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TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS CIVIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING ON DATE: DECEMBER 19, 2012
FROM:	PAT MCNALLY, P.ENG. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
SUBJECT:	COMMUNICATION AND DURATION FOR MAINTENANCE WORK

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Executive Director- Planning, Environmental and Engineering Services, this report **BE RECEIVED** and reported to Municipal Council for their information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- 1) ETC Report–Mon Mar 21, 2005–“Management of Social Costs of Construction on City Streets”.
- 2) ETC Report – Mon. May 30, 2005 – “Implementation of Strategies to Reduce Negative Social Costs of Construction on City Streets”.
- 3) ETC Report on Mon. Oct. 29, 2007 – “Social Impact Review”
- 4) ETC Report–Mon. Nov. 12, 2007 – “Communication Policy for Construction Projects”

BACKGROUND

Purpose:

Councilor Matt Brown submitted a letter to the September 12, 2011 BNEC requesting

“an information report to a future meeting of the Built and Natural Environment Committee setting out the strategies that are currently in place, and those that are in development to both:

1. Communicate plans and timelines for projects (road works, sidewalk repair, street light repair, etc.) with residents living in the affected neighbourhoods prior to beginning any work. and,
2. Ensure there are open and accessible lines of communication existing between the City and residents living in the affected neighbourhoods for the duration of the projects.”

Full letter: <http://council.london.ca/meetings/BNEC%20Reports/2011-09-12%20Report/Item%2028.pdf>

Discussion:

During a period from roughly 2004 to 2008, numerous reports were submitted and discussions took place between the administration and council about social impacts of construction. The primary discussion point was how to minimize the social impact to Londoners without unreasonably raising the cost of the service. The culmination of those discussions was a council policy 7(14) Communication Policy for Construction Projects that can be viewed here.

http://www.london.ca/City_Council/Table_of_Contents.htm#Chapter_7_Engineering_Services

The policy split construction work into 3 categories ranging from lowest to highest complexity. Those categories are maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Under the existing Council policy, maintenance work does not require any public notification. The request from Councilor Brown originates from a sidewalk panel replacement program constructed by City staff, which is categorized as maintenance. As part of the City’s obligation under the revised Provincial Minimum Maintenance Standards (O. Reg. 239/02) staff completed a sidewalk survey that identified over 5300 surface discontinuities. If “a surface discontinuity on a sidewalk exceeds two centimeters, the minimum standards is to treat the defect within 14 days after becoming aware of the fact”. This work is in addition to the regular maintenance program of repairing utility cuts, broken or sunken locations which can generate an additional 2500 locations yearly.

The draft Policy on Community Engagement is not expected to set out a specific tool or format for informing the public on these types of maintenance projects.

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One communication initiative under way is the improvement of the City's web pages that lists ongoing and upcoming construction projects (www.london.ca/construction). The improvements will see the addition of major maintenance works involving excavations in the road, major utility works and special events. That software is under development with the Technical Services Division and is targeted for completion for April 2012. This initiative will increase the speed and ability to find information on construction projects for residents, councillors, and internal staff. However, it should be noted that this site is unlikely to list maintenance work like individual sidewalk panel replacements. A telephone number will be available for questions about any maintenance work in the right of way that does not appear.

To increase the level of service for maintenance and construction work, two options exist. The first option is to increase communication with letters and/or door knockers listing the type of maintenance, duration, and contact information. These types of communications are currently used for tree removals and water service shut offs. Making this service level improvement would cost approximately \$100,000 per year within the PEES department allowing for communication, answering calls, and modifying the schedules to meet the communications.

The second option for improvement is an accelerated schedule for maintenance works. This can be achieved by creating and increasing the level of service timeline for numerous maintenance activities. For example, the current method of panel replacement involves a crew to remove panels, a separate crew to pour concrete, and another crew to remove forms and restore asphalt/brick/turf. These concrete pours are arranged to get enough panels ready to use full trucks of concrete and to optimize the concrete finishers' productivity. The other support crews are often associated with other maintenance work and their schedules are aligned as close as possible. Replacement crews work around parked cars, split driveway accesses where possible and may be called away to emergency repairs at any time. Accelerating the timeline can require overtime, have crews standing by, or incur costs for partial concrete loads. The current average range for panel removal, forming, pouring, stripping and restoration is 7 to 10 working days. Accelerating that task into 5 days, which would be a shortest possible time, could cost approximately \$600,000 per year in operating funds and \$100,000 in annualized capital equipment costs depending on volume and weather. Alternatively, the maintenance activity could be outsourced with tight completion deadlines. This was done in the 1980's, the costs were almost double the City cost and the expected value was not achieved.

Conclusions (or) Summary:

A level of service review was completed in 2007 and at that time defined appropriate communications across the construction spectrum. Increasing the level of service regarding timing and communication with maintenance activities is possible but will increase costs. To absorb these additional costs within constrained infrastructure budgets will decrease the funding available for maintenance and construction work.

Acknowledgements:

This report was based on consultations with PEES operational division managers and Elaine Gamble, Director of Corporate Communications.

SUBMITTED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
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