
City of Kelowna

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 18, 2006
FILE: 8330-20 COB - Model Integration Planning
TO: City Manager
FROM: Transportation Manager
RE: **Central Okanagan Bypass - Modal Integration Study**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a funding agreement with Transport Canada for the planning of the Central Okanagan Multimodal Corridor.

AND THAT Council award a sole sourced assignment to Summit Environment Consultant Ltd to undertake an environmental assessment of the corridor for a fee of \$17,484;

AND FURTHER THAT Council award a sole sourced assignment to the IBI Group to undertake the planning of freight movement and the rail corridor improvements components of the Modal Integration Study for a fee of \$76,970.

BACKGROUND:

Traffic in the Hwy 97 corridor between Spall and Hwy 33 has grown considerably in recent years. Between 1996 and 2003 the average summer day traffic grew from approximately 51,500 vehicles/day to about 65,000 vpd.

The congestion along this corridor has become very evident during peak seasons. With the summer tourist season between June and September the corridor is frequently congested in afternoons from about noon to 6 pm. However, the month of December is also heavily congested due to Christmas shopping both weekdays and weekends.

Responding to the congestion in the corridor, City Council directed staff to accelerate the planning and design of the Central Okanagan Bypass. It will take about eighteen months to complete design, so Council has indicated that they would use this period of time to continue lobbying senior government for partnerships on the project. However, based on design being completed by early 2008 and a two year construction window, it will be at least 2010 before this corridor could be opened to the public.

The provincial Minister of Transportation has indicated that he is not prepared to cost-share any portion of the COB at this time. This position has been taken even though this proposed road could significantly relieve traffic on Hwy 97. Ministry staff have recognized the COB's potential as a replacement of the existing highway if it were

constructed to a higher level with no accesses and grade separation. There is some thought that the Ministry may become interested in a funding partnership if the federal government were prepared to be a funding partner. So there remains an interest to pursue senior government funding to build the COB as a higher order road bypassing the existing commercial section of the highway between Spall Rd and Hwy 33.

The federal government partners on major highways across the country. Their Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program (SHIP) primarily provides funding for highways designated under the National Highway System. Hwy 97 through Kelowna was placed on the National Highway System in September, 2004 after a considerable lobbying that was initiated by Kelowna City Council in the 1990s.

In January, 2006 the City made application to Transport Canada for funding under their 'Transportation Planning and Modal Integration Initiatives' (TPMI) program. This is a funding program under SHIP. The application was on the basis of a partnership that was put together with the BC Ministry of Transportation and UBC Okanagan. The application was for \$100,000 from Transport Canada. The other partner's funding would be as follows:

- City of Kelowna \$100,000 cash;
- Ministry of Transportation \$80,000 cash and \$20,000 in-kind; &
- UBC Okanagan \$25,000 cash and \$25,000 in-kind.

Transport Canada funding was approved in June 2006. So the total project funding now available to this project is \$305,000 cash and \$45,000 in-kind.

As Council is aware this partnership is intended to set the stage for further partnerships to fund major infrastructure investments. The limits of the corridor study are from Gordon Dr to the UBC Okanagan campus and the key components are:

- The Central Okanagan Bypass as major grade separated roadway;
- Rails with Trails;
- CN Railway;
- Intermodal facilities

Staff are currently working with a senior transportation engineer to develop the scope of work for consulting engineers to undertake the planning and design of the road project. It is expected that it will take until September to complete this scoping work. The road work component will also have to be approved by the Ministry of Transportation. So optimistically we should be ready to invite proposals for the road planning and design sometime in September and have this consultant started in October.

As noted above, Council has expressed a desire to both fast track the design of the COB and to lobby the senior governments for funding for this project. Based on the recent federal government budgets funding is available to partner with provincial and local governments. However, the political situation at the federal level is tenuous or uncertain at best with the minority government but we are currently fortunate with our representation. Given that time is of the essence and recognizing that the roadway component is still three months away from commencing, staff feel there is benefit to accelerate a couple of the planning sub-components through sole-sourced assignments.

The first is an environmental assessment. There have been two different environmental assessments done in the past along the COB corridor. The City undertook an

environmental review of optional alignments from Spall Rd to Hwy 33 between 1998 and 2000. Earlier this year, an assessment was done between Hwy 33 and McCurdy Rd as part of the planning of the redevelopment of the Marshall feedlot. It would be beneficial for the road design consultants to have this information done in advance of their assignment. In consultation with the Environmental Manager, we have approached the consultant for the Marshall feedlot redevelopment to provide us with a proposal to consolidate and update the work to date and to complete the environmental assessment. Summit Environmental Consultants Ltd. is an Okanagan based firm. A copy of their proposal is attached.

The second sub-component of the project that would be beneficial to advance is research of freight movement and the non-auto traffic of the corridor. This is an area of interest to Transport Canada. This work includes:

- interviews of shippers and transportation operators;
- an inventory of corridor;
- travel surveys;
- estimates of current daily & annual corridor travel demand by mode;
- estimates of future daily & annual corridor demand by mode; &
- recommendation of concepts & criteria for the civil consultant to use to advance the planning & design of new infrastructure.

IBI Group assisted the City in its application to Transport Canada for funding on this planning work. They have extensive experience with freight movement by both trucking and train. The firm has done a number of initiatives for Transport Canada and therefore very familiar with the senior management. A copy of IBI's submission to do this work is attached.

Ministry of Transportation staff support these two awards. With Council's approval they will begin in the next few weeks.

Ron Westlake, P.Eng.
Transportation Manager

Approved for inclusion

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John Vos
Director of Works & Utilities

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