TO: Bert Meunier, Chief Administrative Officer
FROM: Terry Willing, Acting Commissioner, Planning & Development Services
PREPARED BY: John Sawarna, Project Engineer, Engineering Division
DATE OF MEETING: October 5, 2004
SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR IMPROVEMENTS to COUNTER STREET FROM DIVISION STREET to PRINCESS STREET

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

THAT Council endorse the filing of the Counter Street Improvement Project “Environmental Assessment Report” for public and agency review as required by the Environmental Assessment Act; and,

THAT Council approve the Recommended Solution endorsed by the Technical Steering Committee for the Counter Street Improvement Project, which is to:

1. Widen Counter Street to a four lane roadway complete with intersection improvements, turning lanes, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, boulevard landscaping; and
2. Construct a four lane CN Rail Overpass which requires the relocation of the Portsmouth Avenue/Counter Street intersection approximately 150 meters east of the current location and modifications to William J. Hackett Park.

ORIGIN/PURPOSE:

All major road projects are subject to an environmental assessment in accordance with the Environmental Assessment Act

City Council, at its meeting held on September 17, 2003 approved the following resolution:

"Clause (e), Report No. 83 to retain the Engineering firm of National Capital Engineering (NCE) to undertake a Class Environmental Assessment for Improvements to Counter Street."

NCE has completed Environmental Assessment Report in accordance with the June 2000 Municipal Class Environmental Assessment guidelines. The report Executive Summary is attached hereto, and a copy of the detailed report is available through the Engineering Division.
OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

As part of the Environmental Assessment update, several design alternatives were investigated, including two and four lane alternatives and locations of overpass versus underpass alternatives for the CN Rail crossing.

A Technical Steering Committee consisting of Councillor Steve Garrison as the Council approved appointee, the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, Ministry of Natural Resources, Department of Federal Fisheries and Oceans, Kingston Transit, City of Kingston Planning, Engineering and Parks staff and NCE evaluated the various alternatives.

A Public Advisory Committee was established to represent the interests of stakeholders along the Counter Street corridor. During the course of the study, five meetings were held with the Public Advisory Committee along with two Public Open House meetings earlier this year and a special meeting with the homeowners adjacent to William J. Hackett Park to address their concerns.

The Technical Steering Committee considered Traffic and Transportation, Natural Environment, Socio-Economic Environment, Cultural Environment, Land Use, Property and Cost issues together with all of the comments and concerns from the public during the evaluation of the alternatives.

Utilizing a weighting system developed by NCE, the Technical Steering Committee selected the widening of Counter Street to four lanes alternative complete with intersection improvements, turning lanes, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, boulevard landscaping, a four lane CN Rail overpass and relocating the Portsmouth Avenue/Counter Street intersection. The relocation of the Portsmouth Avenue/Counter Street intersection will require modifications to William J Hackett Park.

After Council approval of the Technically Preferred Alternative recommended in this report, the next step will be the posting of a “Notice of Completion” for Public Review followed by a 30 day appeal period. If no appeals to the Minister of the Environment are received, the Counter Street Improvements Environmental Assessment will be approved by the Minister of the Environment and improvements to Counter Street can commence.

EXISTING POLICY/BY LAW:

Council approval is required for the adoption of the Technically Preferred Alternative so that NCE can file the “Notice of Completion” in accordance with the Environmental Assessment Act.

LINK TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN:

Priority 4 - Infrastructure.

A municipality must be built on a solid well maintained foundation. This foundation or “hard infrastructure” is the community owned roads, bridges, sidewalks, electricity, gas, water, sewers, broadband community networking, storm sewers, street lights and traffic lights. Regular maintenance and upgrading or replacing the infrastructure is necessary to optimize the life of the municipal infrastructure.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Currently there are sufficient funds in the 2003 Capital Works Budget to complete the Environmental Assessment.

Based on NCE recommendations, a request for funds will be made by the Engineering Division commencing with their proposed 2005 Capital Works Budget. The project will include a bridge over the CN rail mainline and the Little Cataraqui Creek at a cost in the order of $10 million for construction over 2 years, along with widening and related roadwork from Division Street to Princess Street at a cost in the order of $12 million over 3 years.

These costs do not include property acquisitions.

CONTACTS:

Speros Kanellos, P. Eng., Manager, Engineering Division; 384-1770 ext. 3133
Gerard Hunt, Manager of Finance 546-4291 ext. 2205

DEPARTMENTS/OTHERS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Finance Division

NOTICE PROVISIONS:

None.

APPENDICIES:

Executive Summary – Counter Street Improvements Environmental Assessment

Terry Willing, Acting Commissioner
Planning & Development Services

Bert Meunier
Chief Administrative Officer

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