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TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS CIVIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 3, 2015
FROM:	JOHN BRAAM, P. ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES AND CITY ENGINEER AND JOHN M. FLEMING MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER
SUBJECT:	DUNDAS PLACE DUNDAS FLEXIBLE STREET SCOPING STUDY

RECOMMENDATION

That on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Environmental and Engineering Services and City Engineer and the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, the following actions **BE TAKEN** with respect to Creating Dundas Place, A Flexible Street Scoping Study:

- (a) the Scoping Study **BE APPROVED** as the basis for implementation of the project; and,
- (b) this report **BE RECEIVED** for information in support of the identified 2015 Capital budget item for the project.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- Civic Works Committee – May 14, 2012 – Dundas Street Improvements, Formulating an Implementation Plan
- Civic Works Committee – August 25, 2014 – Dundas Flexible Street Scoping Study, Consulting Engineer Assignment Increase
- Planning and Environment Committee – February 2, 2015 - Our Move Forward: London’s Downtown Plan

BACKGROUND

Purpose

This report seeks Committee and Council approval of the report entitled Creating Dundas Place, A Flexible Street Project Scoping Study. The Scoping Study Report is available on the City website at www.london.ca/DundasPlace and the Executive Summary text is attached as Appendix “A”. This Civic Works Report also provides information in support of the 2015 Roads & Transportation Capital Budget item for this project.

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The Dundas Place project is recommended in Our Move Forward: London’s Downtown Plan. It is Project 1 in a list of Transformational Projects that aim to reinforce the community’s vision for the Downtown and reinforce its place as the preeminent destination for the City and region.

DISCUSSION

Context

The Dundas Flexible Street evolved from the 2008 *Blueprint for Action; Report of the Downtown Task Force*. The associated public engagement process identified that recreating Dundas Street is a top priority and a clear next step in the revitalization of the Downtown.

The objective of the Blueprint for Action is to “make Dundas Street the most exciting street in London”. The short term goals identified in the report were cleaning up and rejuvenating Dundas Street. The longer term goal is to create a piazza on Dundas Street through beautification, a greater business street presence and development of a pedestrian oriented concept. The Blueprint also recommends phasing buses, then cars, out of the corridor during the spring, summer and fall. The Dundas Street project was subsequently introduced at a concept level of detail at the April 27th 2011 Core Area Summit public meeting and the Mayor’s “Downtown Vision” public meeting on September 28th 2011.

London’s Downtown Plan study evolved out of the previous public discourse and feedback and Council’s previously established vision. The process has benefited from public dialogue and extensive consultation. The final report, Our Move Forward: London’s Downtown Plan is planned to be presented to the Planning and Environment Committee on February 2nd 2015. The report identifies that a successful downtown is London’s face to the world. A successful downtown is key for retaining and attracting business investment in London. A strong downtown tells the world that London is vibrant, interesting, exciting and enriching. It signals to investors that London is a place that is competitive in attracting and retaining a high quality labour force. It exudes the kind of success that breeds investment confidence. The report identifies several Transformational Projects to improve the public realm, the pedestrian experience and create improved amenities for downtown living, business development and connections to the downtown. Dundas Street is the first of several Transformational Projects that proposes public realm improvements. The project will identify Dundas Street as the preeminent street and gathering place. This project would build upon other downtown success stories such as the Budweiser Gardens, the Downtown Library and Covent Garden Market.

Project Description

This goal of this project is to transform the blocks of Dundas Street between Wellington Street and the Forks of the Thames from a conventional downtown public right-of-way into a public space, “Dundas Place”, that is a unique destination in and of itself. Its construction would create a seamless



Filmore Plaza, Denver Colorado

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environment that allows vehicles and people to effectively share the same space. The flexible street would have physical design characteristics similar to that of a public square.

The project aims to create a focal point for the downtown. It will be a shared space with a preference toward pedestrian usage. The urban space will be accessible to all and serve as a stage for day-to-day activities as well as special functions and programmed activities, festivals and events. The project will encourage business and development opportunities and will forge a connection between the Forks of the Thames and the life of the City.

