

MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

7 OCTOBER 1998

1:30 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair: D. Holmes

Members: M. Bellemare, W. Byrne, R. Cantin, L. Davis, H. Kreling, J. Legendre,
M McGoldrick-Larsen, M. Meilleur

REGRETS: C. Doucet

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the Transportation Committee confirm the Minutes of the meeting of 16 September 1998 and the extract of Minute of 2 September 1998.

CARRIED

1. ONTARIO ROAD BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION - PRESENTATION
- Co-ordinator, Transportation Committee report dated 23 Sep 98

On behalf of the Ontario Road Builders' Association (ORBA), Jim Blake of Tarcon Limited spoke to the committee about the changes in management and funding of municipal roads and bridges. Also with Mr. Blake were Mike Cassidy, Karson Kartage and Konstruction, Richard Irving, Dibblee Construction Ltd. and Dave Read, T. Cavanagh Construction Ltd.

Mr. Blake distributed copies of a brief entitled "New Roads, New Responsibilities, New Challenges - Municipal Roads and Bridges" prepared by the ORBA. He explained that there have been major changes over the past 30 years that might inhibit whether Ontario municipalities are able to maintain their local roads and bridges in competition with other funding priorities. Mr. Blake pointed out that there has been inadequate level of investment at the Federal and Provincial levels which has led to the system falling below

Note: 1. Underlining indicates a new or amended recommendation approved by Committee.
2. Reports requiring Council consideration will be presented to Council on 14 October 1998 in Transportation Committees Report 20.

acceptable standards. He explained that the Ontario Ministry of Transportation's share in the Provincial Budget has decreased and funding for construction and maintenance for municipal roads and bridges has been declining since the early 1990's creating a growing infrastructure deficit. He emphasized that investment in local roads infrastructure creates employment in new and local businesses and the construction industry and the economy benefits from a rise in tourism as a result of better constructed and maintained infrastructure. In closing, Mr. Blake stressed the importance of routine maintenance and rehabilitation to extend pavement life.

Committee members expressed an appreciation for the presentation and informed the delegation of the Region's proactive position with respect to road maintenance. They encouraged ORBA to continue their campaign in other municipalities and to the senior levels of government.

That the Transportation Committee receive this verbal presentation by the Ontario Road Builders' Association for information.

CARRIED

2. TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNAL - PALLADIUM DRIVE AND FIRST LINE ROAD
- Director, Mobility Services and Corporate Fleet Services report dated 18 Sep 98

Moved by J. Legendre

That the Transportation Committee recommend Council approve the installation of a traffic control signal on Palladium Drive (Regional Road 88) and First Line Road, subject to the following conditions:

- a. **that the City of Kanata pay all costs associated with the installation of the traffic control signal;**
- b. **that the City of Kanata be responsible for all costs associated with the traffic control signal's annual operation and maintenance, and;**
- c. **that the City of Kanata execute a legal agreement with the RMOC with respect to a. and b.**

CARRIED

3. ELGIN STREET REHABILITATION (QUEEN STREET TO LAURIER AVENUE)
- Director, Engineering Division report dated 15 Sep 98

The Project Manager, Barry Townsend, provided a brief overview of the proposal as detailed in the report. A particular concern raised at the public meetings was the safety of pedestrians in front of the Lord Elgin Hotel where tour buses are often parked and/or are

moving along the sidewalk, as well as other vehicles going to and coming from the hotel. Staff have addressed this concern by proposing the construction of a partial lay-by area to remove tour buses from the sidewalk and to provide an improved parking facility at the side of the hotel off Laurier Avenue. In addition, it is proposed that bollards be installed to deter taxis from driving up on the sidewalk in front of the hotel.

