REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WATERLOO
PUBLIC MEETING OF THE
PLANNING AND WORKS COMMITTEE
AGENDA

Tuesday, April 9, 2013
Immediately following Public Meeting
Council Chamber
2nd Floor, Regional Administration Building
150 Frederick Street, Kitchener, Ontario

1. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST UNDER THE MUNICIPAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

2. REPORT – PLANNING, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - COMMUNITY PLANNING
a) Report P-13-030, Proposed Modifications to the Regional Implementation Guidelines for Transportation Corridor Design – Public Meeting

STAFF PRESENTATION

3. DELEGATIONS
a) Duncan Class

4. ADJOURN
TO: Chair Jim Wideman and Members of the Planning and Works Committee

DATE: April 9, 2013

FILE CODE: D09-00/TCDG

SUBJECT: PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR DESIGN – PUBLIC MEETING

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

SUMMARY:

Regional Council approved the Implementation Guidelines for Regional Transportation Corridor Design on June 16, 2010. The Guidelines provide “context-sensitive” design standards for Regional transportation corridors and clarify the relative priority and treatment for the various travel modes and community uses. The objective was to create greater transportation choice by providing space, improving aesthetics and creating an environment within the transportation corridor for all modes. The Guidelines are also supportive of the Regional Transportation Master Plan and the Community Building Strategy.

Staff was directed to review the effectiveness of these guidelines after a year and identify the need for any modifications. An internal review was undertaken with planning and engineering staff that applies the guidelines to construction projects. The following components were identified as requiring adjustments:

- Sight triangles
- Curb lane widths
- Cycling lane widths
- Curb radii at intersections
- Fencing
- Roadway classifications

Input received during the ongoing Active Transportation Master Plan was used for review during this process, specifically for the cycling lane widths.

The modifications to the Guidelines as recommended were circulated to stakeholders including the Area Municipalities, members of the public that had previously expressed an interest and the development industry. The revisions were also posted on the Region’s website. A formal Public Meeting is required in accordance with the Regional Official Policies Plan and the Regional Official Plan.

REPORT:

The influence transportation facilities and their design have on the built form and the health and vibrancy of the community is considerable. All modes of transportation need to be reflected in
design guidelines so that community planners and design engineers can incorporate and prioritize design elements early in the design process. Road designers and planners should consider the role of the entire road corridor as a public space and the role of roads in shaping the character, function, and livability of adjacent land uses and communities.

The Implementation Guidelines for Regional Transportation Corridor Design have been in operation for over 2 years. Staff has gained considerable experience using these Guidelines during this period. Two of the most notable projects that have been constructed using these Guidelines include Queen Street between Courtland Avenue and Highland Road, and Frederick Street between Bruce Street and Lancaster Avenue.

An internal review of these Guidelines has been undertaken over the past year. In general, the Guidelines have been effective, however, there are a few areas where modifications would be helpful including:

- Sight triangles
- Curb lane widths
- Cycling lane widths
- Curb radii at intersections
- Fencing
- Roadway classifications

**Sight Triangles**

Sight triangles ensure sufficient sight distance is provided for the driver of the vehicle approaching an intersection to perceive potential conflicts and carry out the necessary action to avoid a conflict and negotiate the intersection safely. Sight triangles can also be used to accommodate traffic signal control and other utility equipment.

The previous Regional practice was to require, as a condition of development, the dedication of road widening’s for sight triangles with the maximum length of the side of a sight triangle bordering on either road of 15 m. The current Guidelines suggest the use of the Transportation Association of Canada methodology for Visibility Triangles. The TAC methodology resulted in a considerable amount of property dedication from new development and objections from developers were raised.

It is proposed that the Guidelines be modified to reflect the previous Regional practice for dedication with the maximum length of the side of a sight triangle bordering on either road of 15 m. In addition, during the development approval process, applicants may be required to ensure that there are no sight obstructions higher than 24 inches within the calculated sight triangle as defined by the TAC methodology. This will reduce the amount of property to be dedicated, provide sufficient room for utilities and maintain appropriate sightlines.

The current Guidelines also suggest that sight triangles are not required in built-up areas. The intent of this wording was to minimize property dedications on streets with buildings adjacent to the property line particularly on Main Streets. It is proposed that this statement be modified to read “In built-up areas, specifically Urban Growth Centres, consideration to reducing the sight triangle may be given if there is no demonstrated collision history and the land is not required for utility/traffic signal equipment.”

**Curb Lane Widths**

The Guidelines indicate a preferred lane width of between 3.25 and 3.35 m depending on the road classification. An additional .65 m in urban areas and an additional 1.0 m in rural areas
could be provided on curb lanes where there are no cycling lanes available. It has been observed that wider lanes encourage faster traffic and the intent is to design for the appropriate speed of travel and balance road safety. Additional width on the curb lane can provide room for right turning vehicles and snow storage.

It is proposed that the preferred lane width be modified to between 3.65 and 3.75 depending on the road classification and that the additional .65 m be discontinued. An additional 1.0 m lane width would still be considered optional for Rural Connectors and Rural Village-Main Street. This modification would provide some additional curb lane width while not encouraging speeding.

