City of Burnaby

Meeting 2020 Sept 29

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	**DATE:**	2020 Sept 23
FROM:	DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING	**FILE:** *Reference:*	94000 20 *Stormont-McBride*

SUBJECT: STORMONT-MCBRIDE CONNECTOR

PURPOSE: To provide the Committee with an update on the Stormont-McBride Connector.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the Committee receive this report for information.

2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to N. Davidowicz.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On 2020 May 26, the Planning and Development Committee received an email from N. Davidowicz expressing concern that the new Pattullo Bridge would increase traffic in Burnaby, and the solution proposed by the writer was to construct the Stormont-McBride Connector, extending New Westminster's McBride Boulevard northward in Burnaby to the Trans-Canada Highway's Gaglardi interchange. ***Figure 1*** shows the relative positions of the existing Pattullo Bridge and the proposed Stormont-McBride Connector.

Staff advised the Committee that the Stormont-McBride Connector was not included in the proposals for the new *Burnaby Transportation Plan* that Council, on 2020 February 10, had approved in principle as a basis for public consultation. Arising from the Committee's discussion, staff were directed to provide background on the recommendation to omit the Stormont-McBride Connector from the proposals for the new *Burnaby Transportation Plan*. That is the purpose of this report.

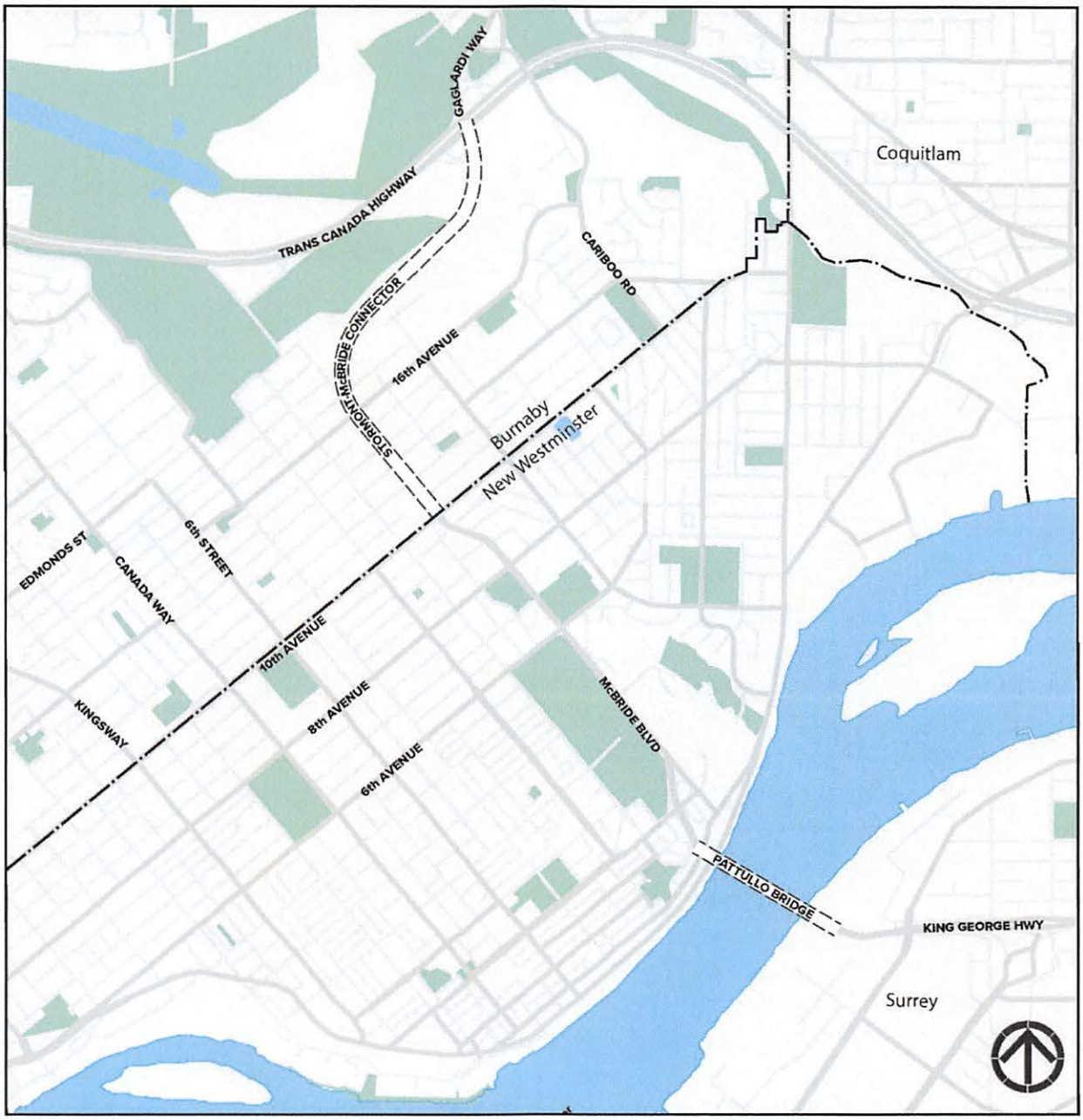
2.0 POLICY SECTION

This report aligns with the following goals and sub-goals of the *Corporate Strategic Plan*:

- A Safe Community
  - Transportation safety – make City streets, pathways, trails and sidewalks safer

- A Connected Community
  - Geographic connection – ensure that people can move easily through all areas of Burnaby, using any form of transportation

Figure 1: Locations of Pattullo Bridge and Proposed Stormont-McBride Connector



- A Healthy Community
  - Healthy environment – enhance our environmental health, resilience and sustainability

- A Thriving Organization
  - Financial viability – maintain a financially sustainable City for the provision, renewal and enhancement of City services, facilities and assets

3.0 PATTULLO BRIDGE

The need to replace the aging Pattullo Bridge, operating since 1937, has been evident for some time. "It is vulnerable to seismic events and high winds, marine collisions and river scour. The bridge does not meet current roadway design guidelines, including lane widths and road curvatures."[1] For over a decade, the replacement initiative was led by TransLink, the bridge's owner.

In 2014, TransLink's *Regional Transportation Investments – a Vision for Metro Vancouver* (commonly referred to as the *Mayors' Vision*) stated that the new structure would have four lanes. The design would "not foreclose the possibility of future expansion to six lanes" but any such expansion "would require all-party agreement and Mayors' Council approval."