On behalf of the National Capital Commission (NCC), Gerry Lajeunesse and Diane Irving stated that Elgin Street is an integral part of Confederation Boulevard because it serves as a ceremonial gateway to Parliament Hill and serves as a route to the National War Memorial (Cenotaph) and to the Canadian Tribute to Human Rights monument. In addition, the National Arts Centre (NAC) and Confederation Park which have entrance from Elgin Street, are important sites for cultural activities, year round. Mr. Irving indicated that the streetscape treatment for this project is at Confederation Boulevard standards, but in a less formal manner with single rows of trees and the sidewalks and crosswalks constructed of concrete with a granite curb. All furnishings i.e. information kiosks, benches and waste receptacles are to Confederation Boulevard standards and careful consideration is given to the placement of traffic lights and regulatory signs in order to maintain and enhance the view up Elgin Street to the War Memorial.

Councillor Cantin believed this proposal offers very little in the way of improving the streetscape and was concerned that the narrower medians would not have the capacity to provide some greenery, thereby creating a somewhat sterile environment. B. Townsend confirmed there will be room for the raised flower boxes and that the proposal simply changes the medians from a concrete surface to one of pavers because the planting boxes can be changed for various events. The councillor questioned the rationale for a new pedestrian crossing on the north side of Slater Street and staff advised this will improve pedestrian access throughout the whole area, but would not deter from the signal timing for vehicles. The councillor was concerned that motorists turning from Slater onto Elgin will be driving quite fast and would not expect to see pedestrians at this point.

With respect to the councillor's comments about greenery, Mr. Lajeunesse indicated that even if the entire area could have as wide a boulevard as presently exists in front of the NAC, he would not support putting trees in because they would not grow properly. The NCC preferred to ensure that those trees presently along the roadside reach a healthy size, thereby helping to frame and create that boulevard environment.

Councillor Legendre noted the stop lines in the northbound lanes on Elgin at Albert were offset from the one in the left-turn lane and believed motorists would not respect those lines but would draw up beside the turning vehicle whose stop line is proposed to be closer to the crosswalk. He suggested all the stop lines be even with each other and that they also be diagonal to the crosswalk. He further questioned why there are two left-turn lanes on Elgin at Laurier and staff advised that if there was only one lane, the traffic would start to stack up into other intersections, which would impact transit service on Albert and Slater; although this situation does not currently exist, the volumes are such that it is relatively close to creating problems.

Councillor Legendre further noted that often motorists do not respect pedestrians crossing in this intersection even on the walk signal, although they were usually those northbound heading east. He was also concerned about the conflicts between those motorists and those southbound left-turning motorists from Elgin Street and staff advised there may be an opportunity to address this dangerous situation during the design stage. Councillor Legendre was also concerned about the location of the crosswalk at this intersection and the potential for right-turning vehicles crossing a pedestrian's path - he suggested moving the crossing closer to the corner to eliminate this danger, but staff indicated that would only serve to lengthen the distance for pedestrians to cross Laurier Avenue.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen was somewhat concerned about the cost of this project and hoped it could be completed at less than the anticipated cost. Staff advised they will be going through a value engineering exercise to look for economies. She liked staff's proposal to paint the stop lines further from the crosswalk because she saw the need to provide a greater separation between the vehicles and the pedestrians.

Councillor Bellemare requested clarification on the rationale for reducing the median on Elgin at the intersection of Laurier and the impact this would have on pedestrian movement. B. Townsend indicated the removal of the median from the crosswalk area would encourage people to walk across the street without having to stop in the middle of the road; the signal timing would be extended to allow for that and would accommodate slower-moving pedestrians. He also confirmed that the pedestrian crosswalks will be made of concrete and will be of a different colour, thereby making them easily identifiable.

When asked what the plans are for the trees on Laurier Avenue adjacent to the Lord Elgin Hotel parking area, staff proposed that the tour buses continue to park in this area, but that the trees be moved to the Elgin Street side of the lot so those vehicles can enter from Laurier Avenue. The councillor stated that buses already have enough problems getting around hotels and suggested there be a full bus-bay provided to get those large vehicles off the road without having them encroaching into the next lane.