Cycling Lane Widths

The current Guidelines indicate a preferred cycling lane width of 1.25 m on all road classifications with the exception of the Community Connector where it is 1.5 m. A 1.0 m minimum cycling lane width was also identified for some road classifications. The Guidelines indicate the needs for cycling facilities are optional on a Community Connector but important on all other road classifications and that the need should be considered in conjunction with the 2004 Cycling Master Plan/Active Transportation Master Plan. The Cycling Master Plan was approved by Regional Council in November, 2004 and is the plan currently referenced. The Active Transportation Master Plan is nearing completion and will be brought to Regional Council for consideration late summer/early fall of 2013. If approved by Council, it would then become the new plan.

The proposed Active Transportation Master Plan is recommending additional separation be considered for cyclists. As a result, it is proposed that the Guidelines be modified to indicate that the preferred cycling lane width be increased to 1.50 m for road classifications with higher speeds (Community Connector, Neighbourhood Connector-Avenue and Rural Connector) and 1.25 m for road classifications with lower speeds (Neighbourhood Connector-Main Street, Residential Connector and Rural Village: Main Street). The minimum cycling lane width would be increased to 1.25 m for all road classifications. It is also proposed, to add clarity, that the optional or important designation be replaced with a reference to the need being consistent with the 2004 Cycling Master Plan/Active Transportation Master Plan. Additional comments would be included that states the width of the cycling lane should be considered in conjunction with the width of the adjacent travel lane and if there is no gutter present, a wider bike lane should be considered.

Curb Radii at Intersections

The curb radii should be designed to accommodate the largest vehicle type that will frequently turn at the intersection. It is also preferred to minimize the curb radii to shorten the distance a pedestrian has to cross the road. The current Guidelines indicate a maximum curb radius of 9 m. In some locations based on geometrics and volume of trucks turning, a larger radius may be required and it is proposed that this be reflected in the modifications to the Guidelines.

Fencing

Fencing is a physical and sometimes visual barrier that prevents access to properties adjacent to a Regional road. Regional staff has required that fences be installed for back and side-lotted residential properties. Although preventing access to a Regional road is one element of this policy, it is also important to restrict encroachments such as sheds, plantings etc. on to the Regional right-of-way. Generally, the entire right-of-way is required for Regional purposes such as sidewalks and utilities which can be obstructed with these types of encroachments. Often
times a property owner may erect a private fence inside the chain-link fence required as part of the development agreement. This can result in an area that cannot be maintained well and garbage collects or grass cannot be cut.

It is proposed that Regional staff continue to ask for the installation of fences for back and side-lotted residential properties adjacent to Regional roads. However, if the developer proposes installing their own fence on private property and the appropriate security is provided to the Region to ensure the fence is installed, the Region would delete this condition. If an individual property owner does not wish for a fence to be installed they could apply to the Region to have this condition waived with agreement that the Region would have the right to remove any encroachments immediately upon being discovered on the Regional right-of-way.

Roadway Classifications

Roads that are classified as Community Connectors are intended to help move goods and people effectively and not provide access to adjacent properties. Regional staff is currently reviewing the Access Policy and have identified additional roads that should be access controlled and classified as Community Connectors. It is proposed that the Guidelines be modified to change the classification of the following roads from Neighbourhood Connector–Avenue to Community Connector:

1. Regional Road 17 (Fountain Street) from Woolwich Street South to Victoria Street North;
2. Regional Road 85 (Arthur Street South) from the interchange with Regional Road 15 to Regional Road 21 (Arthur Street); and
3. Regional Road 33 (Townline Road) from Avenue Road to Can-Amera Parkway.

Implementation and Next Steps

The ROP states that Regional Roads will be planned and constructed in accordance with the provisions of the Transportation Corridor Design Implementation Guidelines.

Sections 10.B.11 to 10.B.14 of the Council Adopted Regional Official Plan (ROP) dated June 16, 2009, requires the Regional Municipality of Waterloo to provide public and agency notification for proposed modifications to Implementation Guidelines. The previous Regional Official Policies Plan had similar requirements. On March 12, 2013, a draft of the proposed modifications to the current Implementation Guideline for Regional Transportation Corridor Design were circulated to the Area Municipalities and other interested parties, including posting on the Regional website. Formal comments will be accepted until April 19, 2013, providing over one month for review. The purpose of this public meeting of the Planning and Works Committee is to receive comments from agencies and interested members of the public.

Following the Public Meeting and the close of the comment period, staff will revise the Guidelines as necessary and bring to the Planning and Works Committee for consideration as a revised Regional Implementation Guideline.

Area Municipal Consultation/Coordination

Area Municipal representatives participated on an External Agency Team and provided input into the original Guidelines. Some of the Area Municipalities have developed Urban Design Guidelines and this information was considered as input into the process. The Area Municipalities were circulated these proposed modifications and asked for input.
CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

The Guidelines supports Strategic Objective 2.2 “Develop, optimize and maintain infrastructure to meet current and projected needs” and Strategic Objective 3.2 “Develop, promote and integrate active forms of transportation (cycling and walking).”

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Guidelines in their entirety are expected to result in less asphalt than previous practice, resulting in nominal savings of road construction costs. These cost savings, in addition to existing allocations for landscaping, could be applied to boulevard improvements such as public art, landscaping, street furniture, accent paving etc. One of the objectives of the Guidelines is to improve the street environment to encourage more active transportation.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

Transportation and Environmental Services provided input to the review of the Guidelines.

ATTACHMENTS:

NIL

PREPARED BY: Graham Vincent, Director, Transportation Planning

APPROVED BY: Rob Horne, Commissioner of Planning, Housing and Community Services