

Transportation Committee – Tom Scott

A number of matters of interest have arisen since the last virtual meeting:

1. The PXO standards with functioning solar panels and flashing lights have been restored at the Greenfield and North Concord intersection. The south-east standard had been sheared off and crushed by a transport truck backing up southbound from Concord across Greenfield (northbound ends at a one-way street exit for Echo), and the rest of the array was temporarily replaced by metal signs on steel pickets. Greenfield Avenue is now also fully signed for 40 km./hr.
2. The City designated the neighbourhoods west of Main to Echo from Graham down to Riverdale (but excluding Riverdale itself) as a gateway where speed limits would be posted at the entrances to these neighbourhoods at 30 km./hr. and additional traffic calming measures would be added as scheduling and weather permit. The first signs were posted this month.
3. The City held a virtual meeting of the Public Advisory Committee for the ongoing planning and design phases of the Greenfield/Main/Hawthorne reconstruction project on Tuesday, November 24, 2020 with at times as many as 35 attendees. The project consultants presented updated and revised plans and schedules. A number of design adjustments were noted especially at intersections, to try and improve pedestrian and cyclist safety. Overhead utilities are to be buried along North Main and Greenfield. The schedule, which has already been delayed a year, is now put off one more year and the order of construction has been reversed: south of the Queensway (Hawthorne, Echo and parts of Main) will now commence first in 2021 along with necessary adjustments to natural-gas lines and gas mains, and then north of the Queensway down to King Edward in 2022 with final landscaping, signage and other adjustments into 2023.

Additional background from within the Transportation Committee and a proposed motion related to the PAC outcomes are attached.

Sent: Wednesday, November 25, 2020, 12:33:10 p.m. EST

Subject: Re: Last night's GMH consultation - delay required?

Good afternoon John [Dance]

I also saw Alexandra's comments back to you. I too was really hoping for more integration of issues and solutions in the project design after this long delay. Instead we got a statement that this project's permit is primarily to replace ageing (and failing) water and sewer infrastructure and to more fully provide separation of what are now combined storm and domestic sewer lines. Improvements in the surface infrastructure appear to be secondary to the buried infrastructure in both priority and funding.

Funding is a matter of affordability choice. City staff chooses what to recommend and Council chooses what to fund, but there is no magic in fully costing what is basically a construction project. Do the design and planning well, cost out the required materials and labour, and then

present the project budget to decision-makers for approval. City staff would never recommend paving only the left half of Greenfield to save money.

Why then would a design be accepted that only half-protected the main cycling route through Old Ottawa East? Jonathan [McLeod] clearly made the point that if additional costs need to be incurred for a fully realized project, then now is the time to identify those costs and secure funding, not five years from now when all the primary infrastructure work is completed and incremental tasks become even more disruptive and costly.

The conflict areas identified in last night's slide show were exactly those identified in the Main Complete Street Safety Audit, and were left undone in the City's response to its own consultant's recommendations; City staff at that time also clearly pointed to what was then this up-and-coming project to find solutions. Those on the PAC will equally clearly recall that this project accepted the responsibility to deal with the outstanding (that is, incomplete) recommendations from the Safety Audit: most notably the safety gap in the Main cycling route from Harvey to Graham, and the turn from Graham to Colonel By Drive, but also the turning radius issue at the SW corner of Main and Hawthorne. That there is no money for these represents a failure in planning and design and a failure of the City to recognize the safety and security needs of active transport (pedestrians and cyclists) over motorists.

Discussions with MTO and NCC needed, and need, to be more active, transparent and timely. There is only one taxpayer and both of these senior-level-of-government agencies carry the same responsibilities for public health and safety, as do the City staffers, on behalf of their respective Ministers.

It is likely that having to find design solutions to these issues would in itself cause further delays in a project now more than two years behind; however, COVID-19 impacts on the City budget and cash-flows may have staff out looking for projects to defer anyway. What we could recommend is: take the time, get the designs right, get better integration of the buried infrastructure needs with the surface infrastructure planning, get the Ministers for both MTO and NCC onside for their shares; and then, seriously disrupt Old Ottawa East once and for good with a project that makes sense. If that takes another year, then so be it.

As a measure of integration, or lack thereof, there is an item in the water supply system plan to link the high pressure main under Hawthorne, down Greenfield and looping around to the Hurdman pumping station. This could also serve new developments to the south and east of the LRT stations at both Lees and Hurdman. It is not in the permit of this GMH project at this time - when there was a schedule pause announced, I had questioned the project management: if we are going to completely dig up Greenfield and N Main at this time, bury utilities and shift gas mains, then why not build in the high-pressure watermain at this time so that in the next few decades or so we don't have to dig up Greenfield again? That was in someone else's plan and budget sphere was the answer and not part of the project scope. My comment that buried infrastructure was supposed to be the priority got no further traction.