Council approved initiation of the Dundas Flexible Street Scoping Study and it was initiated in December 2012. The purpose of the study was to summarize the existing conditions, capture the future vision and propose urban design concepts. The study identified impacts and opportunities for other services and infrastructure and developed a preliminary project schedule and cost estimate. In addition to the Downtown Plan, the Scoping Study built upon previous studies including the draft London Plan, the Smart Moves Transportation Master Plan, the Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan and the Urban Forestry Strategy.

The Scoping Study concepts envision a street with no curbs, unique paving surfaces and movable bollards that can easily transform space orientation from vehicle to pedestrian. Design elements such as paving patterns, trees, street furnishings and lighting would also be used to delineate space for different functions. The design will also allow shops, restaurants and services to spill into the sidewalks

This proposed shared approach to the occupancy, use, and appearance of a historic commercial main street is unique in North America, though it would share some aspects of the transformation projects shown on King Street in Kitchener, Broadway in New York City, and Filmore Plaza in Denver.



King Street, Kitchener Ontario



Broadway, New York

Transit

London's Downtown Plan identifies the necessity to reroute London Transit fixed-route services off Dundas Street because Dundas Place will be available for vehicular access intermittently. Further, an identified objective from the Downtown Task Force Blueprint for Action and the Downtown Plan is to remove the buses from Dundas Street.

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Currently 21 transit routes travel on or across Dundas Street through the downtown. Seven of the routes will be directly impacted by shifting the east-west bus routing onto Queens Avenue and King Street through the project limits. LTC has indicated that this project has the potential to increase transit operating costs and negatively impact transit use based on existing configurations. However, the future of transit in the downtown is poised to undergo a significant transformation with the implementation of Rapid Transit, as determined through the Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment. Rapid Transit should create institutional improvements for the service. The LTC is also currently undertaking a Route and Service Review that will examine short and long term improvements to the system.

Further study of the transit service is required to develop an operational plan to deal with the realignment of bus routes and relocation of the transit hub at the intersection of Dundas and Richmond Streets in conjunction with the proposed Rapid Transit implementation and potential High Speed Rail Environmental Assessment project that the Province of Ontario has initiated.

Parking

It is important that Downtown London continues to provide a supply of parking that serves business needs. Short term parking is of particular benefit on Dundas Street. However, parking uses valuable space that can also serve other purposes that further the needs of the project.

The Downtown London Parking Master Plan is currently being completed and it will help inform the parking requirements for this initiative, determine usage utilization rates and assist the decision making as to how much parking should be provided on Dundas Street. Consultation with the local business owners to understand their needs and investigate parking alternatives will be a key component of the project engagement plan.



Hess Village, Hamilton Ontario

Infrastructure

Dundas Street has a very high density of municipal services and utilities and the project needs to have regard for the opportunities and constraints these present. While the potential for design constraints exists, the project does provide an opportunity to rationalize the placement of, and upgrade utility installations as needed in the corridor.

Water

City of London watermains ranging in age from 50 to over 100 years old exist beneath the street. These mains and any remaining lead services are recommended for replacement at the time of street reconstruction.

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Sewers

The sewers beneath Dundas Street were reconstructed in the 1960s. The design life of the sewer pipes is 100 years and only minor works are proposed. The sewer reconstruction included the separation of storm and sanitary sewer pipes to enable prevention of sanitary overflows into the Thames River. However, the separation of flows remains an issue because a number of building owners have yet to separate their internal sanitary and storm flows within the buildings. The Dundas Flexible Street construction would provide an opportunity to extend any unconnected storm private drain connections into the buildings. Further work inside the buildings would remain the responsibility of the property owners.

London Hydro

London Hydro has over 60 chambers and vaults as well as three major duct structures along Dundas Street. The majority of this infrastructure dates back to the early 1920s. London Hydro has indicated a desire to upgrade and consolidate the Hydro infrastructure in conjunction with this project.

The reconstruction of the Dundas Street hydro plant represents a significant planning and coordination effort. London Hydro has indicated a lengthy schedule to plan and fund the project.

