



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 16-028**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Denis Leger, Commissioner of Transportation, Facilities & Emergency Services
Resource Staff: Sheila Kidd, Director of Transportation Services
Date of Meeting: December 15, 2015
Subject: Completion of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for the Kingston Transit Downtown Transfer Point

Executive Summary:

The Downtown Transfer Point (DTP) located at the corner of the Brock and Bagot streets is the main transit facility for the downtown core with more than 600,000 annual transit users and service from 12 routes including all Express routes. At present, the DTP has a number of accessibility and operational deficiencies that impact service efficiency and detract from the rider experience.

Transportation Services initiated a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) in May 2015 to determine an approach to address the deficiencies of the current DTP and evaluate if improvements to the current DTP or relocation to another site within the downtown core would be preferred. The Class EA process has determined that the preferred solution is to maintain the DTP at its current location and improve the site to address accessibility and operational concerns. A Class D construction estimate prepared as part of the Class EA estimates that the costs associated with these improvements, including all roadway and underground infrastructure replacement, will be \$1.94M.

Staff are requesting Council approval of the study findings for the DTP to allow the Class EA to be finalized and submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change for Provincial approval.

Recommendation:

That Council approve the findings of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment that recommends improvements for the current Downtown Transfer Point at an estimated cost of \$1.94M and direct staff to submit the completed report *Kingston Transit Downtown Transfer Point Environmental Assessment Project File*, to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change for Provincial approval.

December 15, 2015

Page 2 of 6

Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Denis Leger, Commissioner
Transportation, Facilities &
Emergency Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Cynthia Beach, Corporate & Strategic Initiatives Not Required

Lanie Hurdle, Community Services

Jim Keech, President and CEO, Utilities Kingston

Desiree Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer Not Required

December 15, 2015

Page 3 of 6

Options/Discussion:

Within the Kingston Transit system, the main transit stop in the downtown core, known as the Downtown Transfer Point (DTP), is located along Brock Street between Montreal and Bagot streets and along Bagot Street between Brock and Princess streets. The DTP is used by more than 600,000 riders a year, currently serves 12 transit routes including all of the Express routes, and acts as both a gateway to the downtown and a connection between the east and west ends of the City. At present, the DTP is not fully accessible, has limited rider amenities, and has a number of operational issues that impact service efficiency and detract from the importance of this hub in the Kingston transit network.

To address these concerns and investigate if the DTP should remain at its current location or be moved to a new location in the downtown area, the City initiated a Schedule 'B' Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) study in May 2015. The goal of the DTP Class EA was to develop a preferred course of action with the following key benefits considered:

- improving the passenger experience for transit customers waiting at the site
- improving the universal design and accessibility to meet the needs of people with disabilities, as well as a wider variety of users
- improving the safety for all users and address potential conflicts between buses, other vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians
- improving transit operations and increase capacity to accommodate future growth
- improving the pedestrian environment and public realm in a central downtown location

Transportation Services retained the services of HDR Corporation to complete the Class EA and deliver conceptual plans and cost estimates for a preferred solution. The study included consultation with transit riders, community stakeholders, Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee members, business owners, nearby tenants, large employers, and institutions. In addition to stakeholder consultation, the study included technical analysis and review by City staff in Transit, Planning, Heritage, Traffic, Engineering, and Utilities Kingston.

The study considered the conditions of the current site and a number of alternate locations within the downtown for potential relocation. A short list of three options was developed that included leaving the current site as is, upgrading the current location, and relocating the DTP to a segment of Clarence Street between Bagot Street and Wellington Street.

A comprehensive review of the three options was conducted with detailed evaluation criteria organized around six major categories: transit customers, transit operation, downtown community, other transportation users, environmental aspects, and cost. The review included input from stakeholders, transit users, and the public sought through public meetings, workshops held at the DTP, online surveys, and print media.

The review determined that the preferred solution was to maintain the DTP at the current location on Brock and Bagot streets and upgrade the site to meet the accessibility, amenity,

December 15, 2015

Page 4 of 6

and operational needs of the users. The alternate location, Clarence Street between Wellington and Bagot streets, was not preferred as the site could not provide sufficient pedestrian space, had more impact on the surrounding residential areas, had more impact on transit efficiency of operation, and was forecast to have higher construction costs. The option of leaving the current site as is was not preferred due to existing accessibility and transit operation issues that could be addressed through improvements.

