

## Report to Corporate Services Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Corporate Services Committee

**From:** Anna Lisa Barbon, CPA, CGA  
Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports

**Subject:** City Hall Front Entrance Canopy Repairs and Remediation

**Date:** January 15, 2024

## Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports, with the concurrence of the City Manager, the report dated January 15, 2024, "City Hall Front Canopy Repairs and Remediation" **BE RECEIVED** for information.

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the construction plan, schedule and impact of work required to complete essential repairs to the front (south) entrance canopy soffit of City Hall.

To complete the soffit repairs safely, hoarding (barriers) must be installed beneath the entirety of the south canopy. This will make the front entrance of City Hall inaccessible. The public will be redirected to the north entrance from Reg Cooper Square. The accessible ramp to the west of the front entrance will not be impacted by construction and will remain accessible throughout the duration of construction.

A communications plan will be developed to keep the public and staff informed about accessing the facility during the ongoing work. Our main goal is to minimize any disruptions to services.

## Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

### Well-Run City

The City of London is a leader in public service

### 3.3 The City of London has effective facilities and infrastructure management

- Build, maintain and operate facility assets to provide expected levels of service and optimize reliability and functionality

## Analysis

### 1.0 Background Information

#### 1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

None

#### 1.2 City Hall Front Entrance Canopy Background Information

On February 2, 2019, a segment of the chilled water line within the south canopy failed, leading to a substantial leak that flooded the front entrance. Swift and crucial repairs to the chilled water line were promptly executed.

On February 5, 2023, another leak originating from the chilled water line occurred, flooding the soffit once again. The incident occurred at the primary entrance of City Hall, resulting in significant water damage to the soffit situated above the front entrance. In response to this occurrence, scaffolding was promptly installed as a precautionary measure to provide support to the compromised soffit. For clarity, the “south canopy” is the overhead structure above the front entrance to City Hall and extends over the stairs. The “soffit” is the finished material of the underside of the canopy that covers and protects the structural, mechanical, and electrical infrastructure. The current soffit is constructed of suspended wire lath and plaster with several access hatches.

Due to the confirmed existence of Asbestos Containing Material (ACM), the aging mechanical infrastructure and the necessary evaluation of all potential risks, including the potential structural failure of the canopy soffit itself, additional investigation and due diligence were necessary before implementing any corrective actions.

A structural engineer was commissioned to perform a thorough review of the soffit. The subsequent evaluation by the engineer indicated a structural concern with the soffit material and its connection to the main canopy structure. The report recommended that the installed scaffolding remain in place and advised the complete removal of the soffit. Furthermore, the report suggested conducting a comprehensive investigation due to repeated water damage and exposure.

The completion of a designated substance survey concluded that the fibrous sprayed fireproofing that is present on all structural steel and metal deck throughout the soffit is ACM and would be disturbed by the work. Therefore, a type 3 asbestos abatement operation, mandating full enclosure as per Ontario Regulation 278/05 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, is required. The extent of the enclosure will impact pedestrian access to the main entrance of City Hall for the duration of the project, with intermittent impacts on vehicle access.

An architect was engaged to complete schematic design options for the soffit replacement for staff review and consideration. After selecting an option, the architect proceeded to finalize design and construction documentation. A tender package was then released for contractors to competitively bid on. The architect will serve as the City's contract administrator, overseeing the project and collaborating with Facilities staff, subconsultants, and the contractor throughout the entire duration of the project.

It was the original intent to complete this work in the Fall of 2023, however given the required due diligence outlined above; the time required to professionally design and procure the work; and the impact it will have on the main entrance of City Hall, it was decided that the work should be scheduled for Spring 2024. This will avoid winter construction costs and weather delays as well as ensure the soffit can remain sealed to mitigate exposure to temperature fluctuations. Operationally, the mechanical system is functioning at the highest safe temperature to maintain warmer conditions within the soffit.

## **2.0 Key Issues and Considerations**

### **2.1 Cause of Failure**

Previous intermittent leaks observed during the summer months are associated with condensation forming on the chilled water piping situated within the canopy, and above the soffit. This condensation leads to the saturation of the insulation and plaster soffit and causes rusting of soffit components. Consequently, water drips through access hatches onto the front stairs and at the entrance of City Hall.

