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TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS CIVIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2012
FROM:	JOHN BRAAM, P.ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENGINEERING & CITY ENGINEER
SUBJECT:	HIGHWAY 401 Highbury Avenue Interchange Reconstruction MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ADDENDUM

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Engineering & City Engineer, the Preferred Plan in the Class Environmental Assessment Addendum Study conducted by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation for the reconstruction of the Highway 401 / Highbury Avenue Interchange **BE ENDORSED**, it being noted that this endorsement is for the technical aspects of the Preferred Plan including the widening of Highbury Avenue to six lanes from Highway 401 southerly to Wilton Grove Road.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- Environment and Transportation Committee – January 12, 2004 – Highway 401 Improvement: Planning Study Completion

BACKGROUND

Context:

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) completed a class environmental assessment study of Highway 401 from Highway 4 / Colonel Talbot Road to Highbury Avenue in 2004. The Transportation Environmental Study Report (TESR) outlined short, medium and long-term needs to address highway operating capacity, safety and interchange deficiencies. Primary recommendations were for additional lanes on Highway 401 and improvements/expansions of London interchanges.

The 2004 TESR identified additional lanes on Highbury Avenue. This need for additional capacity has been confirmed in the recent Transportation Master Plan Update.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the current MTO study and obtain Council endorsement of the Class EA Addendum Preferred Plan.

Class Environmental Assessment Summary:

MTO retained Dillon Consulting Ltd. to undertake a review and update of the Highbury Avenue Interchange aspects of the previously approved 2004 EA to prepare for the reconstruction of the interchange within the next 2 to 4 years. Due to the lapse in time since the 2004 study and changes to the design, an Addendum to the EA is being prepared. The EA Addendum study was initiated in May, 2012 and a Public Information Centre was held in June, 2012.

The previous EA proposed maintaining the existing interchange layout with a westerly shift of Highbury Avenue to simplify construction. The current study confirms the previously identified interchange layout but proposes to maintain the current Highbury Avenue alignment to minimize property and utility impacts.

The EA Addendum identifies an Interim Design for near-term interchange improvements, followed by an Ultimate Design for the future widening of Highway 401. The primary features of the Interim Design include:

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- Replacement of the interchange bridge to accommodate additional lanes on Highbury Avenue and future additional lanes on Highway 401;
- Reconstruction of bridge approaches to accommodate a grade raise for the longer structure;
- Widening of Highbury Avenue to six lanes from Highway 401 southerly to Wilton Grove Road; and,
- Reconstruction of interchange ramps.

The Ultimate Design includes the widening of Highway 401 to ten lanes plus speed change lanes and the installation of high-mast lighting.

The preferred plan was selected based on an evaluation of Highway Engineering, Social, Cultural and Natural Environment considerations.

The construction staging plan developed to date balances the need to minimize traffic disruptions while allowing construction to be completed in a timely and efficient manner. Highbury Avenue will be reduced to one lane in each direction during construction. Periodic overnight and weekend closures of Highbury Avenue will also be required. The detours associated with the short-term closures of Highbury Avenue will be to Veterans Memorial Parkway and Wellington Road via Bradley Avenue and Wilton Grove Road. The proposed traffic management plan is acceptable to staff and has operated adequately during previous construction at this location in the past.

The City owns a developable property southwest of the interchange at 1416 Wilton Grove Road. The north half of this property is zoned Light Industrial and the south half is an Open Space Zone with a woodlot designated as "significant" in the Official Plan. Acquisition of a widening strip from this property was identified in the 2004 EA. The design modifications proposed by the current review reduce the amount of property required to construct the project. The current property requirement is estimated at 5,400 m² and is predominantly from the north half of the property. The EA design anticipates development in the north half and includes left and right turn lanes into the site.

A cost contribution for the expansion of Highbury Avenue will be required from the City and is subject to future negotiations. This project is identified in the City's Transportation Master Plan and will be carried forward to the upcoming Development Charges Background Study and rate calculation. A new project is required in the upcoming Capital Budget Forecast. Since this project is related to growth, funding should be predominantly from the City Services Reserve Fund (Development Charges).

The interchange improvements, as defined by the EA Addendum Interim Design, is identified in the Southern Ontario Highways Program (SOHP) for completion by 2016. The SOHP project also includes the new Highway 401 Interchange at Wonderland Road and the expansion of the Veterans Memorial Parkway.

Conclusion:

Dillon Consulting Ltd., on behalf of MTO, is finalizing a Class Environmental Assessment Addendum for the reconstruction of the Highway 401 / Highbury Avenue Interchange. The preferred plan is to reconstruct the interchange to accommodate a widening of Highbury Avenue to six lanes and a future widening of Highway 401. The next step for the study is to file the Transportation Environmental Study Report (TESR) on the public record. Staff recommends that Council endorse the Ministry's EA preferred plan.

This project represents a cost-effective opportunity for the City to expand capacity on Highbury Avenue to facilitate industrial development in the area south of Highway 401. MTO has indicated a cost contribution will be required from the City. This is subject to future negotiations and will be addressed in a future report. This project is identified in the Transportation Master Plan and will be carried forward to the upcoming Development Charges Background Study and rate calculation. Staff recommends that this new project be introduced into the Capital Budget Forecast.

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Acknowledgements:

This report was prepared with the assistance of Doug MacRae, P.Eng. Transportation Design Engineer in the Transportation Planning & Design Division.

RECOMMENDED BY:	REVIEWED AND CONCURRED BY:
JOHN LUCAS, P. ENG. DIVISION MANAGER TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND DESIGN	JOHN BRAAM, P.ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENGINEERING & CITY ENGINEER

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cc: Brian Goudeseune, Ministry of Transportation
 Kevin Welker, Dillon Consulting Ltd.
 Peter Christiaans
 Alan Dunbar