In 2018, the Province announced replacement of the bridge was now a provincial initiative, and the Province would own the new structure. "The new bridge will be four lanes that will be built to modern safety standards, featuring a centre safety median barrier and wider lanes to accommodate both passenger and commercial vehicles. The bridge will also have walking and cycling lanes, separated from traffic, on both sides of the bridge."[2] The new structure would be located a short distance upstream (northeast of) the existing one. As with TransLink's plan, the new bridge would be designed to accommodate potential future widening to six lanes.

Design and construction will take place from late 2019 to the end of 2023, after which the existing structure will be demolished[3].

The project includes changes to the connections at either end of the bridge for all modes. However, the basic shape of the proposed interchange in New Westminster is quite similar to the existing one. The Province is not proposing to toll the new bridge.

Unlike other regional bridge projects such as Golden Ears or Port Mann, the primary objective for the Pattullo Bridge replacement is not to provide increased capacity. It is to replace an aging structure with one that meets current standards. The new bridge will have the same number of lanes as the existing one. However, those lanes will be slightly wider, to meet current roadway design standards. Aside from the safety benefits, this will mean that trucks will be able to remain in a single lane rather than straddling two. This, in turn, will slightly increase the bridge's capacity. The Province has forecast[4] daily traffic volumes of 78,000 on opening day, rising to 85,000 by 2045. These are increases of 1% and 10%, respectively, over the 77,000 trips at which bridge volumes had previously peaked.

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[1] Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure; *Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project – Business Case*; 2018 January.
[2] British Columbia; *Pattullo Bridge replacement will improve safety and create jobs* (press release); 2018 February 16.
[3] BC Transportation Investment Corporation; *Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project – Spring 2020 Project Overview*; 2020 May 22.
[4] Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure; *Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project – Strategic Options Analysis*; 2018 January.

However, bridge traffic destined to / from Burnaby relies on McBride Boulevard between the bridge and 10th Avenue. This road will remain a four-lane road[5], the capacity of which will be controlled by existing signals at 6th, 8th, and 10th Avenues. For this reason, any change to traffic volumes on 10th Avenue (and further into Burnaby) are expected to be minimal.

4.0 STORMONT-MCBRIDE CONNECTOR

The Stormont-McBride Connector was shown in Burnaby's first transportation plan in 1979, and the second one in 1995. The proposed alignment is shown in ***Figure 2***. South of 18th Avenue, the Connector would be constructed in a cut-and-cover tunnel beneath Newcombe Street. Since the early 1980s, the City has been acquiring residential properties along the east side of Newcombe Street to facilitate this proposed construction since the existing road allowance is not wide enough.

