

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

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DATE 03 September 1998

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator
Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee

FROM/EXP. Executive Director, Economic Affairs

SUBJECT/OBJET **LINKAGES INITIATIVE AND STUDY APPROVAL**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee recommend Council direct staff to undertake a study to conduct an issue analysis and develop implementation guidelines and procedures for the linkages initiative pedestrian system, addressing matters of development and funding, design and approvals, and management and operations, and restore the delegated spending authority on Capital Account 912-13420, Convention Centre/Linkages.

BACKGROUND

On 13 May 1998, Council approved the capital budget for the Convention Centre/Linkages project but lifted the delegated authority for expenditure of funds, pending reports to be brought forward to the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee (CSEDC) and Council on both projects.

DISCUSSION

Linkages Initiative

On 19 May 1998, CSEDC received a presentation from the Linkages Initiative and received and addressed a related staff report. The Linkages Initiative presentation highlighted the importance and benefits of an enhanced downtown pedestrian system, from both an economic impact and public good perspective. Some of the benefits include:

1. Improving Ottawa's marketability as a tourism and convention destination, especially during the winter months:
 - Ottawa would be positioned with the greatest number of hotel rooms closely connected to convention space by weather-protected linkages in Canada
 - Additional connections would provide increased opportunities for package marketing (convention/shows/attractions/shopping/dining)
2. Contributing to core revitalization:
 - Enhancing the attractiveness of downtown Ottawa, the region's quality of life and the image of the nation's capital (for visitors and residents)
 - Generating increased activity and development in the core
3. Enhancing the pedestrian environment:
 - Improving pedestrian accessibility and convenience, especially for disabled or senior citizens
 - Promoting local pedestrian activity through improved access to transit and parking facilities

During the discussion, Linkages Initiative members and staff emphasized that much of the basic linkages network is already in place, but on an informal, adhoc basis so that it is not consistently addressed or readily recognized as a system. The addition of the proposed priority linkages will build on and complete the network, and provide an opportunity to undertake a more consistent, system wide approach to its planning and operation.

It was also noted that several related downtown projects are progressing which will or may incorporate many of the proposed priority linkages, including the:

- Daly Site redevelopment
- Government Conference Centre conversion
- Plaza Bridge rehabilitation
- Mackenzie King Bridge transit station
- Convention centre expansion

With these projects moving forward, it has become evident that if the linkages are to function as a public-serving system, there is an immediate need for some co-ordination in such areas as development and funding, design and approvals, and management and operations.

The staff report recommendations included endorsing the priority linkages system plan developed by the Linkages Initiative, and directing staff to continue to work with the initiative to ensure the priority linkages are implemented through related downtown developments or as separate projects. The recommendations were carried by the Committee, and by Council on 27 May 1998.

During the CSEDC discussion, the Committee indicated that it would like staff to address a number of specific matters related to implementation of the linkages. These included:

- Determining who pays for the linkages (the public and/or private sector)
- Assessing the impacts of linkage systems in other cities
- Considering mandating, not just assisting, implementation
- Determining how to ensure both the public interest in access and private interests are considered and protected

- Addressing the impacts of linkages on the cityscape, especially impacts of above grade links on views and vistas
- Confirming opportunities for revenue generation
- Determining ways that the Region can support the initiative beyond funding, such as undertaking work on design and operational guidelines

Given the immediate need for this work and the dedicated time and different areas of expertise required to undertake it, staff are recommending that a consultant be retained, for which funding will be required.

Linkages Implementation Guidelines and Procedures Study

In undertaking the study, the consultant would address and produce four key components:

1. *An Issue Analysis*

Including a benchmark analysis of above and below grade linkage systems in other cities and an issue analysis of the existing and proposed Ottawa linkages system.

2. *Development and Funding Guidelines*

Establishing policy, equity and financial parameters for building, programming, funding and ownership of the linkages and related responsibilities [major repair, life cycle replacement and liability]; and exploring opportunities for self-financing through revenue generation and private sector financing.

3. *Design Guidelines and Approvals Procedures*

Preparing general design guidelines for the overall linkages system, including enclosed and exterior linkages, addressing: urban and development context, continuity and accessibility, environmental design, programming, safety and security and way-finding.

Confirming multi-level government approval requirements and agency roles and responsibilities.

4. *Management and Operations Guidelines and Procedures*

Preparing guidelines and developing procedures for the on-going management and operations of the overall linkages system and specific linkages, including: governing authority(ies), operational practices and standards, services and service providers, monitoring and dispute resolution mechanisms, third party liability and related agreements.

CONSULTATION

The Linkages Initiative, the City of Ottawa and the National Capital Commission have been consulted on, and are in support of, the linkages study outlined in the report. In developing the detailed terms of reference and undertaking the study, the Region will work in direct consultation with these agencies and in consultation with the general public and special interest groups. The study will be undertaken in accordance with the Region's Public Consultation Policy and guidelines for consultant selection.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Approval of the report recommendation will permit the issuance of a request for proposals to undertake a study in support of the linkages initiative and reinstate the staff delegated expenditure authority for Account No. 912-13420, the Convention Centre/Linkages project. It is anticipated that the cost of the Linkages implementation study will be less than \$50,000.00.

*Approved by
R.. Chartrand*

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