

4. LAURIER AVENUE BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION - AMENDMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That Council delete the examination of a below grade or above grade pedestrian link across Laurier Avenue between Confederation Park and the Regional Plaza in front of the Regional Headquarters.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Councillor Diane Holmes' report dated 28 March 2000 is immediately attached.
2. Extract of Draft Minute, Transportation Committee, 5 April 2000, immediately follows the report and includes a record of the vote.

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf. 03 07-00-0095
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 28 March 2000

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator, Transportation Committee

FROM/EXP. Councillor Diane Holmes

SUBJECT/OBJET **LAURIER AVENUE BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION -
AMENDMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Transportation Committee recommend Council delete the examination of a below grade or above grade pedestrian link across Laurier Avenue between Confederation Park and the Regional Plaza in front of the Regional Headquarters.

BACKGROUND

I am requesting that the Environmental Assessment Study for the Laurier Avenue Bridge Reconstruction be amended to delete the examination of an above or below-grade pedestrian link. An extract of Minute from the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee meeting of 1 December 1999 is attached. The following documents are also attached and support the position:

1. M. Fulton letter dated 29 February 2000
2. Women's Action Centre Against Violence letter dated 9 March 2000
3. C. Stark e-mailed comments dated 28 February 2000

*Approved by
Diane Holmes*

att.

1. ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

LAURIER BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION
LAURIER - ELGIN TO NICHOLAS STREETS
CONSULTANT APPOINTMENT

- Environment and Transportation A/Deputy Commissioner's report
dated 25 Oct 99

Councillor van den Ham noted the large impact construction of this magnitude had on traffic. He referenced the proposed work plan and inquired if staff considered working on the project around the clock to minimize traffic disruption. J. Miller, Director, Engineering Division, confirmed this issue would be reviewed during the environmental study phase. In response to a question regarding funding, Mr. Miller confirmed Federal funds were available, however, Regional funds may be required depending on the outcome of the study.

Chair Chiarelli stated he had requested the Department to consider the creation of a pedestrian over/under pass from Confederation Park to Festival Plaza. He noted the high pedestrian volume and significant events held in the Park/Plaza resulting in street closures. Mr. Miller explained the study would review from the Elgin Street intersection up to Nicholas Street, and confirmed his request would be considered in the environmental report. Chair Chiarelli directed staff to proactively review whether a pedestrian over/under pass could be constructed.

Councillor Meilleur stated the Action Sandy Hill Community Association would like to be involved in the preparation and consultation processes. The Councillor referenced the high traffic, pedestrian and cycling movement at the Laurier / Nicholas intersection and the need to ensure safety. Mr. Miller stated a public advisory committee would be formed and staff would welcome their involvement. Councillor Meilleur commented she would like to suggest names from Action Sandy Hill to sit on the public advisory committee.

That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee approve the appointment of McCormick Rankin Corporation, Ottawa to provide professional engineering services to carry out an environmental study, detailed design and preparation of contract documents for the reconstruction of Laurier Bridge, including Laurier Avenue from Elgin Street to Nicholas Street, for a total contract provision of \$923,222.

CARRIED

Councillor Diane Holes
Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton
111 Lisgar Street
Ottawa ON K2P 2L7

February 29, 2000

Dear Councillor Holes:

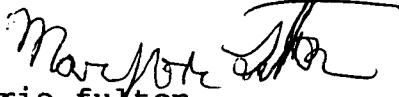
re: proposed tunnel under Laurier

I am dismayed to hear that the re-design of Laurier-Nicholas is considering the idea of a pedestrian tunnel under Laurier Street between confederation Park and the Festival Plaza. I gather the intent of the proposal is to allow motor traffic to continue as usual during major events when Laurier is now closed. It would also, I take it, eliminate the present pedestrian crossing. In short, it would benefit motorists at the expense of pedestrians, and would do so in the midst of an area of high pedestrian activity. And this in direct opposition to the objectives of the region's Official Plan, which aims to enhance facilities for walking and lessen the role of motor traffic.

and what a substantial, and entirely unnecessary expense!

No doubt some will claim that grade separation of pedestrians and cars improves safety. I, as a woman, a blind person, an old person, will not use such a tunnel during the evening, because I think it unsafe.

I trust you will vigorously oppose this threat to an established pedestrian right of way.



