Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – January 18, 2012

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Item No. 3 Review of the Assiniboine Active Transportation Bikeway

WINNIPEG PUBLIC SERVICE RECOMMENDATION:

That the Executive Policy Committee, in its capacity as the Audit Committee, recommend to Council that the Review of the Assiniboine Active Transportation Bikeway report dated September 2011, be received as information.

Audit Department Report
Review of the Assiniboine Active Transportation Bikeway – September 2011

A Review of the Assiniboine Active Transportation Bikeway was initiated by Audit Department as a result of a complaint from a citizen alleging a consultant failed to comply with the terms and conditions of the associated contract.

Scope of Review

The Audit Department completed a limited scope review of Request for Proposal (RFP) No. 120-2009 – Traffic Impact Study, Community Profile and Community Facilitation. The review focused on three specific areas:

(1) To review the City's involvement in active transportation (to provide background),
(2) To assess the compliance of the consultant to the terms and conditions of the RFP, and
(3) To evaluate the public consultation processes employed to engage the public prior to the design and construction of the Assiniboine Active Transportation bikeway.

Key Observations

The topic of "Active Transportation" has been a priority issue for City Council for several years. On January 25, 2006, Council approved the *Active Transportation Study* to serve as a resource in formulating future active transportation policies and programs for the City. Subsequently, on April 25, 2007, Council adopted the *Active Transportation Study Implementation Plan* which resulted in the recruitment of an Active Transportation coordinator and formation of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee. The Assiniboine bikeway was included in the *2008 Active Transportation Action Plan Report,* although actual construction did not proceed until 2010 due, in part, to a lack of resources.

We believe the RFP process was executed fairly and in compliance with City's Material Management Administrative Standard. The bidder's submission met the key requirements of the RFP and successfully communicated their ability to conduct the required work. The submission identified a large project team with a diverse skill set to enable completion of the project in the desired time frame. Once the consultant was engaged, we believe they met the terms and conditions as specified within the contract based on our limited review of the work they conducted; however, we did identify issues in the public consultation process.

The first phase of the public consultation required the development of a Community Profile. We reviewed a listing of groups, businesses, organizations or individuals that were contacted directly via phone or email and noted the absence of a lack of identification of local business owners. In the public consultation process we noted that while local businesses were contacted via "ad mail" they were not directly targeted by the consultant team. The lead consultant advised that the inclusion of the business associations was viewed as avenue to streamline the process and to communicate with the individual businesses. A shortfall was the lack of a formal agreement with the business associations to ensure that there was a common understanding of the proposed role they were to play in communicating information to their membership. As local businesses may have been impacted either during the construction phase or by the resultant changes to the traffic corridors under consideration their feedback would be an important contribution to the process. Attendance at the Master Meeting and Open House was considered low and the omission of local businesses in the development of the community profile was a gap that may have contributed to the lower level of involvement.

The Master Meeting brought stakeholders together from all neighborhood routes for a presentation on the benefits of active transportation. Breakout sessions then followed to present options for each potential bikeway and solicit feedback. Options were to be evaluated on the following criteria: technically sound; reflect the needs of the community and City in general; cost-effective; environmentally responsible and safe; and is generally understood and accepted by most of those affected. The options presented differed significantly in regards to impacts on traffic, businesses and residents and also on the degree of construction work required to implement. The absence of a cost figure minimized the ability for the public to provide meaningful commentary. The participant's evaluation of options may have been altered if the reasonable estimates of the cost of each option had been presented.

The consultant team used various media to communicate with the public including flyers, Canada Post mail outs, print and radio communications and updates on the website. We noted that the public notifications contained very limited commentary to suggest there could be any impact to vehicular traffic or parking. The inclusion of the term "traffic calming", which is not defined, in the notification does not necessarily suggest that roads may be closed, traffic directionality changed or parking impacted. By excluding the full potential impact that the active transportation route could have on vehicle traffic, businesses and residents, the interest to participate in the process was limited to those most interested in active transportation.

Beginning in April 2010, additional concerns were raised regarding the selected option for the Assiniboine bikeway. We also reviewed the follow-up communication with the public once construction has been initiated. In July 2010, a letter was issued to all area residents and businesses regarding the changes to the Assiniboine bikeway. This letter accurately described the proposed changes to traffic flow, the timing for construction and provided a detailed traffic flow diagram. The final constructed design is virtually identical to the August 2009 design originally communicated to the public. The final design was communicated to the public through advertisements in the Winnipeg Free Press in December 2010.

Policy

The report is submitted in accordance with the City Organization By-law 7100/97 section 19(d)(iv) that the Audit Committee will "Receive and review audit reports, and table such reports with its recommendations at a regular meeting of Executive Policy Committee".

Recommendation:

That the Executive Policy Committee, in its capacity as the Audit Committee, recommend to Council that the Review of the Assiniboine Active Transportation Bikeway report dated September 2011, be received as information.

Attachment

Review of
Assiniboine Active Tra

Report Written By B. Mansky Approved by B.Whiteside October 20 , 2011