Cost Estimate

Capital Costs

The estimated cost of the project is in the order of \$16 Million. It is broken down into major items as follows:

Engineering, Studies, Engagement, Coordination	\$2,600,000
Construction:	
Roadworks	\$5,800,000
Sewers	\$700,000
Waterworks*	\$1,400,000
Traffic Signals and Streetlighting and Utilities**	\$3,200,000
Street Furniture and Landscaping	\$2,400,000
Total Capital Costs	\$16,000,000

* *Replacement of aged City watermains at the time of the surface improvements will be identified in the Water capital budget.*

** *Utility cost identified is only the City portion of costs.*

London Transit Commission has estimated that rerouting fixed-route services off Dundas Street will require one-time costs of \$1.5 M for three additional buses and \$170,000 of infrastructure relocation. The additional buses are required to maintain service levels with the additional imposed routing time. However, this cost information was received prior to the commencement of the Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment and the Service and Route Review which may affect these costs.

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London Hydro has identified major infrastructure upgrades in the corridor that would be coordinated with the construction. The cost of hydro plant upgrades is a London Hydro expense and is estimated to be in the order of \$6 to \$10 Million.

Operating Costs

The successful execution of this project relies on a long-term commitment to maintain the space to an enhanced level. This would be similar to the limited timeframe “ramped-up” City Operations activities that were executed in the downtown for the 2013 World Figure Skating Championships and the 2014 Mastercard Memorial Cup Hockey Tournament.

Creating Dundas Place as a permanent outdoor civic space, equivalent to an outdoor version of Budweiser Gardens, may require a distinct management model similar to Budweiser Gardens that operates in partnership with the City. The project considers establishing an entity dedicated to its ongoing management function to ensure coordination of maintenance, security, seasonal decorations, event programming and scheduling, revenue generation, and vehicular access. Thus, a variety of functions currently executed by various City operations departments, emergency service providers, planners, cultural officers, etc. will need to be reviewed in the design, construction, and forward administration of the project. There is potential for the Business Improvement Association (BIA) to play a role in the ongoing operation.

Until the scope of the enhanced operating and the model through which it is delivered is determined, the additional operating costs associated with this project are very difficult to estimate. A very preliminary estimate is between \$100,000 and \$200,000 per year.

LTC has estimated an ongoing operating cost increase at \$282,000 per year associated with the three additional buses required to maintain existing service, subject to the studies discussed previously.

Schedule

The project requires significant lead time. A municipal class environmental assessment is required for a project of this scale. Community engagement with all stakeholders will be important for the success of the project. Studies such as parking utilization and transit network configuration studies are also required to support this initiative. The coordination of internal and external services and utilities design and construction will be a time consuming process. In addition to the significant works envisioned by London Hydro, Rogers Cable Bell Canada, London District Heating (Veresen), Union Gas and others may have works to be considered in the project scheduling.

The 2015 capital budget funding request enables the initiation of these initial project activities. The Scoping Study conservatively identifies a seven year total project schedule. Considering the time required for the environmental assessment and external utility work, construction is anticipated to being in Year 5. This schedule will be developed further as the project details are scoped through the above activities and opportunities to expedite will be pursued. Key to this is coordination of external utility works. Of utmost concern will be minimizing the impacts to the business community during project implementation. Determination of utility requirements and the ability to

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coordinate multi-jurisdictional construction activities under unified contracts will be a factor in schedule development.

CONCLUSION

Recent research by the Canadian Urban Institute has identified that investments in downtown projects such as this provide a good economic return on investment by growing confidence in the downtown and increasing its levels of vitality with more visitors and residents.

Dundas has been London’s *Main Street* dating back to the 1800’s and has been the City’s economic and cultural heart. Positioning it to regain its previous status can benefit the downtown and by extension, the entire City. Downtown is London’s face to the world.

The Downtown Task Force and London’s Downtown Plan identifies a goal of making Dundas the most exciting street in London. This goal is promoted in the Downtown Plan through the identification of this transformational project. The Dundas Place Flexible Street can provide the foundation for the vision.

Acknowledgements:

This report was prepared with input from Jim Yanchula, Manager, Urban Regeneration.

SUBMITTED BY:	REVIEWED BY:
DOUG MACRAE, P.ENG. DIVISION MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & DESIGN	EDWARD SOLDI, P. ENG. DIRECTOR, ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION
RECOMMENDED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
JOHN BRAAM, P.ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES & CITY ENGINEER	JOHN FLEMING, MCIP, RPP MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING & CITY PLANNER

Attach: Appendix “A” – Dundas Flexible Street Scoping Study Executive Summary
 c. John Fleming, Managing Director, Planning & City Planner
 London Transit Commission c/o Kelly Paleczny
 Transportation Advisory Committee c/o Heather Lysynski
 IBI Group

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Appendix “A” Dundas Flexible Street Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The Dundas Street Scoping Study is a preliminary study to define the scope of future improvement initiatives as related to Dundas Street in order to create a more attractive, vibrant and functional corridor in the heart of London, Ontario. It is the next step in a commitment to a new and revitalized Dundas Street – a bustling, thriving public space which will once again become the economic, cultural and institutional heart of the City.

