

Riverbend Community League Board Position on City of Edmonton Terwillegar Drive North Segment Proposals

February 2018

Riverbend Community League (RCL) Board reviewed the information presented at the City of Edmonton Terwillegar Drive Concept Plan Update sessions and discussed the two Terwillegar Drive 'North Segment' options at its February 5th Board meeting. The Board passed a motion to provide formally endorse 'North Segment Option A' which would continue to provide access to and from Terwillegar Drive/Whitemud Drive at 40th Avenue/Bulyea Road. The Board rejected 'North Segment Option B' which would completely eliminate that access. In addition the RCL Board has met with Councillor Cartmell, is providing a formal letter of response to the City, and is posting its position.

The issues created by eliminating access to and from 40th Avenue/Bulyea Road with 'Option B' can be broken down into three primary areas: impact on community residents and infrastructure, and impact on other busy roadways.

Impact on Community Residents

The negative impact of 'Option B' on community residents would be that approximately 8,200 people in 3,000 households in Rhatigan Ridge, Ramsay Heights and Bulyea Heights would lose the existing main access point to and from their homes and would have to double back, when coming from the north on Terwillegar Drive. The added distance, travel time and significantly increased traffic loads in both directions on Rabbit Hill Road, 53rd Avenue and Riverbend Road would have negative impacts on residents in these neighborhoods.

Impact of Community Infrastructure

The negative impact of 'Option B' on community infrastructure would be the elimination of primary access to three Elementary Schools, five Pre-Schools, four Churches, two Community League buildings, and two community shopping centres with neighborhood amenities such as gas stations, restaurants, Dentists, a Veterinarian and other well utilized community services. Additionally, access to multiple community sports fields used extensively by local children's sports leagues would be affected.

Impact on Other Busy Roadways

The other negative impact of 'Option B' would be to add significant traffic volumes on other busy community roadways. Presently, 9,200 cars/day (2015 City data) enter 40th Avenue from Terwillegar Drive and this additional traffic would have to be shared by Rabbit Hill Road, 53rd Avenue and Riverbend Road. We have assumed that two thirds of this would go to Rabbit Hill Road and one third would go to 53rd Avenue. The impact on these roadways is discussed below.

Rabbit Hill Road

Rabbit Hill Road would be dramatically affected due to higher traffic volumes. Estimated increases are 36% west of Terwillegar Drive (to 23,233 cars/day), and 47% east of Terwillegar Drive (to 24,900 cars/day). These volumes are comparable to Jasper Avenue and Whyte Avenue traffic levels. Free traffic flow on Rabbit Hill Road west of Terwillegar Drive is already challenging because of multiple access points to Riverbend Square, seniors housing, other roadways and several well used crosswalks. Rabbit Hill Road already experiences significant rush hour traffic congestion and is challenging to enter from the neighborhoods of Rhatigan Ridge, Falconer Heights, Carter Crest, Bulyea Heights and Ogilvie Ridge.

53rd Avenue

53rd Avenue is currently significantly overloaded at rush hour periods and is an existing 30 km/hr zone. It has the only vehicle access to an Elementary School, a Junior High School, Community League tennis and pickleball courts, and a community garden, and also has three access points to existing residential complexes. Additionally, both school crosswalks are significantly used by parents and students due to limited parking and school access. For all of these reasons, 53rd Avenue is not free flowing or designed for high volumes of traffic, which we estimate would rise by 21% to 17,667 cars/day.

Riverbend Road

Riverbend Road between Rabbit Hill Road and 53rd Avenue would see existing traffic volumes increase by an estimated 56% (to 17,033 cars/day) just north of Rabbit Hill Road, and by an estimated 23% (to 16,367 cars/day) just south of 53rd Avenue. Stretches of Riverbend Road adjacent to Rhatigan Road (both East and West) and 53rd Avenue currently experience gridlock between 7:45 am and 8:45 am every week day, and higher traffic loads would only make this worse.

Summary

To summarize, it is the position of Riverbend Community League that the 40th Avenue/Bulyea Road interchange represented by 'North Segment Option A' would allow thousands of residents to continue to access their homes, schools and amenities, and would avoid the impact of extra traffic on surrounding communities. Both Rabbit Hill Road and 53rd Avenue have significant existing free flow traffic limitations due to their current design and proximal facilities and are already over capacity at peak periods. Riverbend Road experiences daily gridlock and would be challenged to accept significantly higher traffic loads. All of these existing problems would be made significantly worse by 'North Segment Option B'.

Riverbend Community League supports resident feedback to our Councillor, Mayor and City officials on this and other issues. It is important that dialogue is respectful and constructive.

Councillor Cartmell Position

Ward 9 Councillor Tim Cartmell has engaged with many community members on this issue, as well as with RCL Board representatives. Councillor Cartmell's position supporting the 40th Avenue/Bulyea Road interchange is available on his twitter account: https://twitter.com/cartmell_ward9?lang=en and on his Blog: <http://www.timcartmell.ca/blog>. Councillor Cartmell is providing an opportunity for community feedback, and we encourage residents to do this.