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Lakeview called safe from dozers

By RICK BELL, CALGARY SUN

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Cheer up Lakeview.

Luke doesn't want to huff and puff and blow hundreds upon hundreds of your houses down just to get a Plan B solution to replace a fast southwest ring road.

"I don't think taking out 700 houses is acceptable," says Luke Ouellette, the province's poobah of pavement, who is not the sort to express what he has to express with a lot of 10-dollar words.

"We have to find a better solution."

Of course, the better solution doesn't mean he won't go down 37 St. S.W.

In some scenarios, it could be far fewer than 700 houses biting the bulldozer if the province were to lower the speed limit on the southwest stretch from the standard ring road speed of 110 km. an hour.

The lower the speed, the fewer houses facing the taste of the bulldozer.

Earlier in the year Luke told this page he wasn't stuck on 110 km. The transportation minister said he wanted "the least invasion" of people's lives.

Still, there's the problem of going over the Weaselhead.

Luke says the "preliminary outlook" shows, when it comes to such a brainwave, "the prices are going to be out of this world." And when you go south on 37 St., without access to the Tsuu T'ina, there sits the Weaselhead. But he hasn't ruled out a bridge going over the area.

Meanwhile, Luke is well aware the southwest community of Lakeview have been in full fear and loathing mode, with the locals saying, a couple months back, how 500 to 700 houses could face destruction.

They wanted answers.

There were accusations the province was "cooking something up."

Luke replies they are "jumping the gun."

The earliest we will see a Plan B is Stampede next year. It could be the fall of 2011. What he says for sure is he doesn't want a demolition derby down in the southwest.

He again insists 700 houses are not on Death Row.

Bronco wanted to avoid 37 St. and the community hassles, Mother Earth hassles and hassles over houses.

He proposed the province do the west ring road from Hwy. 1 to Hwy. 8 at around Discovery Ridge and upgrade Hwy. 8/Glenmore, including interchanges, to an interchange at 37 St. and Glenmore. The mayor believes it would sort out the vast majority of today's headaches.

But Bronco is leaving and everything is in play.

Once again, Luke says he's not picking up the phone and calling the Tsuu T'ina but he is "willing to listen" if they dial his number: 1-780-427-2080.

"I've heard now it wasn't so much the deal that was turned down it's a clarification of some items in the deal."

The Tsuu T'ina route was the only ring-road route and they voted it down. Is that a light flickering or a damn mirage?

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart is from the southwest. She knows this file up, down and sideways and sounds like she's had enough.

She wants people to stop calling the 37 St. option a ring road. It isn't a ring road. It will never be a ring road. There was a ring road plan on the table with more lanes than some aldermen can count but it is no more.

Grieve and move on.

Diane backs the mayor's plan to improve Hwy. 8/Glenmore Tr. but she also wants a widened connector route down 37 St., a move she says will have "minimal impact" on the Lakeview community imagining its own apocalypse.

She adds it's time to get on with building a bridge over the Weaselhead.

"We have to go down 37 St. It is a connector. It is not a ring road. That deal died on the vine," he says.

"No more talk. We know what we need to do."

Will her Plan B solve any and all of the traffic woes?

"That's all we have," says Diane. "There is no ring road."

Right now, it sounds like Luke wants to calm some folks down in the southwest, as he refers once again to all the talk of levelling properties.

"They don't know if we're considering it. We don't even know if we're considering it."

Told you he didn't use ten-dollar words.

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