North of 18th Avenue, the Connector would run on the surface to the Gaglardi interchange, which was designed to accommodate this connection if needed. As shown in ***Figure 3***, this area is currently forested, largely undisturbed for over a hundred years[6]. The route is crossed by one tributary of Osprey Creek and multiple tributaries of Cedar and Coldicutt Creeks as they flow towards Burnaby Lake. About half the tributaries impacted by the alignment are Class "A" watercourses, with the rest being Class "B". The area is also popular for its walking trails.

Due to its regional function and high cost of the project, it has been Burnaby's position that the project would need to be constructed by either TransLink or the Province. To date, neither organization has shown interest in doing so. The project has never been included in TransLink's long-term strategy. The Province declined to include the Connector in the Port Mann / Highway 1 project, and has shown no other interest in the Connector.

5.0 BURNABY TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Burnaby's original 1979 transportation plan was almost entirely a "roads" plan, with minor consideration for transit and none for active modes. The 1995 plan sought a "balanced" approach with a larger role for transit and the introduction of active modes. The focus was on "efficient" movement of vehicles and goods.

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[5] City of New Westminster; *New Westminster Master Transportation Plan*; 2015 May.
[6] Based on historical ortho-photography.

Figure 2: Alignment of Proposed Stormont-McBride Connector

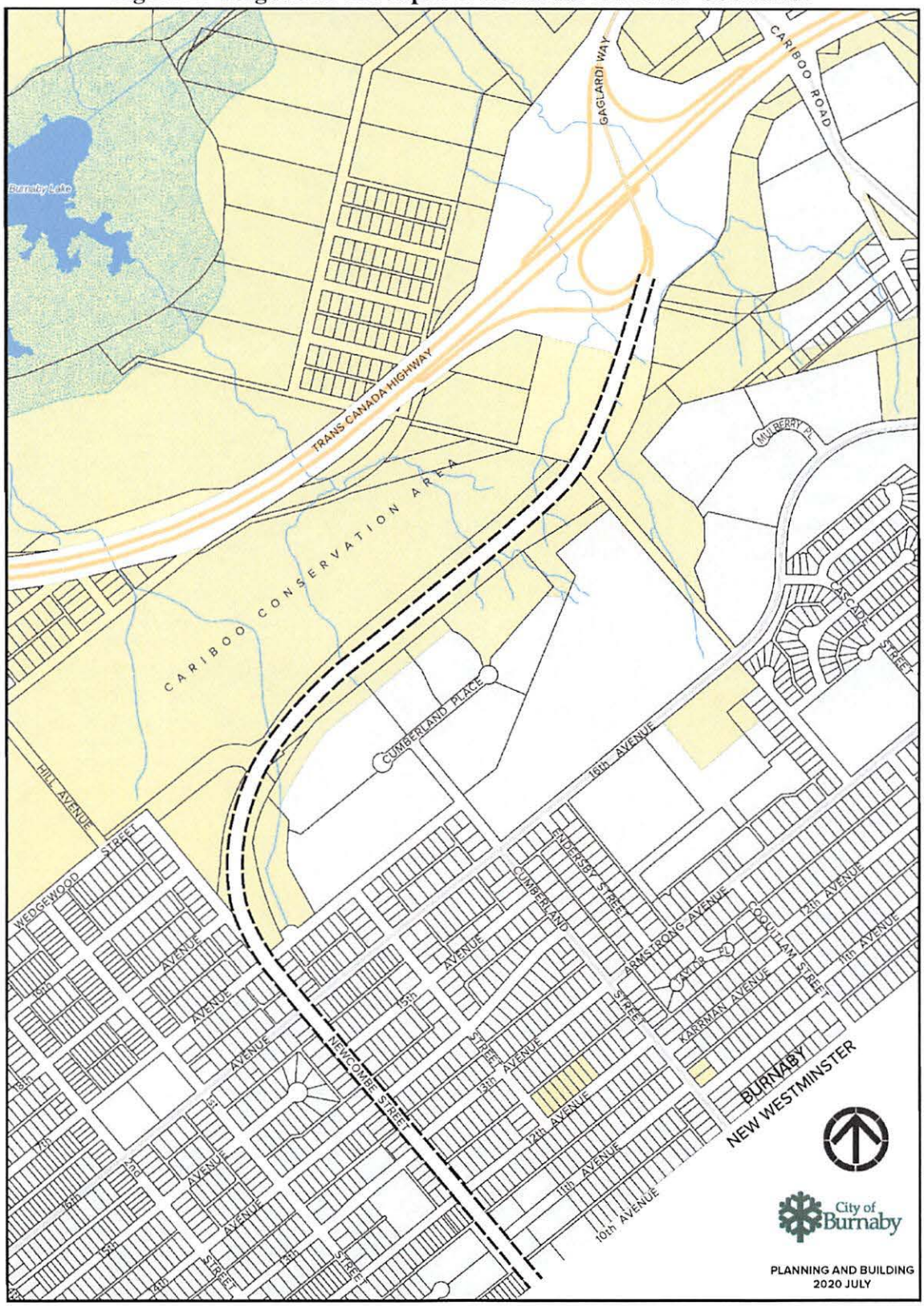


Figure 3: Existing Conditions