Bruce Levine submitted his proposal dated 7 October 1998 for a "civic square" to be created on Elgin between Nepean and Lisgar. He believed this would balance the War Memorial to the north and a ceremonial arch could be installed where the southern part of Elgin enters this square. Mr. Levine noted that over the years, increased traffic has eroded the boulevards on this once "grande allée" and trees have met with disease or abuse and are unable to flourish. In addition, the pedestrian environment has suffered and he doubted few would pause in the central median to admire the view of the Cenotaph. He encouraged expansion of the scope of the project to Lisgar Street because it would be short-sighted to install the proposed sidewalk detailing, street furniture and light standards along the three-block stretch only and urged committee to seriously consider his proposal for a civic square.

Pat Gillin, owner, and Don Blakeslee, Lord Elgin Hotel recognized that tour buses on the sidewalk and boulevard pose a problem, but they believed that what staff propose will effectively block them off at all angles, thereby affecting accessibility for those people coming by bus to the hotel. The compromise offered by staff for a 5' lay-by would be insufficient to accommodate the width of the average tour bus (10 feet wide), and would leave the vehicle encroaching into the next lane. Further, the design reduces the distance between the existing access/egress points and will undoubtedly make it difficult for vehicles to enter and exit. They urged that the proposed lay-by be widened to accommodate the full width of buses and that a better alternative be found with respect to the proposal for access to their parking lot via Laurier, which would include a depressed sidewalk to allow the buses to drive perpendicular off that street and then back up into the parking lot. They maintained that having the buses park backing up from Laurier would only serve to cause traffic problems on that road. Mr. Blakeslee distributed copies of drawings illustrating what presently exists and what they propose. He reminded members that the airport shuttle bus also pulls up in front of the hotel every half hour and if there are two cars stopped under the canopy, that vehicle cannot fit under as well and must wait on the sidewalk or the boulevard. In response to a suggestion that the tour buses load and off-load at the side entrance, he explained that guests have always been let off at the front door and the bus parking is a major part of the bus tour business and is a good selling feature for the hotel. It would also be difficult to load and unload people from the side lot because there are usually several buses there at a time.

Councillor Cantin suggested that rather than a depressed sidewalk, that there be a driveway slanted at a 45° angle into the side lot off Laurier so the buses can get in and out quickly. Staff indicated that this proposal has been examined and while it may serve some buses, it will not serve all of them. Further, it is not recommended that there be an entrance that close to the intersection. He added that if the trees currently along Laurier were to be moved to a location along Elgin, the buses that currently park parallel to Laurier would be instead be parked perpendicular to the road.

Councillor Byrne inquired about the staff's proposal to provide a bus-bay along Elgin Street, noting it would be narrower than the width of a tour bus. B. Townsend indicated that although it would be preferable to take the buses completely off the road, the standards for Confederation Boulevard must be respected and by making a wider bus-bay will result in the loss of trees and therefore the view up the boulevard will change dramatically. He explained that this solution with a bus bay has been used successfully at other hotels e.g. the Chateau Laurier and maintained that this proposal will marry the needs of the hotel for a bus lay-by, with the aesthetic qualities the NCC are looking for along the boulevard.

In light of some of the comments raised about the lack of facilities for the parking of tour buses in the downtown, Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen suggested the public consultation include the Ottawa Tourism and Convention Authority with a view to determining whether this problem is only with this specific hotel or whether a solution should be found for other hotels in the downtown. The Committee Chair advised that there is a short and

long-term bus committee which have been meeting for many years on this issue, but have yet to come up with a solution. Councillor Cantin suggested that staff might look into the availability of surplus land in the vicinity of the downtown which could be used as a central bus parking area.