Marjorie Fulton
345 Waverley Street, apt. 506
Ottawa, ON K2P 0W4

March 9th, 2000

Councillor Diane Holmes
Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton
111 Lisgar St.,
Ottawa, ON
K2P 2L7

Councillor Holmes,

It has come to the attention of the Women's Action Centre Against Violence, that there is discussion as to the construction of a tunnel beneath Laurier Avenue West between Confederation Park and Festival Plaza.

The Women's Action Centre Against Violence is requesting the deletion of this option from the Environmental Assessment. We believe that such construction is unnecessary and costly, not to mention the safety issues that would arise from such a project. It is our opinion that women would not utilize the tunnel during evening or night hours for various safety reasons (isolation, possible assault site, unsafe behaviour, vandalism, graffiti, just to mention a few). We believe that the configuration of the space is satisfactory at this time and that this kind of project would not enhance safety for pedestrians or be useful in any way. It would however be very unsafe and would constitute a step backwards with regards to women's safety.

It is our hope that our concerns will be voiced and considered at the next Transportation Committee. We would like to participate in any committee pertaining to these actions. We believe our expertise about women's safety issues would be an asset to the committee.

If you wish to reach us, you may contact Karine Gauvreau or Valerie Collicott at 241-5414.

Sincerely,



Karine Gauvreau
Program Director
Women's Action Centre Against Violence

Bergen, Laura

From: Chris Stark [chris.stark@attglobal.net]
Sent: 28 of February, 2000 19:46
To: chiaraelliro@rmoc.on.ca
Cc: holmesdi@rmoc.on.ca; sahnivi@rmoc.on.ca
Subject: Laurier Bridge Reconstruction

Dear Sir

I write to express concern about the requested creation of a pedestrian over/under pass from Confederation Park to Festival Plaza.

I have used similar tunnels and overpasses in other cities like Edmonton and found them to be very inconvenient and disorienting for persons who are blind. Even the overpasses at Blair Station and Place D'Orleans used by OC Transpo at the transit stations do not contain any way finding cues for persons who are blind using these passages. There are not any measures in place to provide information similar to the signage offered sighted users.

Furthermore the routes now available through the area under discussion provide good paths of travel for pedestrians who are blind. Adding additional mobility obstacles like finding tunnel or overpass entrances and figuring out their design makes it more difficult for us to move about in our community.

I urge you to reconsider this proposal and think of the needs of all pedestrians.

Sincerely

Chris Stark

4. LAURIER AVENUE BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION -
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- Councillor D. Holmes' report dated 28 Mar 00

By way of background, Chair Holmes explained that when the Regional Headquarters building was constructed, the NCC stated the Festival Plaza always remain open space and be used in conjunction with Confederation Park for festivals. Complaints had been received from the Lord Elgin Hotel and others, however, about the difficulties these businesses encounter by the closure of Laurier Avenue during times of festivals. In order to avoid having to close the road during these periods, it was suggested that an examination be conducted of providing a pedestrian crossing under the road. However, in order to make such a crossing accessible to all users, a large portion of the park and the plaza would be required to construct a ramp to the tunnel. Such massive land-taking presents a major problem for both the NCC and the Region. She advised that local community associations and women's groups were opposed to any kind of underground facility, siting isolation and safety considerations. To address these concerns and in the interest of saving money, she requested committee's approval of her recommendation. She also expressed concern about the terms of reference for transportation items not coming to the Transportation Committee for verification.

The Commissioner advised that one of the requirements of an Environmental Assessment Study is an examination of some level of every idea put forward.

Councillor Cantin thought that security cameras would provide some element of safety, but the Commissioner advised that according to surveys, 2/3rds of the women and 1/3 of the men believe such links are unsafe to use. This is an important factor to consider, because if people do not feel safe, the tunnels will not be used. The councillor thought that if the tunnel were only used during festivals, it might be appropriate to have cameras during those times. However, the Commissioner explained that it is the access and egress points and the actual size the tunnels would have to be in order to be deemed safe enough by the public to use.

Councillor Byrne noted that compared with other underground pedestrian tunnels, i.e., Carleton University, this crossing is very short and for the amount of time required to go under and through a tunnel, she believed pedestrians would probably opt for the shorter way across the street. She agreed the costs would be phenomenal to provide the type of tunnel that the public would deem safe enough to use and which would be accessible for all users.

Extract of Draft Minute
Transportation Committee
5 April 2000

That the Transportation Committee recommend Council delete the examination of a below grade or above grade pedestrian link across Laurier Avenue between Confederation Park and the Regional Plaza in front of the Regional Headquarters.

CARRIED