On 2018 February 27, Council adopted the Vision, Themes, and Goals for the third edition of the *Burnaby Transportation Plan*. This continues the trend of expanding how we view transportation in our community. The adopted Vision is:

> *In Burnaby, all travel choices are enjoyable and the transportation system is the foundation of our thriving public spaces and our quality of life. The transportation system not only moves people and goods between destinations but provides places for people to meet and participate in city life. It is a balanced and inclusive system that offers accessible and safe mobility in support of a healthy, green, prosperous, and connected community.*

The focus is no longer on mobility for its own sake, but on how transportation can help or hinder our progress on larger improvements to the community. Specific Goals were identified under six Themes: accessible, safe, healthy, green, prosperous, and connected.

On 2020 February 10, Council endorsed the draft Big Moves, Targets, Policies, and Networks as a basis for public consultation for Phase 2 of the new *Transportation Plan*. That consultation is now underway.

The intended direction of the new *Plan* is given added clarity by the draft Targets[7]:

- zero deaths or serious injuries on Burnaby's transportation network;
- three-quarters of all trips originating in Burnaby will be by transit or active transportation in 2050; and,
- zero emissions from transportation in 2050.

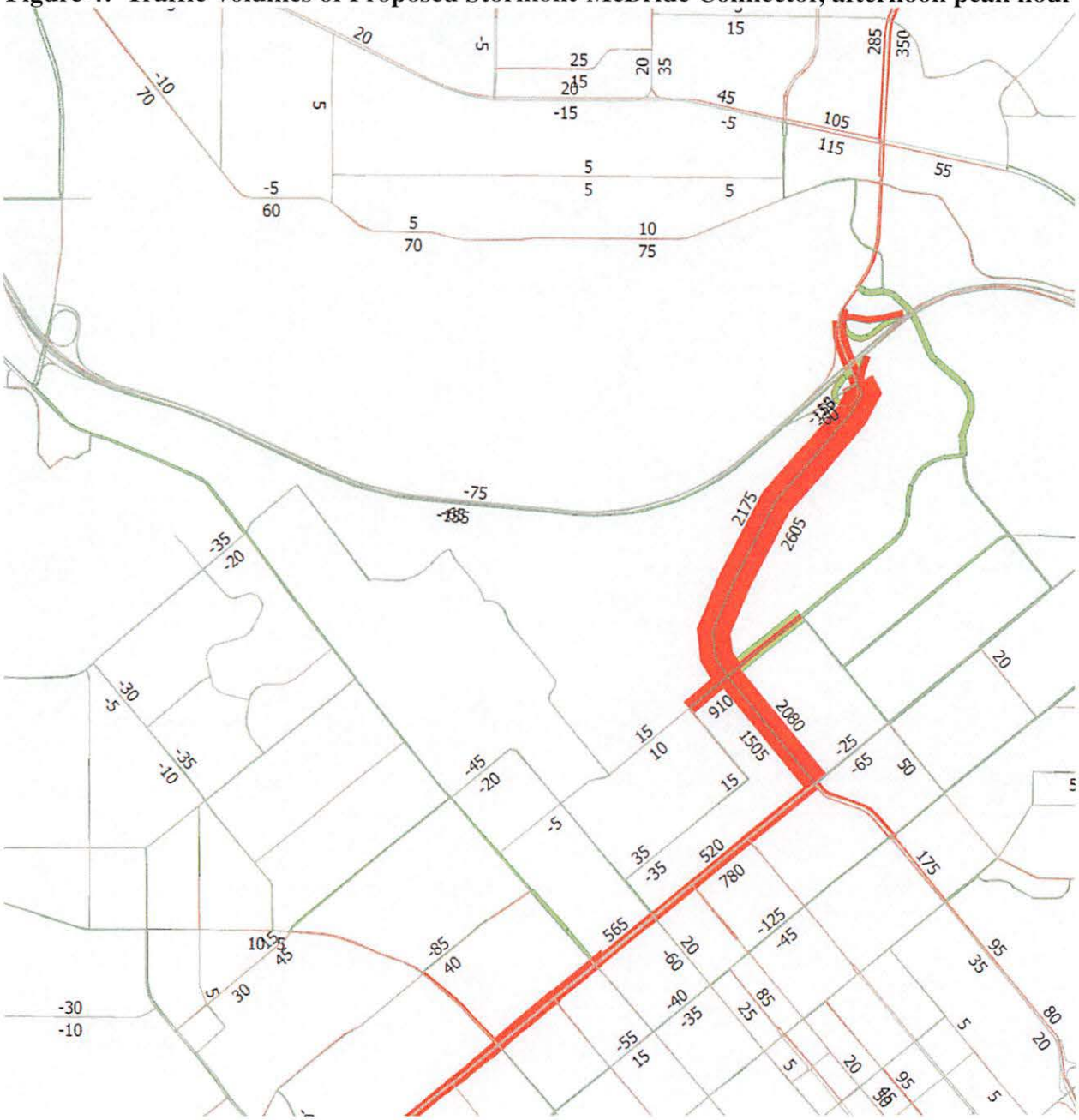
In keeping with the Vision and Targets, the current proposals for the *Plan* strengthen the walking, cycling, and transit networks. In contrast, proposed changes to the existing road network are much more limited. Only a handful of road widening or new roads are proposed, and these are typically targeted for specific purposes such as supporting the focus of new development into our Town Centres and Urban Villages.