The high-level rationale for improving the current site on Brock and Bagot streets as the preferred option includes the following reasons:

- Improving the existing site can provide a quality environment that is convenient safe, comfortable, understandable, and accessible for transit customers.
- Kingston Transit can continue to operate efficiently and reliably, and provide sufficient capacity for current and future needs.
- The downtown community benefits with a location that balances benefits to businesses and impacts to residential neighbourhoods.
- Other transportation users continue to share the road with transit with similar impacts
- Impacts to the environment and to nearby cultural heritage resources are minor.
- The option is feasible and has a relatively low capital and operating cost.

Upgrades proposed for the current DTP site as part of the preferred solution include:

- full reconstruction of Brock Street between Montreal and Bagot streets including sidewalks, bus travel lanes, roadway area, and underground infrastructure
- clear delineation between the pedestrian, waiting, and boarding areas of the streetscape on Brock and Bagot streets
- bus bay placement that shortens the transfer distances between routes
- additional bus-only demarcated areas on Bagot Street that enhance transit operation and route visibility
- tactile strips and signage that enhance the accessibility of the site for all users
- reclaimed amenity space within the Lower Bruce Garage with the removal of one parking space to provide additional seating and shelter
- placement of shelters and benches that enhance accessibility, safety, and rider comfort

A summary of the Class EA process, analysis, and preferred solution is attached as Exhibit A. Conceptual drawings and 3D renderings of the proposed improvements to the current site are attached as Exhibit B.

The preferred solution recognizes that the Bagot Street portion of the DTP was recently reconstructed in 2014 and provides two project phases, a short-term phase that utilizes the Bagot Street improvements completed in 2014, and a long-term phase that reconstructs a portion of the sidewalk on Bagot Street. Both options meet the accessibility and operational requirements of the DTP however the longer term option provides for some additional amenity and pedestrian space that enhance the Bagot Street experience.

December 15, 2015

Page 5 of 6

All components of the Class EA study are documented in a Project File Report (PFR) that describes in detail the current site conditions, alternative solutions, rationale and evaluation in selecting the preferred solution, environmental effects and mitigating measures, and the consultation process. Included within the PFR are conceptual designs and illustrations of the upgraded DTP site. The Kingston Transit Downtown Transfer Point Environmental Assessment Project File is available at the project's Class EA website at the following link: cityofkingston.ca/DTP

The Class EA includes a "Class D" construction estimate that assesses the total cost for the short-term option noted above to be \$1.94M. This estimate includes the reconstructed DTP including roadway and utility reconstruction on Brock Street between Bagot and Montreal streets. The short-term project scope includes the rehabilitation of all infrastructures along this segment of Brock Street at the time of the DTP construction to minimize future disruption and reduce the risk of infrastructure replacement on a newly reconstructed DTP.

Staff is requesting Council approval of the findings of the Class EA and recommended solution to allow submission of the report to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC). Once the Class EA is submitted to the MOECC, it will be open for final public comment for a period of 30 days and, following that period, if no concerns requiring action are received, the Class EA will be received by the MOECC for final approval.

Pending final approval of the Class EA from the MOECC, staff will use the document as the basis for detailed design and future reconstruction of the DTP. The detailed design process will include final on-street design, confirmation of the infrastructure replacement requirements by Engineering and Utilities Kingston, and refinement of the construction costs for inclusion in future capital budgets.

Existing Policy/By Law:

Not Applicable.

Notice Provisions:

Under the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act*, a Notice of Study Commencement was issued on May 26, 2015, requesting input into the project. To date, the project team has received input from a number of transit riders, community stakeholders, business owners, and residents that was incorporated into the option analysis.

A public open house was held on September 22, 2015, to present the preferred option and public input specific to the preferred option was solicited until October 7, 2015.

If Council supports the preferred solution, a Notice of Study Completion will be issued including a detailed project file report and inviting the public to provide input for a 30-day review period.

December 15, 2015

Page 6 of 6

Accessibility Considerations:

Members of the City's Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee participated in all phases of the Class EA process.

The preferred design, both short-term phase and long-term phase, has been developed to meet or exceed AODA and FADS requirements. In particular, the design addresses and provides recommendations on accessibility issues related to mobility, shelter access, bus location, and visibility of signage. These components will be confirmed further in future detailed design work.

Financial Considerations:

The Class D construction estimate produced as part of the Class EA estimates the cost of the scope proposed for the short-term phase of the preferred option to be \$1.94M. This capital amount was included in the 2016 15-year capital budget forecast submission and is planned for inclusion in the 2017 capital budget submission. This figure will be reviewed and refined as part of the detailed design process for the upgrades proposed for the DTP.

Construction timing is subject to budget approval in future years and coordination of projects with the City's Engineering Department and Utilities Kingston.

