Report "A" – Executive Policy Committee - March 14, 2007

Item No. 2 Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce - Chamber Way Project
File S-7

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On March 14, 2007, the Executive Policy Committee submitted the following to Council:

1. That funding not to exceed $50,000.00 be provided to the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce from the 2007 Image Route Enhancements/ Streetscaping Program for the sole purpose of conducting preliminary engineering design work for the Chamber Way concept to the satisfaction of the Director of Public Works in advance of endorsing the Manitoba Rural Infrastructure Fund application.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On March 14, 2007, the Executive Policy Committee recommended to Council:

WHEREAS the route from the James A. Richardson International Airport to the City's downtown provides an important first impression to visitors and Winnipeggers;

AND WHEREAS the 2007 Capital Budget has identified "Airport to Downtown" as a top priority image route;

AND WHEREAS the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce is taking a leadership role to improve this route by creating a scenic corridor that showcases Winnipeg business and culture;

AND WHEREAS the Chamber of Commerce has submitted an application under the Manitoba Rural Infrastructure Fund Program (MRIF) for their project, Chamber Way, to receive funding to carry out this work;

AND WHEREAS all MRIF applications require endorsement from City Council;

AND WHEREAS there are unresolved design issues with the proposed concept;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that funding not to exceed $50,000.00 be provided to the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce from the 2007 Image Route Enhancements/ Streetscaping Program for the sole purpose of conducting preliminary engineering design work for the Chamber Way concept to the satisfaction of the Director of Public Works in advance of endorsing the Manitoba Rural Infrastructure Fund application.

On February 21, 2007, the Executive Policy Committee laid over the matter for 30 days.

RE: Chamber Way Project – MRIF Application

FOR SUBMISSION TO: **Executive Policy Committee**

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED BY: **L.S.W. Larkin, P. Eng, Director of Public Works**

REPORT DATE: **February 16, 2007**

RECOMMENDATION:

That this report be received as information for the consideration of an MRIF application for Chamber Way.

Report Summary

Key Issues:

The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce has prepared an application for MRIF (Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund) funding to finance a portion of this proposal.

Endorsement from City Council is required as part of the MRIF approval process.

The proposal presented by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce has not been developed to the point where the feasibility of the proposed design and the estimates provided can be confirmed by the administration.

Implications of the Recommendation(s):

General Implications

None
For the organization overall and/or for other departments
x For the community and/or organizations external to the City
Involves a multi-year contract

Comment(s):

Policy Implications

x No
Yes

Comment(s):

Regulatory Implications

x None
Eliminates or reduces regulatory impact
Proposes regulatory impact

Comment(s):

Environmental Implications

x No
Yes

Comment(s):

Human Resources Implications

x No
Yes

Comment(s):

Financial Implications

x Within approved current and/or capital budget
Current and/or capital budget adjustment required

Comment(s):

The Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund application does not identify the City as a funding source.

Report

REASON FOR THE REPORT:

The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce has prepared an application for MRIF (Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund) funding to finance a portion of the proposed Chamber Way project.

Endorsement from City Council is required as part of the MRIF approval process.

There are several technical challenges that have yet to be resolved to confirm that this project can be constructed within the limitations of the existing infrastructure and that it can be constructed within the proposed budget.

HISTORY:

At its meeting of June 29, 2005, Council adopted the following policy guidelines to regulate the endorsement of applications applying for funding under the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF).

> A. The City of Winnipeg will not endorse any MRIF application from an external group, which requires a capital contribution from the City.
>
> B. To allow all groups equal opportunity to apply, the City of Winnipeg set three deadline dates for consideration of MRIF internal and external applications: September 1, 2005, January 1, 2006 and June 1, 2006.
>
> C. To coordinate the endorsement process, external groups are required to provide copies of their MRIF application to the Executive Policy Committee Secretariat for review and comment by the Administration.
>
> D. Preference for endorsement will be given to projects that originate from the City of Winnipeg.

The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce has proposed the concept of *Chamber Way* to act as "*a new first impression for visitors to Winnipeg*." The intent is to provide a welcoming, scenic drive from the Airport into downtown Winnipeg.

The project extends for two blocks along Century Street (Route 90) between Ness Avenue and St. Mathews Avenue. The main features of the project are 2.4 metre high

concrete walls providing visual separation from adjacent residential back lanes, a series of sponsored murals showcasing Winnipeg events/attractions and landscaping.

The Chamber of Commerce has assembled a team of engineers and architects to assist in development of the Chamber Way proposal.

An interdepartmental technical review team comprised of staff from P.W., P.P.&D, and W.& W. was established to identify design, safety and maintenance requirements for the project and to assist the Chamber in the development of a workable design.

The review team met with the Chamber and their design team several times, most recently on July 27, 2006. At these meetings several technical challenges were identified that would have to be resolved before the project could proceed.

DISCUSSION:

The Chamber of Commerce has been able to provide “minimal compensation” to their design team to develop a concept and preliminary estimate for the project. Subsequent to the development of the conceptual plan, several significant design challenges have been identified, but due to lack of funding the Chamber Way design team has not been able to resolve these issues.

The two most significant design challenges are as follows:

1. There is a large 2.25m diameter sewer that is directly below the proposed west wall and planters. Walls of this type must be able to support wind and snow loading and being only a few metres from the street, must be protected from vehicular impact. These walls are typically built directly on pile foundations, but that is not possible with a sewer immediately below. A specialized foundation would have to be designed to bridge the sewer so that its integrity is not compromised. The feasibility and cost of such a foundation is not known at this time.

2. Between Silver Avenue and St. Mathews Avenue the rear lane is much closer to the traffic lanes of Century Street, leaving a very narrow boulevard. This narrow boulevard is not of sufficient width to accommodate the type of wall being proposed. It would not be feasible to install mural panels within this narrow median. No design information, conceptual or otherwise, for the block between Silver Avenue and St. Mathews Avenue has been provided. Installation of a wall consistent with the concept presented in the promotional literature would not be possible without acquisition of property adjacent to the right-of-way.

Other design issues are as follows:

- There are overhead power and communication lines, street lighting, and trees that would be affected. The proponent has provided estimates for the burial of Hydro lines and relocation of street lighting. Century is lit from poles within the lanes adjacent to Century Street. Due to the height of the walls, new lighting on Century and in the lanes would be necessary to maintain current lighting levels. Security and graffiti in the back lanes may become issues due to the visual blocking effect of the wall.

- The Chamber of Commerce has indicated that they want to be responsible for the maintenance of this project. Being on City-owned land, this will require some sort of agreement outlining the terms and conditions of that maintenance. A long-term view of maintenance must be taken, including the replacement of signage, damaged sections of the concrete barriers and walls and the seasonal maintenance of the landscaping in this harsh traffic environment. If the Chamber is not able to secure ongoing private funding for maintenance the City would have to assume these costs. There would also be increased costs to the City for snow hauling, and sewer repairs.

The administration is prepared to work with the proponent to resolve these design issues if the MRIF application is approved.

Financial Impact Statement Date: February

Project Name:

Chamber Way Project – MRIF Application

COMMENTS:

As this report is for information only there is no financial impact.

IN PREPARING THIS REPORT THERE WAS:

Internal Consultation With and Concurrence By:

External Consultation With:

THIS REPORT SUBMITTED BY:

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File No.:	A/E
File Name:	H:\Projects\Chamber Way\Chamber Way MRIF Report.doc