

## **SRA's CONCERNS ABOUT THE COMMUNITY PANEL**

### **Is the Panel representative of those directly impacted?**

The 42-person Panel will include 21 residents selected at random from a study area that spans from Quebec to Commercial, Great Northern Way to the Burrard Inlet. The broad scope of the study area effectively dilutes the input of residents who will be directly and adversely impacted by the new arterial.

The brunt of these direct impacts will fall on residents living in the area bordered by Gore on the west, Prior/Malkin on the south, Hastings on the north and Clark on the east. These impacts could include limiting residents' access in and out of their neighbourhood by car, bike or on foot; reducing access to bus transport; reducing the use of green space and facilities in Strathcona Park and community gardens; health impacts and the continued severing of the community with an arterial road. Residents outside Strathcona may experience a change in traffic density or shifted access to downtown but not any of the direct impacts listed above.

### **How will specifically impacted groups be represented?**

Specific groups that will be directly impacted by a new arterial have not been specifically identified in the proposed study area and so will not necessarily be represented.

- Residents of social housing and low-income residents (according to the 2016 Census, 49.8% of residents live at or below poverty levels)
- Residents along Prior and Atlantic, whose quality of life and property values will be directly impacted.
- Artists living and working in the area.
- Produce Row truck drivers, whose road access will be restricted.
- Park Users: sports leagues, dog walkers, skateboarders, daycare centres.

### **Will existing community groups, like the SRA or the community centres, be represented?**

Existing community organizations supported by real constituencies that know and can represent the issues, history and the potential impacts to the people living in the affected area have been excluded from the Panel's composition. The Panel has been curated to give the appearance of unbiased and fair inclusion but in practice excludes the very people most knowledgeable of the issues. We request that Panel include representatives of existing community groups in the affected area to ensure that those most impacted are an active part of the Panel's deliberations throughout and therefore more likely to accept its results.

### **Will the process ensure that the Panel receives a fair and informed view of competing perspectives?**

There is one day allocated to covering "parks, green space, recreational space, community gardens, visual experience, residents on Prior and Atlantic, arts/culture, commuters and the local food system" in rapid-fire 5-10 minute presentations. Beyond that, all "educational components" seem to come directly or indirectly from City staff, allowing them to influence the understanding, deliberations and possible decisions of the Panel significantly. We ask that community groups be given access in advance to information that will be presented to the Panel and sufficient opportunity to question staff assumptions and offer alternative perspectives to the Panel, particularly concerning urban design, traffic flow, cost, and sustainability.

### **Will the National-Charles option be considered?**

The City engineering staff are aware of the National-Charles option, but have yet assessed its viability and cannot guarantee that it will be an option presented to the Panel for consideration. We request that it be given equal consideration and that a 3<sup>rd</sup> party expert be able to comment upon it independently for City staff.

### **Why is Prior back on the table?**

City Council has twice passed a resolution to return Prior to being a calmed, residential street it was designed to be. But city staff is now designing options for an "underpass-overpass" just in case the Panel is unable to agree on the other options.

### **Is the process transparent?**

To date, the City has released no detailed plans for any of these options; no information on the length of the overpass, off-ramps, underpasses, controlled intersections, closed streets, property expropriation or traffic flow. To fix this, the City needs to make its plans and intentions public.

### **Is the process credible?**

We assume that the Jefferson Group has made a convincing case that this is a viable process of public consultation likely to result in a consensus decision, and we are hopeful that that will happen. But in our experience, expecting 42 unpaid non-professional volunteers to show up for ten day-long sessions over a four-month period, to absorb and process vast amounts of technically complex and emotionally charged information, and to then reach a decision that professional planners and engineers have been unable to reach after years of effort feels, at best, highly optimistic, and, at worst, designed to provide cover for a pre-determined outcome. On this, we reserve judgement.