Lois K. Smith hoped this project will address the problems associated with the red bricks located in front of the Lord Elgin Hotel and further north along the boulevard. She explained that they easily come loose from their sand bedding and cause serious problems for people running to catch a bus, especially the elderly. To remedy this, she suggested there be concrete right up to and including the bus shelters where these bricks serve as the floor of the shelter. She spoke to the issue of bus access via Laurier Avenue at the Lord Elgin Hotel and the difficulties this may cause because the bus driver may not see the pedestrian fully. Ms. Smith was also quite concerned about the proposal to remove the median from the crosswalk because she found them to be helpful on a wide street and people in wheelchairs or those who are physically or visually challenged will certainly find it difficult to cross the road fully on the signal, without a place of refuge to wait until the signal allows them to cross further.

Chris Bradshaw, Ottawalk made reference to their letter dated 7 October 1998 in which they request a wider median and single turning lanes at Elgin and Laurier/Albert. Ottawalk is concerned about large vehicles, such as tour buses, crossing sidewalks and backing up into parking areas and they agree with the importance of providing a designated parking area for these vehicles. Ottawalk has a concern with the use of double turn lanes within areas that have high pedestrian volumes where the potential for conflict exists and motorists often cannot see pedestrians when two vehicles are turning at the same time. He found it difficult to accept the argument that there is a demand for these lanes, except if the street has a history of moving all this traffic. He pointed out that the Official Plan calls for the favouring of access to the downtown by walking, cycling and transit and yet it appears, in this design, that the Region is only concerned about the capacity for vehicles. With respect to the view of the Cenotaph and the need for open space, he indicated that with a road of this width there is a need for extra wide medians. Further, Ottawalk is concerned about eliminating the median from the crosswalk because it may encourage motorists to make wider turns, instead of being forced to make a tighter turn if there was a bit of the median in the centre. During the public consultation process, he suggested that signs be placed on the sidewalk to let people know what is going on and to encourage input from all users.

With respect to the latter point, and in response to a question posed by Councillor Legendre, staff advised there will be the traditional newspaper advertising for four weeks. The councillor liked the idea of a road sign to attract attention and to advertise the public hearing and staff advised they had put up display boards to advertise for the public meetings, but a canvas of attendees indicated that no one came as a result of those signs, but rather as a result of the newspaper ad or a hand-out. Despite this, the councillor encouraged staff to try this method of advertising again because he believed that would

bring it to the attention of the public who are not in the habit of reading the Regional page in the newspaper.

Linda Hoad, Federation of Citizen's Association spoke to the issue of the double left-turn and suggested staff be directed to do further consultation with respect to this particular aspect of the project. She remarked that the FCA has been involved in transportation issues in Ottawa for a long time and referred to the Region's "Central Area Transportation Study" from 1993/94 which was a joint project between the Region, the City of Ottawa, OC Transpo and the NCC and is policy for these organizations. She indicated that part of that report states that greater pedestrian use of the central area serves to strengthen its retail sector, attracting more shoppers and tourists and contributes to more interesting streets. She continued by stating that a greater priority for pedestrians will mean less priority for cars and establishing that greater priority will encourage people to use public transit, hence lessening the need for adding parking in the central area. Ms. Hoad also referred to a statement in the Transportation Master Plan that "Council shall review and modify current standards and practices for pedestrian facilities such as pedestrian space at intersections, curb ramp design...and the use of channelized right-turn and multiple left-turn lanes at intersections to ensure that they support walking." Therefore, she saw this as an opportunity to begin that review and possibly modify the current standards. She referred to the comprehensive review document for public transit which was recently released, which states that if the Region is not prepared to take strong measures to discourage automobile use, it cannot achieve the transit objectives it has set and make OC Transpo the successful transit system it is hoped to be. She also referred to increased health costs if carbon emissions are not reduced and all this has to do with encouraging other friendlier modes of transportation. She urged that committee request staff to work with community associations and other interested groups on these problem areas in order to find solutions to these problems.

Councillor Meilleur understood the concerns raised about the safety of double left-turn lanes, but felt the removal of such would only serve to cause congestion, thereby forcing motorists to find other routes through nearby communities. She agreed there should be a program in place to encourage people to use public transit.

