



City of
Peterborough

TO: The Mayor and Members of City Council

FROM: Malcolm Hunt, Director, Planning & Development Services

MEETING DATE: June 17, 2002

SUBJECT: **Report PL02-034**
Transportation Plan and the Environment Assessment Act

PURPOSE

A report to present additional information on the Environment Assessment process as it pertains to the Transportation Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That Report PL02-034 **be received** for information.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no new budget and financial implications arising out of this matter.

BACKGROUND

There has been considerable debate over the Environmental Assessment Act and its application to the Road Network improvements identified in the new Transportation Plan, particularly the Parkway. To be absolutely certain of the position of the Ministry of the Environment in this

matter, staff and consultants met with a representative of the Ministry of Environment, Eastern Region, in Kingston on Tuesday June 11, 2002. In the opinion of staff, there was a need to present the overall findings of the Transportation Plan to the Ministry, the long transportation planning history in Peterborough and the current transportation issues that are influencing local decision making, such as the construction of the Peterborough Regional Health Centre

The attached memorandum from Stantec Consulting summarizes the facts as reviewed with the Ministry. The memo itself has been given to Ministry staff and we are awaiting confirmation that it is an accurate reflection of the guidance given.

It is important to regard the Environmental Assessment process as a constructive decision making opportunity. In the Ontario planning environment, the EA Act is the recognized process for evaluating alternatives, assessing impacts and mitigation needs, and promoting the necessary public forum to review all the issues. By virtue of its comprehensive scope, the EA process does require a proponent to give consideration to all alternatives. The process however, does not obligate Council to choose the preferred alternative or any alternative for that matter. The process however, provides all of the information needed to make an informed decision and to participate in the review process with all of the facts at hand. In summary, the EA process should be viewed as an opportunity and not as a threat.

The Ministry has made it abundantly clear that the preference of the MOE would be to conduct an Environmental Assessment for the entire north south corridor (the full or partial Parkway Route) because the need and justification for this roadway network improvement has been validated in the Transportation Plan.

The Ministry has advised, however, that a 2nd EA approach would still satisfy the EA process. This approach would not be considered “piecemealing” and would allow more focussed environmental review to be undertaken to satisfy the need for improved access to the new Hospital. Essentially, two (2) separate roadway EA’s would be required to address two (2) separate and distinct needs:

- a) a “Localized Roadway EA” to resolve the localized transportation needs of a new Hospital between Sherbrooke and Parkhill.
- b) a “Full Corridor EA” for the full or partial Parkway to resolve the identified transportation needs of the City as a whole over the next 20 years.

We have been advised that the “Localized Roadway EA” cannot be considered Phase 1 of a Parkway EA as the “Localized Roadway EA” would be based on a distinct need and completely different network function. As the two EA’s would be unrelated, the Ministry is satisfied that the integrity of the EA process is maintained and piecemealing has not occurred. Even the Localized Roadway EA process will require an assessment of the options for network improvements to the hospital. The preferred approach may not even utilize the Parkway corridor.

SUMMARY

The Ministry in suggesting the 2nd EA approach, has assumed that the long term corridor needs established through the Transportation Master Plan update will also need to be respected. This would involve retaining the full/partial Parkway concept in the City's Official Plan with the expectation that a "Full Corridor EA" would be commenced when determined by Council.

This report is presented so that Council has all the information. It remains the recommendation of staff that conducting the Full Corridor EA without delay is the preferred approach, is most respectful of the findings of the Transportation Master Plan, provides the best opportunity for Council and citizens to make informed choices and is therefore in the public interest.

Respectfully submitted,

Malcolm Hunt, Director
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Attach. Stantec Memorandum

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