Upon further investigation, it was revealed that the substantial leaks in February of 2019 and 2023 resulted from a combination of cold air infiltration due to building envelope issues, particularly failing insulation, and aging mechanical piping systems.

## **2.2 Description of Work to Be Undertaken**

The scope of work includes a comprehensive set of tasks aimed at repairing the soffit and mechanical system and enhancing the City Hall main entrance. This includes:

### **1. Temporary Hoarding and Wayfinding:**

- Implementing temporary hoarding around the construction site for safety and security.
- Installing temporary wayfinding signage to guide the public safely around the construction area to the north entrance off Reg Cooper Square. Access to and from the building will be maintained at all times.

### **2. Soffit Demolition & Removal:**

- Removing the guard rail and extending the parapet wall of the balcony above.
- Removal and disposal of any associated hazardous materials within the soffit and canopy assembly.

### **3. Mechanical Equipment Repairs and Replacement:**

- Conducting necessary repairs and replacing mechanical infrastructure accessible within the soffit ceiling space to ensure optimal functionality.

### **4. New Canopy Soffit Installation:**

- Installing a new soffit constructed of aluminum composite panels that incorporates modern insulation, enhanced lighting, and provisions for security cameras to improve overall functionality and security measures.
- Install new aluminium composite panels on the balcony façade.

This comprehensive approach aims to not only address immediate concerns and potential hazards but also to enhance the overall functionality, safety, and security of the main entrance. Cost efficiencies can be achieved by completing the lighting and security system upgrades when the soffit has been fully removed. Access to the current soffit is through a limited number of hatches in specific locations, making repairs or additions more difficult and costly. The new soffit construction will allow easier access to the space and facilitate additions, changes, or repairs to the infrastructure within the soffit.

## **2.3 Construction Plan**

Hoarding will be erected under the entirety of the front canopy constructed of plywood to ensure a safe work environment for the contractor and to protect the public. This will prevent pedestrians from accessing City Hall from the south entrance. An alternate route to the north entrance will be provided. The accessibility ramp at the west side of the entrance will always remain available during the project.

The construction zone will also impact a portion of the front circle driveway at times. The hoarding will need to be extended into a small section of the driveway. The driveway will be maintained, and we do not anticipate any significant impacts to vehicle access.

## **2.4 Schedule**

Construction is set to begin on March 4, 2024, beginning with the installation of the hoarding. The anticipated completion date for the construction is July 31, 2024.

## **2.5 Impact to City Hall**

Facilities is collaborating closely with the City Clerk's Office, Corporate Communications, Corporate Security, and our Accessibility and Inclusion Advisor on this project. Access to City Hall will always remain available. Signage will be installed to facilitate wayfinding in accordance with AODA standards. A comprehensive communication plan will be prepared to keep the public informed about what to expect while accessing the facility

during ongoing work. The accessibility ramp will remain unaffected and accessible throughout the project. Our primary objective is to minimize any disruption to services.

Provisions for security will be implemented to guarantee that the north entrance doors leading from Reg Cooper Square are open and accessible during normal business hours. Regular monitoring of pathways and sidewalks leading to the north entrance will be conducted to ensure safe access for the public.

### **3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations**

The competitively tendered price of this work is \$338,700.00. This work is being funded through Capital Project GG155522 City Hall Major Upgrades. Funding was validated via a Source of Finance through the Administrative Approval of Tender Acceptance/Contract Award per Section 13.2 (c) of the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy.

## **Conclusion**

Due to the failure of aging infrastructure, it is imperative to undertake the repair and restoration of the City Hall front entrance soffit. These essential repairs aim to address structural, building envelope and mechanical concerns to ensure the longevity and safety of the building. This also provides an opportunity to enhance lighting and security features at the front entrance.

To guarantee a safe and secure remediation process, it is necessary to install hoarding beneath the south canopy. During the construction period, the front entrance of City Hall will be inaccessible. The public will be redirected to the north entrance. Additionally, the accessibility ramp will not be impacted by the construction and will remain fully operational.

A communication plan will be developed to notify staff and the public of this restoration project. We are committed to maintaining transparency and open communication throughout the process as we work towards enhancing the safety and functionality of City Hall.

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