Councillor Legendre asked that staff provide statistics on accidents at intersections with double left-turn lanes at the time this matter rises to the public hearing.

Speaking to the staff report, Councillor Cantin stated that if bollards are used on the sidewalk it will cause problems for visually impaired pedestrians. He recognized that the use of cobblestone has been raised as a significant irritation for people, sighted or not, but agreed it is worse for people who are fragile such as the elderly. He indicated other hotels in the downtown have lay-bys and suggested this should be pursued, reminding members about the demographics of those tourists who arrive by bus and their need to be let off close to the front door of the hotel.

Councillor Holmes removed herself from the Chair in order that she could put forward several Motions for the committee's consideration. Councillor Legendre assumed the Chair for this period.

Moved by D. Holmes

That staff Recommendations 1 and 2 be amended to replace the words "Approve" with "Receive".

CARRIED

Moved by R. Cantin

That staff present an option for a full lay-by in front of the Lord Elgin Hotel.

CARRIED

Moved by R. Cantin

That staff re-examine the possibility of constructing a ramp for bus parking from Elgin Street to the lot to the south of the Lord Elgin Hotel.

CARRIED

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen proposed that consultation on the "Restore the Core" (Elgin portion) include a lunch time meeting at Regional headquarters to be advertised by both flyer handout on Elgin at least one week prior to the meeting and by newspaper ad. Councillor Cantin asked that the Motion be split for voting purposes.

Moved by M. McGoldrick-Larsen

That public consultation on the "Restore the Core" Elgin portion include a lunch-time meeting at Regional headquarters.

CARRIED

Moved by M. McGoldrick-Larsen

That this meeting be advertised by both flyer handout on Elgin Street at least one week prior to the meeting and by newspaper ad.

CARRIED

YEAS: M. Bellemare, W. Byrne, L. Davis, D. Holmes, H. Kreling, J. Legendre,
M. McGoldrick-Larsen....7

NAYS: R. Cantin, M. Meilleur....2

Moved by D. Holmes

That staff meet with interested groups including but not limited to: the Lord Elgin Hotel, the Centretown Citizens Community Association, Lisgar Collegiate and Ottawalk, to address their concerns.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That staff provide comments for a pilot project to prohibit right turns on red in this area.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That staff conduct a verbal survey of pedestrians using the Elgin and Laurier intersection to elicit their concerns.

CARRIED

Councillor Holmes suggested that staff bring forward an option for single turn lanes at Elgin and Albert/Laurier. Some members would not support this because staff have already examined such a proposal in detail and it was determined it would only lead to further congestion. In defense of her Motion, the councillor explained that those turn lanes were implemented approximately 10 years ago and since then traffic volumes in the downtown have been reduced, it would be reasonable to look at the possibility of a reduced lane capacity. She recognized the double left-turn lanes could not be eliminated without determining the affects and hoped those answers would be forthcoming before Council approve the double left-turn.

The Acting Chair questioned whether the Motion would cause staff to examine the option and present the impacts surrounding the intersection where the lanes would be reduced. B. Townsend advised it would involve a traffic impact study which would normally be

beyond the scope of this proposal. Councillor Holmes suggested an amendment to her Motion to include the words “with an impact analysis”.

Moved by D. Holmes

That an option with single left-turn lanes at Laurier and Albert be presented to the Transportation Committee at the public hearing, with an impact analysis.

LOST

YEAS: W. Byrne, L. Davis, D. Holmes, J. Legendre....4
NAYS: M. Bellemare, R. Cantin, H. Kreling, M. McGoldrick-Larsen,
M. Meilleur....5

Councillor Holmes further proposed that a second option be presented for the medians by providing shrubs and formal parketts similar to University Avenue in Toronto. Councillor Cantin was not in favour of exposing pedestrians to a median of a style they are unaccustomed to and also preferred to use something more permanent such as a raised flower boxes rather than planting shrubs in the median itself. Councillor Holmes agreed with the deletion of her reference to “parketts”.

