to ameliorate problems.

This report responds to the request made by Council.

2.0 THE LAKE CITY STATION

Under the Agreement between the City of Burnaby, TransLink and Rapid Transit 2000 Ltd., the Lake City Station will be built and operational by January 01, 2004. This station is one of two stations being provided to service the Lake City Business Centre. The location of the station in the context of the Business Centre area and the surrounding area is shown on the *attached Figure 1*.

2.1 Neighbourhood Context

The Lake City Station is to be situated on the north side of the Lougheed Highway and immediately west of Lake City Way. Under the terms of the Agreement with TransLink and the RTP 2000 Ltd, the intersection of Lake City Way and Lougheed Highway is to be improved to a signalized three way "T" intersection. This road work is to be done as a first phase item in advance of the work associated with the station itself. No pedestrian grade separation crossing is proposed for the Lougheed Highway. Pedestrians would use the signalized intersection to cross the highway.

On the south side of the Lougheed Highway is the Government Road single family residential area. No change to this land use is proposed within the Official Community Plan for Burnaby. Immediately across from the station is Charles Rummel Park which has been dedicated for permanent park use. Included in this 25.3 acre park area is the Parks Department's nursery operations which takes access through a driveway from Lougheed Highway. Immediately south of the park area is Seaforth Elementary School.

3.0 REVIEW OF OTHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN PROXIMITY TO SKYTRAIN

The key issue raised by the delegation to Council at the 2000 March 06 meeting was the potential impact of SkyTrain on their community, with specific mention of the impact of the future Lake City Station on Seaforth School. Staff have contacted TransLink, law enforcement agencies and school district officials in Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster

and Surrey regarding their views on the relationship between SkyTrain and crime generally, and the impacts of SkyTrain on elementary schools located near SkyTrain stations specifically.

There are nine elementary schools located within one-half a kilometer of existing SkyTrain stations. Of these, four are located in Vancouver; two in Burnaby (Stride and Maywood); two in New Westminster and one in Surrey. Land uses surrounding the various schools are diverse ranging from a relatively urbanized town centre environment at Maywood Community School to a more suburban context at Connaught Heights Elementary School in New Westminster. Clearly, Seaforth School is more aligned with the suburban, low density residential context.

While recognizing that the review undertaken was “unscientific” and that care has to be taken in generalizing, there are some key observations as follows:

- perceived impacts vary from school to school, with density and land use around stations, the presence of natural or man-made barriers (e.g. highways or major arterials), social and demographic characteristics of communities and distance from stations being variables;
- schools in higher density or busier locations such as Broadway or Metrotown reported the greatest degree of concern, while lower density or less busy areas (e.g. Nanaimo, 29th, 22nd Stations and Edmonds) reported relatively fewer negative impacts; TransLink has indicated greater problems at stations where there are bus loops.
- with the exception of two “inner city” schools, problems of strangers entering into the grounds were not reported. Some incidents of people using the school area on weekends and evenings were noted, however, it was not known whether those people were from the area or were “outsiders” who had arrived by SkyTrain; criminal behavior already present in adjacent neighbourhoods is often mirrored at the stations;
- with respect to Stride Elementary School which is the closest comparable situation to Seaforth School in Burnaby, the RCMP have reported that they are not aware of any SkyTrain related impacts on the school. It is their view that the children do not frequent the station and people do not use SkyTrain to loiter around the school. If this did occur it would be reported to them. It is their additional view that the separation of the station from the school by 19th Avenue (an arterial roadway) plays a role in the absence of interaction between the school and the station. The principal of the school also indicated that there has not been a history of problems at the school emanating from the Edmonds Station;

- several of the school contacts cited two positive impacts of SkyTrain: 1) providing a convenient and efficient system for taking children on field trips (e.g. Science World) and, 2) providing transportation for school staff. While convenient, several school contacts felt that the cost of fares can pose a financial barrier. As a way to overcome this and improve community support for the system, it has been suggested that TransLink should consider waiving fares for children using the system on escorted field trips.
- a review of SkyTrain station crime rates for 1998 shows that the rate of crime varies greatly across stations and is generally unrelated to the number of people using the trains. These differences can be accounted for by the view that the associated crimes pre-existing at the station locations affects the subsequent crime rate.
- TransLink has made a submission to the Attorney General concerning the establishment of an appropriate law enforcement unit for SkyTrain recognizing that the present security arrangements are in need of improvement. A series of options is currently under review by the Attorney General.