Contacts:

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Kim Brown, Manager of Infrastructure and Development
Jeremy DaCosta, Transit Manager
Deanna Green, Manager, Traffic Division
Andrew Morton, Transit Service Project Manager
Ryan Leary, Senior Planner
Chris Phippen, Manager, Utilities Engineering

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A – Kingston Transit Downtown Transfer Point Environmental Assessment Executive Summary

Exhibit B – Conceptual Renderings of the Upgraded Downtown Transfer Point



Kingston Transit Downtown Transfer Point Environmental Assessment Executive Summary

City of Kingston

Executive Summary

The City of Kingston conducted a Schedule 'B' Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study to develop a solution to address operational deficiencies and improve the passenger experience at the Kingston Transit Downtown Transfer Point (DTP), located at the corner of Brock Street and Bagot Street.

Study Process

The study followed the Schedule 'B' Class EA requirements, and included:

- Public and stakeholder engagement
- Reviewing background information and existing conditions
- Identifying alternative solutions, and evaluation potential impacts that the project may have on all aspects of the environment
- Selecting the preferred solution and developing a conceptual design
- Identifying ways to mitigate potential impacts
- Transparent documentation of the decision-making process

Public and Stakeholder Consultation

A comprehensive public and stakeholder consultation program was conducted, and involved public notices, an online webpage, a Pop-Up Workshop at the DTP, an online survey, interviews with key stakeholders, a public open house, and online feedback after the open house. Feedback was incorporated into the decision-making process, and influenced the evaluation of options.

Problem / Opportunity Statement

Based on the review of background information and existing conditions, a problem / opportunity statement was developed:

The DTP is an important part of the existing and future transit system. However there are a number of operational and functional issues that are evident, including:

- *The poor state of repair and condition of the sidewalk, as well as the quality of existing passenger amenities and street furniture;*
- *The lack of visibility, lack of signage and information, and inconsistency in transit operations that do not facilitate easy transfers between buses;*
- *The need to upgrade to improve accessibility for all users; and*
- *An inadequate capacity to accommodate future growth of the transit network.*



In order to allow the DTP to play its full role in the transit system, and facilitate safe, accessible, convenient, and comfortable transfers, this study will identify alternative solutions to improve the operational efficiency and passenger experience at the DTP.

Identification of Alternative Solutions

Three alternative planning solutions were identified to address the deficiencies and to improve the passenger experience at the DTP, which included:

- **Do Nothing** – No change to the existing DTP
- **Improve Existing Site** – Upgrades and modifications at the existing DTP location
- **Relocate to a New Site** – Relocation of the DTP to a different location within the study area (a transit-only facility on Clarence Street, between Bagot and Wellington Streets was identified as the most preferred relocation site)

Evaluation of Alternative Solutions

A methodical evaluation process was undertaken to assess and compare the three alternative solutions. The evaluation took into account various quantitative and qualitative criteria for impacts to transit customers, Kingston Transit operations, the downtown community, other transportation users, environmental aspects, and cost and feasibility. Through the process evaluation, **Improve the Existing Site** was identified as the preferred option for the following reasons:

- Improving the Existing Site can provide a quality environment that is convenient, safe, comfortable, understandable, and accessible for transit customers;
- Kingston Transit can continue to operate efficiently and reliably, and provide sufficient capacity for current and future needs;
- The downtown community benefits with a location that balances benefits to businesses and negative impacts to residential neighbourhoods;
- Other transportation users continue to share the road with transit with similar impacts;
- Impacts to the environment are minor; and
- The option is feasible and has a relatively low capital and operating cost.

Preferred Solution

The preferred solution for the Downtown Transfer Point is to remain at the existing location on Brock and Bagot Streets, with significant improvements to the bus stops and transit customer waiting areas.

The key features of the conceptual design include:

- Two-phase implementation to make use of the recent upgrades of transit infrastructure on Bagot Street;
- Short-term, the existing curb line on both Brock & Bagot Streets remains' Long-term, the west sidewalk on Bagot Street is widened by 1m;
- 8 distinct parallel bus zones, accommodating up to 12 buses at the same time, including 4 articulated buses;
- Future expansion area on the east side of Bagot Street could accommodate 2-3 buses for staging or additional bus stops;
- A distinct pavement surface treatment would reinforce the bus-only areas;
- Pedestrian space layout would accommodate the needs of transit customers waiting at the site and boarding buses, and also pedestrians walking through the site or accessing businesses in the area;
- Appropriate transit amenities (shelters, benches, information signage) and street furniture (benches, garbage bins, lighting, etc.) would facilitate a safe, comfortable, and accessible waiting area for transit customers;
- On Bagot Street, shelters and benches would be recessed in the Robert Bruce Memorial Parking Garage, and the façade would be upgraded; and
- The total Class 'D' cost estimate of the project is approx. \$1.94 million (plus applicable taxes).



