

**Black Road / Third Line Corridor Improvements**

**CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Issue No. 1

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**INFORMATION BULLETIN**

January, 2015

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**Introduction and Background**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie has identified a need to address the following problems/opportunities:

1. **Emergency service response** – Black Road and Third Line are principle routes for staff, visitors and emergency service vehicles accessing the hospital. The overall road platform width is narrow along Black Road north of Second Line and along Third Line from Black Road to east of the hospital entrance.
2. **Corridor capacity** – Traffic volumes have increased along these transportation corridors and based on the results of the City's Transportation Master Plan update further increases are projected in the future. The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has deferred plans to extend the Highway by-pass through Batchewana First Nations to the Second Line/Black Road intersection. There is a need to ensure the road corridors have adequate capacity to accommodate existing and future traffic volumes.
3. **Pavement structure** - There is a need to ensure the existing pavement structure is adequate to carry the existing and projected future traffic volumes.
4. **Pedestrian and cyclist safety**– Black Road and Third Line are identified as spoke routes in the Cycling Master Plan and cyclists and pedestrians are currently accommodated on shoulders. The shoulders were upgraded along Black Road from McNabb Street to Second Line in 2000-2001 but the shoulders along Black Road north of Second Line and along Third Line from Black Road to the Hospital entrance are narrow.
5. **Municipal Servicing** – It is considered prudent to assess potential servicing extensions within the subject transportation corridors in conjunction with this Class EA.

**What is a Class Environmental Assessment?**

Municipal infrastructure projects must be undertaken in accordance with the Environmental Assessment ("EA") Act. Municipal infrastructure projects of this type are not subject to a complete environmental assessment but are subject to a "Class" Environmental Assessment ("Class EA"). The Class EA process was developed to ensure that environmental concerns and public input are considered in the implementation of municipal infrastructure projects.

Under this process it is mandatory to consult with the public and relevant review agencies. A public open house is being

conducted to provide an opportunity for agencies, area residents and the general public to review and comment on the alternative solutions being considered.

Any input or comments received through the public consultation process will be considered in the planning and design of this project. Individuals are encouraged to submit comments, in writing, to the project team.

**Alternative Solutions**

Alternative solutions were developed and evaluated to address the identified problems/opportunity. The alternatives consisted of:

1. Do nothing.
2. Widen the road platform while maintaining a basic two-lane configuration.
3. Widen the road platform and incorporate additional through lanes.
4. Extend municipal water and/or waste water servicing.

The preferred solution may consist of one or a combination of more than one of the alternative solutions listed above. The existing environment was inventoried and a detailed evaluation of the alternatives was completed with due consideration of technical issues, natural and social environmental impacts and costs.

**Preliminary Preferred Solution**

Based on the results of the evaluation the preliminary preferred solution consists of the following:

- Widen Black Road from McNabb Street to Second Line to include two through lanes in each direction.
- Maintain a single through lane in each direction and widen the Black Road and Third Line shoulders and overall platform width from Second Line to Third Line and from Third line to east of the SAH entrance.
- Complete Pavement structure improvements along Black Road from Second Line to Third Line and along Third Line from Black Road to east of the SAH entrance (ie. previous reconstruction limits).
- Forego any municipal waste water or potable water extensions at this time.

The principle reasons for the selection of this alternative are as follows:

- In general, a two lane road configuration (one through lane in each direction) is suitable for average daily traffic volumes in the range of 14,000 vehicles per day. The projected volumes on Black Road from McNabb Street to Second Line significantly exceed this threshold but are within this threshold north of Second Line along Black Road and along Third Line.
- The Highway 17 routing through the City includes Black Road to Second Line. This is the only section of the Highway route within the urban center that does not include four lanes.
- Although a single lane in each direction is adequate along Black Road north of Second Line and along Third Line, the existing platform width is narrow and does not provide adequate space for emergency response vehicles to safely pass two vehicles stopped adjacent to each other. In addition pedestrian and cyclist safety can be enhanced with widened shoulders.
- The existing pavement structure south of Second Line was upgraded in 2000-2001 and has held up well but the Black Road and Third Line pavement structure north of Second Line to east of the SAH entrance is in poor condition and in need of upgrading.
- The installation of service extensions is costly and there is not adequate justification to proceed at this time.

### **Your Involvement**

You are encouraged to review the project plans and documentation and to ask any questions of the Engineering Consultant or City Staff. Comment sheets have been provided for you to record your opinions, comments and concerns. The Engineering Consultant will accept comments relating to the alternative solutions until February 27, 2015. Comments can be left with the Consultant at the Public Information Centre or mailed or delivered to:

AECOM Canada Ltd.  
523 Wellington Street East,  
Sault Ste. Marie ON P6A 2M4

Attention: Rick Talvitie, P.Eng.,  
Project Manager

### **Next Steps in the Class EA Process**

Once the comments have been received (ie: after February 27, 2015), the Engineering Consultant will compile the information and finalize the preferred solution. All of the comments received will be considered and incorporated into the planning for this project.

Once the preferred solution is finalized, the Engineering Consultant will confirm the appropriate Class EA Schedule based on the scope of the project. Provided the project remains a Schedule C undertaking, another Public Open House will take place to give agencies and interested individuals an opportunity to review design options for the preferred solution.

The design options will generally include consideration of cross-section types (urban/rural), lane and shoulder widths, intersection configurations and other cross-sectional elements.

Once the preferred preliminary design is selected, an Environmental Study Report ("ESR") will be prepared and issued for public review. At the time of completion of that report a Notice of Completion will be advertised and issued to all individuals that expressed an interest in the project. The public will be given an opportunity to review the ESR over a period of 30 calendar days.

Provided no significant concerns or objections to the proposed undertaking are received during the 30 day review period the City may proceed with the detail design and construction.

In some cases concerns regarding a project cannot be resolved through discussions with the project Consulting Engineer and/or City Staff. In this unlikely event a person / agency may request that the Minister of Environment make an order for the project to comply with Part II of the Environmental Assessment Act (referred to as a Part II Order). A Part II Order addresses individual Environmental Assessments. Requests for a Part II Order must clearly identify the rationale for the objection and ultimately the Minister will decide based on the process followed and the rationale for the decisions reached.

**Thank-you.**

**We appreciate the time you have taken to review the preliminary project plans.**