I remain to be convinced that using this time but still not planning to bury utilities on Hawthorne is short-sighted. Taking the poles away serves a large number of purposes, including, among

others, allowing trees to be replanted and flourish on both sides of Hawthorne, allowing greater ease and efficiency of snow clearing, protecting lines from storm damage and service loss thereby increasing Climate Change resilience, and improving the esthetics and design continuity of the entranceway to Old Ottawa East from the Elgin corridor.

I guess that my expectations were unduly raised that we would see more solutions and fewer issue-identification slides after the pause in public consultations. As your OOECA Transportation representative, please know that I raised all these concerns and proposed solutions with the project manager and his design teams well in advance of this latest PAC meeting, so I remain more than a bit at a loss of where to turn to next. I don't think that I could yet take a resolution to our Community Association to support this updated design prior to the proposed Public Information Session.

Sent: Sunday, December 6, 2020, 02:14:10 p.m. EST
Good afternoon Transportation Committee members

Further to your note this morning. I sent this message (noted above) out to the members of the virtual Transportation Committee but so far you and Alexandra are the only ones to answer. Ariela [Summit] acknowledged receipt. There was also a parallel discussion going on with you and Barbara that touched on many of these points.

If I send my note out as a report to the rest of the board members, I think then that I need a plan of action: I don't know if you share the same view, but I think that we are beyond just talking to the City project manager and his consultants because they are already in a box, perhaps in part of their own making. Nevertheless, we also need to keep our lines of communication open and friendly with that manager and Novatech.

Our ends of the east-side canal and Main "mainstreet" bikeways still go from nowhere to nowhere without a safe crossing at Smyth and another at Main and CBD - the Graham design is turning out to be a disaster and the whole thing needs to be re-thought if we are going to get pedestrians and cyclist safely over to Pretoria and onto the canal MUPs. At the other end, Rideau at Sussex is getting repainted but how to get safely from the end of CBD in that congested block then over to Mackenzie? We seem to want to keep building dedicated bike lanes that do nothing more than dump cyclists into conflict intersections. I'm not clear on why two segregated tracks on Hawthorne is not a more likely answer except that the west side on Main from Harvey to Graham remains the bottle neck. Speaking to MTO about the use of the property from the Main-417 Bridge to Hawthorne seems to be just too much for the project. The cat is already well out of the bag for expropriations so why the great secrecy?

Speaking of Hawthorne, the project manager appears to be up against a wall for removing overhead utility lines and someone needs to give clearer direction to Hydro Ottawa, as the Mayor was pleased to note just recently in his Elgin Street address. Besides the multi-faceted rationale that we have already presented, burying the utilities at this time would also get them out of the way for MTO when the Queensway's Main and Rideau Canal bridges have to be replaced. What MTO's construction phase would do to newly reconstructed City streets, cycling paths and sidewalks, with associated accessories and signage, remains to be seen.

The Nicholas overpass replacement project is also way behind its original schedule so that may not bode well for the Queensway downtown-bridges replacement projects' scheduling. The projects marching in from the west towards Bronson and Percy seem to be chugging along but are still in the planning and property-grab phase (see this weekend's Citizen) so the big spending is still a few years down the road, so to speak.

I have to think that, at this time with what we have seen, we need to be on the record with the Councillor and Mayor of **not** supporting just the limited adjustments, and that prior to the Public Information Session, more of this design needs to be shared more broadly with affected communities. If someone is looking for a candidate to reduce cash-flow demand by a project deferral until the City gets back on its fiscal feet after COVID-19/20/21, then this should be one to be seriously considered - and then use the time to come up with a more rational design and plan with a better chance of consensus acceptance. It also needs to stop shrugging off the safety issues raised in the Main Street audit report, for which it accepted responsibility, but are now deemed to be beyond its scope.

Given the concerns raised above

Moved that the Old Ottawa East Community Association **not** support the amended project designs and plans, as presented at the third PAC meeting for the Greenfield Main Hawthorne (GMH) project. OOECA requests that the Mayor and Councillor take more positive action to provide for a full scope and budget for this project necessary to meet both infrastructure and transportation requirements in equal balance with identified safety concerns and to more fully incorporate the objectives of the Official Plan renewal, especially for facilitating fifteen-minute neighbourhoods, for improving Climate Change resilience and for setting a stronger priority on active transport.

Tom Scott
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