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TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS CIVIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING ON JANUARY 20, 2014
FROM:	EDWARD SOLDI, P.ENG. DIRECTOR OF ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION
SUBJECT	CLOSING OF HILL STREET BOULEVARD

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Director of Roads and Transportation, the following actions be taken with respect to the Hill Street boulevard:

- (a) the closing of a 6.140 metre wide by 59.131 metre long portion of the Hill Street boulevard abutting 419 Hill Street **BE APPROVED**; and,
- (b) Civic Administration **BE AUTHORIZED** to initiate the process of legally closing the said portion of the Hill Street boulevard as public highway, it being noted that the closing will not be initiated until the City enters into a purchase and sale agreement for the closed road allowance.

BACKGROUND

Purpose:

The owner of 419 Hill Street has applied to close and purchase part of the Hill Street road allowance, being part of the boulevard of Hill Street. Prior to the boulevard being sold it must be legally closed as public highway, which is the subject of this report.

DISCUSSION

The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation Diocese of London, being the owner of Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish Church at 419 Hill Street just east of Colborne, has applied to close and purchase a 6.140 metre wide by 59.131 metre long strip of the Hill Street boulevard that immediately abuts their property. The Church has been using the boulevard for parking under a long-running commercial boulevard parking agreement with the City and now wants to formally acquire the boulevard to make the parking permanent. They also have plans to renovate the front entrance to the Church to better accommodate the disabled, and renovations require the acquisition of the boulevard.

Normally, Civic Administration doesn't support such applications because of the need to maintain public infrastructure and buried utilities within the road allowance, as well as to help protect the streetscape in established neighborhoods. However, this is an unusual case.

Hill Street, which was originally laid out by Crown Plan 30 in 1840, abruptly transitions from a 40 metre (132 foot) wide road allowance to a more standard 20 metre (66 foot) wide allowance directly in front of the Church property. For the most part, the discontinuity in street width has not been reflected in the actual build-out of the street as the public infrastructure and utilities are essentially confined within a standard 20 metre wide corridor for the entire length of the block from Colborne Street on the west to Maitland Street on the East.

The double-wide portion of Hill Street in this block has never been utilized and is in excess of what the City needs to support a residential street. Closing and selling the proposed 6.140 metre wide by 59.131 metre long strip will not affect public infrastructure or utilities and will have no detrimental effect on the streetscape since a sufficiently wide portion of the boulevard will be retained by the City to accommodate neighborhood enhancement plans through the Planning Department's "Green Streets" initiative.

Specifically, no Civic departments including Planning or Environmental and Engineering

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Services object to the closing and sale of the boulevard. The City's Building Division has also confirmed that when the boulevard is acquired by the Diocese, there will be no zoning implications if/when they apply for a building permit.

The required closing by-law will not be requisitioned until Realty Services and the Diocese have agreed upon a purchase price for the Hill Street boulevard.

CONCLUSION

The Hill Street boulevard in front of 419 Hill Street is excessively wide and is not needed by the City. It has been licenced for parking use by Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish Church, owned by the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation Diocese of London, whom now wishes to acquire ownership for continued parking use and to accommodate a planned Renovation of the Church. The City has no need for the boulevard and its closing and sale will not impact the City operations or that of the utilities, and will have no detrimental effect on the local street scape. It is therefore recommended that the closing of the boulevard as public highway be approved as a prelude to being sold to the Diocese.



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PREPARED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
A. GARY IRWIN, O.L.S., O.L.I.P. DIVISION MANAGER, GEOMATICS AND CHIEF SURVEYOR	EDWARD SOLDO, P.ENG. DIRECTOR OF ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION
REVIEWED AND CONCURRED BY:	
JOHN M. BRAAM, P.ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND CITY ENGINEER	

December 17, 2013
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