



Tuesday » January
16 » 2007

Aldermen call for ring-road option review

Study would look at alternatives to crossing reserve

Kim Guttormson

Calgary Herald

Tuesday, January 16, 2007

The city needs a detailed review of its options for the southwest portion of the ring road, including a cost estimate of running it down 37th Street and below or above the Weaselhead, some aldermen say.

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart, whose ward hugs the bottom portion of the proposed roadway, plans to introduce a motion asking city staff to explore alternatives to building the road across Tsuu T'ina land.

"I don't believe for a minute we should wait any longer without putting an option on the table for the province to consider," she said. "Not wait and wait and waste another year to see the outcome."

"Have that piece ready."

Colley-Urquhart is still talking to administration about how much such a study would cost, but initial estimates peg it at about \$1 million.

Ald. Madeleine King said a cost estimate of an alternate would be beneficial.

"Then it will enable the province to weigh the cost," she said. "We're getting to the point where we need (the road) so much, if there's a delay on the decision which route to go on, it could have a negative impact."

The preferred route for the 20-kilometre southwest portion of the road is across Tsuu T'ina land, because of the impact other options would have on neighbouring Lakeview.

Talks between the province and the Tsuu T'ina have been ongoing for years.

While it's been determined what land would be needed, both sides still have to work out a price. An appraiser's report is expected this month, but will be the basis for further negotiations.

The band has said it hopes to take a deal to its members this summer.

Ald. Barry Erskine plans to hold an open house in early February to discuss a plan -- including cost assessment -- to run the road through a tunnel under the Weaselhead. Erskine said it could be done at a "reasonable price."

Alex Broda, the city's director of transportation planning, said that while some concept work has been done on alternatives to the Tsuu T'ina plan, crossing the Weaselhead and the effect that running the road down 37th Street would have on Lakeview hasn't been costed out.

"One of the challenges we have is when you put a cost together, in this kind of

economy, those costs are out of date so quickly," he said. "We're in the hundreds of millions no matter what happens."

Broda said it's likely a tunnel would be more expensive than a bridge over the Weaselhead, should that be the eventual option, because it would require going under a waterway.

As well, since it would have to be fully enclosed, it would need more material than a bridge.

Ald. Craig Burrows, who represents residents northwest of the proposed road, said the city shouldn't begin detailed plans until what is or isn't happening with the Tsuu T'ina land is finalized.

"We hope the Tsuu T'ina want to work on a win-win," he said. "And if that's the case, it's good for everyone.

"There will come a point when we're going to say if we can't have a deal, we'll move on to our own thing, and if that was the case I'd fully support it."

Burrows said that while he would prefer a bridge over the Weaselhead, the ultimate determining factor for him would be cost.

Colley-Urquhart said costing out a backup plan before it's known whether it would be needed is simply due diligence.

"I believe on a concurrent basis we need to be developing a plan that looks at alternatives," she said.

kguttormson@theherald.canwest.com

© The Calgary Herald 2007

CLOSE WINDOW

Copyright © 2007 CanWest Interactive, a division of [CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.](#) All rights reserved.