Moved by D. Holmes

That a second option be presented for the medians by providing shrubs and raised plantings similar to University Avenue in Toronto.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That medians continue to be provided through the pedestrian walkways as pedestrian refuges.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That the use of the curb lane be considered for the bus drop-off/pick-up/taxi area on Elgin Street in front of the Lord Elgin Hotel.

CARRIED

YEAS: W. Byrne, L. Davis, D. Holmes, J. Legendre, M. McGoldrick-Larsen,
M. Meilleur....6
NAYS: M. Bellemare, R. Cantin, H. Kreling....3

That Transportation Committee recommend Council:

- 1. Approve the scope of works contained in this project report;**
- 2. Approve the preliminary design for the project, as detailed in the presentation drawings;**
- 3. Authorize the Environment and Transportation Department to proceed with the relocation of utilities to be determined in the detailed design stage;**
- 4. Authorize the initiation of the public hearing process as required by Sections 297 and 300 of the *Ontario Municipal Act***

CARRIED as amended

INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED

1. WORKSHOPS ON ROAD DESIGN
 - Motion TC-29-97
 - Commissioner, Planning and Development Approvals memorandum dated 23 Sep 98

Judy Flavin, of Planning and Development Approvals Department, provided a brief overview of the report and indicated there were still some spaces available at the 28 October Workshop and encouraged members to attend.

INQUIRIES

Northside Road - Public Hearing

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen suggested the public hearing be held in the community on the evening of 21 October 1998. There was general agreement with this request, but some members indicated they would be unavailable that night. The Co-ordinator was directed to poll members to determine the best available date and schedule the public hearing. Staff advised that if the hearing is held too late into October and if the proposal is approved by committee and Council, it was doubtful work could begin this year.

Cedarview Road

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen referred to the “s” curve of Cedarview Road south of West Hunt Club Road and its unsafe condition for motorists. She proposed the following:

Moved by M. McGoldrick-Larsen

That staff report back to the Committee on the following Motion:

“That the Region not accept that portion of Cedarview Road (Baseline to Lytle) back into its jurisdiction until remedial measures are taken in order to improve the safety and design of the road.”

CARRIED

Bicycle Lane - West Hunt Club Road

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen indicated that the bicycle lanes on West Hunt Club Road stop west of Highway 416 on Cedarview Road and questioned when a small stretch of the shoulder is planned to be paved so there is continuity with the existing bike lane along Cedarview Road between Highway 416 and Moodie Drive. The Acting Environment and Transportation Commissioner, Bill Beveridge, advised that such consideration should be a part of the public participation process associated with the design for that piece of road west of Highway 416. The councillor inquired therefore whether this request should be forwarded to the Regional Cycling Advisory Group for comment and then brought forward to committee and staff advised that would be the best route to follow. The councillor suggested that staff report back to discuss this further.

Donald Street at St. Laurent Boulevard

Councillor Legendre expressed concern about left-turning movements (north/south) from St. Laurent Boulevard to Donald Street. While he acknowledged there was a protected cycle for these movements, motorists are permitted to continue turning left on the green through signal, presuming there is no oncoming traffic. He believed this was a dangerous situation and asked that staff investigate the possibility of allowing left-turns only on the protected cycle.

Plaques on Bridges

The committee briefly discussed the issue of plaques which are placed on newly constructed/rehabilitated bridges in the Region and whether or not specific names of officials are appropriate for inclusion, as this practice is apparently not consistent with all bridge plaques. Staff were directed to report back to committee on the following:

That plaques installed on new or rehabilitated bridges include only the name of the bridge.

Forest Renewal Plan

Councillor Legendre made reference to a newspaper article in which it was claimed that the Region turned down an offer for trees. He questioned the rationale behind that decision, especially in light of Council's recent approval of its Forest Renewal Plan. Staff agreed to report back with an explanation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

CO-ORDINATOR

CHAIR