The inclusion or exclusion of specific road projects from the proposals for the new *Transportation Plan* was based on transportation modelling, an evaluation of positive and negative impacts of the changes, and on discussions among City staff. With regards to the Stormont-McBride Connector if constructed, the analysis found that:

- the project would be an incentive for more driving, increasing vehicle-kilometres travelled;
- as a result, it would also produce more crashes and emissions;
- trips by transit and active transportation would be reduced because driving would be made more attractive;
- the predicted impacts on traffic volumes in the afternoon peak hour are illustrated in ***Figure 4***, where red indicates an increase and green a decrease. Alternative routes such as Canada Way and Cariboo Road are not expected to see a significant reduction in traffic. The primary impact is forecast to be creation of a stronger link between Marine Way and Highway 1, and onward to Coquitlam, with increased volumes on 10th Avenue. Rather than providing local relief, the Connector would draw in more regional traffic. (The figure also shows a slight volume reduction on Cariboo Road near Highway 1. This is only because the consultant's modelling of the Connector included an interchange at 16th Avenue, which was not included in any plans as it would be highly disruptive to the neighbourhood.);
- there would be impacts to the forest and watercourses where the road would traverse lands that have not been disturbed in over a century. The existing recreational uses would be eliminated; and,
- the project would be extremely expensive, due to the need to construct a tunnel for 800 metres under Newcombe Street.

[7] Only the long-term targets are shown here. There are also interim targets for 2030 and 2040.

Figure 4: Traffic Volumes of Proposed Stormont-McBride Connector, afternoon peak hour



6.0 RECOMMENDATION

This report responds to the Committee's interest in the Pattullo Bridge replacement, the new *Burnaby Transportation Plan*, and the previously-proposed Stormont-McBride Connector. Construction of a new Pattullo Bridge will result in modest increases in daily traffic volumes on the bridge, but impacts on Burnaby roads are anticipated to be minimal. Analysis has shown that the Connector would be counter to Council's position on climate change, would promote increased driving on Burnaby streets, and would have significant local impacts on the forest, watercourses, and recreation opportunities. It is thus contrary to the Vision, Goals, and draft Targets for the new

Transportation Plan. For these reasons, the Stormont-McBride Connector was not included in the proposals for Phase 2 of the *Plan* that Council endorsed on 2020 February 10 for public consultation.

It is recommended that the Committee receive this report for information and that a copy of this report be forwarded to N. Davidowicz.

E.W. Kozak, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

SR:tn

cc: City Manager
Director Engineering

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