Appendix C.3

Concept Renderings

Concept Renderings

Conceptual renderings of the preferred site are shown as follows:

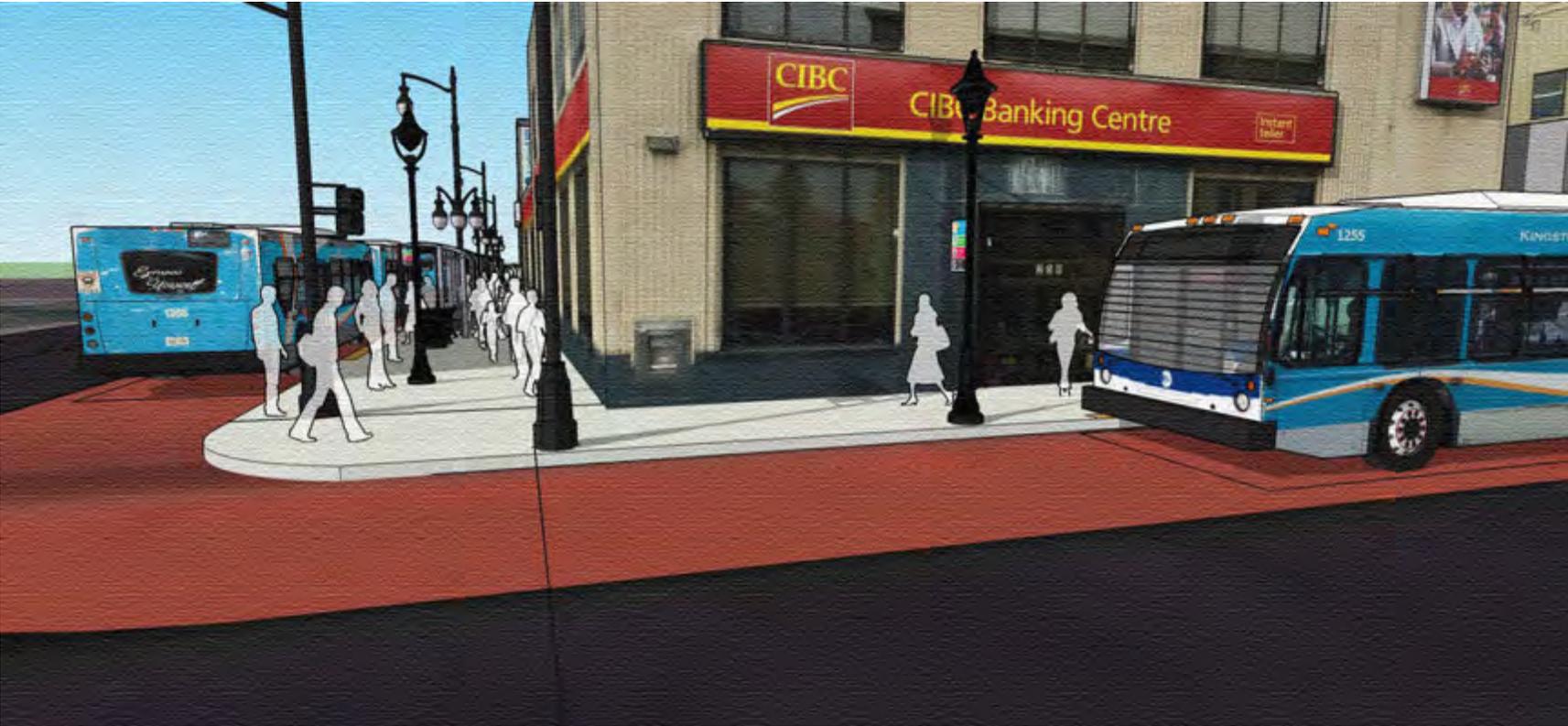
Overall DTP looking Northwest at Brock & Bagot Street Intersection



Looking East on Brock Street from Montreal Street



Looking West at Brock & Bagot Street Intersection



Looking West on Brock Street from Bagot Street



Looking Northwest at Brock Street



Looking North on Bagot Street from Brock Street



Overall View of Bagot Street, looking West



Looking South on Bagot Street from Princess Street