In 2012, the City of London retained IBI Group to carry out the Dundas Street Scoping Study and develop a project that meets several goals and opportunities as outlined in the Draft Downtown Plan (June 2013) as well as provide the City with a comprehensive review to identify how Dundas Street can be successfully re-established as the primary shopping and recreation district in London. With a principal focus on flexible streets, enhanced pedestrianization and increased linkages to key local features, the Scoping Study blends a strong understanding of the relationship between urban design and placemaking, traffic, transportation, safety, construction staging, utility relocation, maintenance and operation and costing. The resulting project plan details a balanced approach over a seven year period and includes budget and timelines for stakeholder consultation, design and construction.

The report is organized into 11 key sections, each building upon the understanding and findings of the previous sections to culminate in a set of design opportunities, implementation and staging and cost estimates. The key sections are briefly summarized as follows:

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Introduction

Dundas Street has always been an important street for the City of London, with a rich history dating back well into the 1800s. This section details valuable historical context, the steps taken to further the revitalization conversation and the purpose of the Dundas Street Scoping Study.

Case Studies

Given the intent to transform the segment of Dundas from Ridout Street to Wellington Street into a flexible street or shared street, there is a strong need to fully understand the implication and benefits of these types of streets. In this section, these terms are defined and further expanded upon, providing three successful case studies for review.

Context

Context plays a critical role in urban design and placemaking, and in this section, elements that influence Dundas Street both physically and non-physically are examined. In addition to defining the study area, Dundas Street is evaluated in terms of its place within the City of London and its importance as both an economic and social hub as well as a key component of the London transportation system.

Existing Conditions

In this section, the existing conditions of the five block section between Wellington Street and the Forks of the Thames are studied and graphically represented including key local attractions, existing built form and the delineation of three distinct character areas. An issues and opportunities analysis is categorized by the built environment, the natural environment, infrastructure and servicing, transportation and transit, social-economic and traffic operations, pedestrian movement and parking.

Dundas Street Vision

While Dundas Street has been included as part of numerous studies and improvement initiatives, it has never been the sole subject of a comprehensive review to create a new project opportunity to “re-invent the street”. The many studies that have helped to develop the project vision are reviewed and summarized in this section as well as ideas combined to further develop specific key components in terms of economic, placemaking and direct benefits.

Public Transit

This section outlines the potential impacts on the public transit services and transit users should removal of public transit services occur on Dundas Street between Wellington and Ridout. Specifically, the potential impacts are discussed in regards to transit operating costs and transit use.

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Transportation

As Dundas Street is a central portion of the Downtown London’s transportation network, any major changes to the street have to be evaluated against various transportation considerations. In this section, changes are considered in terms of road network operation, parking, enhances pedestrianization, cycling and event planning and street closure.

Infrastructure Review

Within the City of London, Dundas Street has the highest density of municipal services and utilities and any future improvements will need to have regard for these services. This section provides a summary of the information provided by various service and/or utility representatives during the course of this study in addition to potential impacts these services and/or utilities could have on any future revitalization projects.

Design Opportunities

Dundas Street revitalization has been identified within the Draft Downtown Plan as the first of six strategic directions items focused on public realm improvements. The project plan presented in this section consolidates all design opportunities identified and provides direction on specific sections of the street to further execute the project vision of making Dundas Street “the most exciting place in London”.

Implementation

The Dundas Street project plan shown in this document will be implemented over time incrementally and in a balanced manner addressing various conflicting interests and priorities, which are identified and listed in this section. A Critical Path Schedule is also recommended, which takes the project from project commitment to construction over a seven year period.

Stage & Cost Estimates

Due to the size and scale of the anticipated improvements, a two stage phasing strategy is recommended and outlined in this section as well as pre-design estimates of probable costs for both stages.