The following general observations can be made with reference to SkyTrain as it relates to the Government Road area and Seaforth School:

- while it is not possible to guarantee (as is currently the case) that no negative impacts will occur in the area, Lake City and the Government Road residential area are not “hot spots” for crime suggesting that their existing and proposed land uses should not attract potential criminals (or other “outsiders”) to frequent the area;
- the Lake City Station is to be located on the north side of the Lougheed Highway, which will be a barrier to pedestrian traffic. As a result, it is considered very unlikely that there will be casual crossings into the neighbourhood;
- in discussions with TransLink, it is their opinion that Lake City Station will likely be relatively crime free because of its low off-peak volumes, the absence of nearby drinking establishments and the proximity of a well established, stable single-family neighbourhood to the south of the Lougheed Highway.

4.0 POSSIBLE APPROACHES

From the general review undertaken, it is apparent that there is not a direct correlation between incidence of crime and the location of SkyTrain stations. It is more often that there is a relationship to existing crime patterns and activities that pre-exist in an area.

To a large extent, the approach to mitigate the residents' concerns about the potential for unwelcome visitors entering the neighbourhood from the Lake City Station lies in the degree of access to the station desired by the community. If on the one hand, the neighbourhood would rather forego convenient access to the Station in deference to the highest degree of isolation, then it could be possible to construct a fence along the south side of the Lougheed Highway across the Charles Rummel Park frontage. Some provision for continued vehicular access to the nursery would have to be accommodated. This alternative would rule out residents from the area gaining pedestrian access to the station thereby negating this benefit of a station across the Lougheed Highway but within walking distance of the neighbourhood.

If on the other hand, one were to leave access open for the neighbourhood to gain direct access to the station, then a series of different actions could be considered. These could include:

- improvement of the informal trails extending through the park to the Lake City Way/Lougheed Highway intersection including pedestrian lighting;
- construction of a modest fence around the perimeter of Seaforth School as a statement that persons not on school business are not welcome within the grounds of the school;
- treatment of the nursery access road to Piper Avenue to ensure that general traffic did not use this route as a pick up and drop off area for SkyTrain passengers and could not use Piper as a shortcut to and from Lougheed Highway;
- the establishment of a school and neighbourhood liaison connection to the Designated Police Unit that is under consideration for the SkyTrain line.

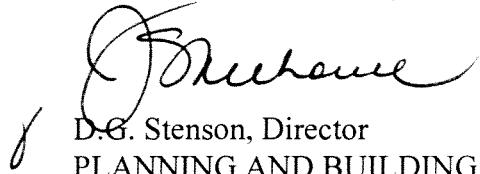
5.0 RECOMMENDED MEETING PROCESS


It is recommended that a public meeting be held at Seaforth School in order for the community to attend and provide comments and suggestions as to the mitigative approaches that could be employed. Preliminary arrangements have been made to have the meeting on the evening of May 31.

Staff intend to prepare a brochure for distribution in the neighbourhood advising of the meeting and providing some background information. Included in the brochure would be an invitation for representatives of the neighbourhood including residents and members of the school community to volunteer to serve on a working group that will help staff refine the appropriate mitigation approach(es). It is proposed that this working group should comprise about 6 to 8 members and represent a cross section of the neighbourhood as well as representation from the School District and the Parks and Recreation Department.

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Following completion of the recommended approach(es), the information would be reviewed by Council and the community. This would subsequently be adjusted as required and forwarded to Council for approval.


D.G. Stenson, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

 JSB/ma
Attachment

cc: Director Engineering
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

