



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Corporate Assets and Strategic Planning Division

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 7, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Civic Gateway Study (PW14044) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Gerry Davis, CMA General Manager Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That, as a short-term strategy, a Civic Gateway be installed in the vicinity of Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange subject to approval from the Ministry of Transportation; and
- (b) That the total amount of \$230,000 for a Civic Gateway in the vicinity of Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange be funded from Council Strategic Capital Projects Reserves – 108022 in the amount of \$190,000 and from account 8090149100 in the amount of \$40,000; and
- (c) That subject to approval of (b), the operating impact of \$10,000 for the Highway 403 and Highway 6 gateway be considered as part of the 2015 budget deliberation process; and
- (d) That, as a long-term strategy, Civic Gateways be investigated at Highway 6 and Freelton Road, Highway 403 and Alberton Road, and Queen Elizabeth Way and Fifty Road and related funding be considered as part of future capital budget submissions.
- (e) That the General Issues Committee Outstanding Business List item related to Entrance and/or Gateway Signage be identified as complete and removed from the list.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report responds to a request from General Issues Committee, September 18, 2013: *“That the City Manager, in conjunction with Public Works and Planning and Economic Development staff, be directed to report back on both a short- and long-term plan to address entrance and/or gateway signage in an effort to improve the branding and promotion of the City of Hamilton.”*

The City of Hamilton Planning and Economic Development Department has completed studies in 2001, 2007 and 2008 to examine the importance of gateway features, to determine possible locations, and to explore conceptual design alternatives. As a result of consultant’s reports and public consultations, the following five sites were recommended (see Appendix “A” attached to Report PW14044):

Location	Challenges
Site #1 - Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Located in the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Right-of-Way• Access limited to MTO Right-of-Way
Site #2 - Highway 6 at Freelon Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Located in the MTO Right-of-Way if city-owned parcel is insufficient• Low Average Annual Daily Traffic flow• Minimal distance from Right-of-Way to existing tree line
Site #3 - Highway 403 at Alberton Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Located in the MTO Right-of-Way• Low Average Annual Daily Traffic flow
Site #4 - Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) at Fifty Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Located in the MTO Right-of-Way• Existing “Stoney Creek” gateway is nearby at Fruitland Road and additional gateway conflicts with MTO Policies
Site #5 – QEW at the Burlington Street/Red Hill Creek Expressway/ Centennial Parkway Interchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The existing QEW Pedestrian Bridge crossing functions as a gateway feature at this location

Short-Term Strategy

With the Pan Am Games in July 2015, and the limited timeframe for approvals and installation of four permanent gateways, it is necessary to focus on approvals and installation of one gateway at the Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange. This location was chosen due to traffic volume statistics, and the high volume of traffic expected as part of the official route to Pan Am Games soccer in Hamilton.

It is important to note that the short-term strategy is subject to MTO approval. Staff have based the proposed strategy and schedule on the projected timeframe for the MTO approval process. If problems or delays occur staff will notify members of Council through an Information Update.

A public consultation process was undertaken to select the preferred concept presented in the 2008 civic gateways design report and represented in Appendix C to this report. A preliminary site review in the vicinity of Highway 403 and Highway 6 revealed that the preferred concept may require modifications to suit the existing topography and landscape. In addition, staff are suggesting coniferous vegetation be utilized in place of deciduous vegetation to provide a continuous four seasons background that accentuates the gateway. Recognizing the importance of a public consultation process, staff will make the modified design available for public comment on the City of Hamilton website.

Long-Term Strategy

Typically a site's potential as a gateway is based on the volume of traffic, the proximity to the municipal boundary, and how the design relates to the surrounding neighbourhood. Considering the QEW Pedestrian Bridge serves a gateway at site #5 and short term strategy addresses a gateway at site #1, the three remaining sites referenced in this report have been reassessed based on 2010 traffic counts, current property ownership, development and growth. Staff will report back to committee with a strategy that can be considered as part of the 2016 Capital Budget deliberation process.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 8

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Annual operating and maintenance costs of \$10,000 for the short-term strategy will be considered as part of the 2015 operating budget deliberations.

Short-Term Costs

The short-term costs of installing a civic gateway at the Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange are estimated to be \$230,000 including a 15% contingency. Account 8090149100 from the 2008 study completed by Planning and Economic Development has approximately \$40,000 remaining in available funds. Staff are recommending the remaining \$190,000 be funded from the Council Strategic Capital Projects Reserves - 108022. The cost breakdown for the Highway 403 and Highway 6 gateway is as follows:

Consulting Fees – Landscape Architectural and Engineering	\$30,000
Construction Costs	\$170,000
Contingency (15%)	\$30,000
Total Costs for the Highway 403 and Highway 6 Gateway	<u>\$230,000</u>

Long-Term Costs

The long-term costs are different for each gateway location as site conditions, timeframes for construction and material costs will vary. Although site assessments have not been completed for each site in 2014, the preliminary estimated cost to design

and construct the remaining three gateway features is \$550,000. This cost is based on an assessment of Site #3, Highway 403 at Alberton Road, which is similar in topography and access to the other sites. It is important to note that the 2014 Capital Budget submission indicated that the four permanent gateway projects were not affordable.

Staffing: There are no additional staffing implications.

Legal: The Ministry of Transportation requires that an Encroachment Permit Application be completed for permanent gateway features.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The City of Hamilton Planning and Economic Development Department completed studies in 2001, 2007 and 2008 to examine the importance of gateway features and to determine possible locations. In 2008, the Civic Gateway Design Study was completed and four gateway designs were proposed by Urban Design staff. A series of Public Information Centres (PIC) were held in the spring of 2008 to gain input from the public on the proposed gateway designs.

Recognizing that the QEW created an obstacle for linking hundreds of kilometres of trail in Southern Ontario, Council approved the construction of the QEW Pedestrian Bridge on April 11, 2007. Construction began in 2008 and in November of 2010, construction of the QEW Pedestrian Bridge was completed. As identified in Report PW06109 the bridge serves as an enhanced Gateway into the City of Hamilton satisfying the vision of a gateway feature in the vicinity of the QEW and Red Hill Valley Parkway / Centennial Parkway interchanges. The remaining elements of the 2008 Civic Gateway Design Study were not completed.

More recently on September 18, 2013 a motion was presented at General Issues Committee (13-019) requesting:

“That the City Manager, in conjunction with Public Works and Planning and Economic Development staff, be directed to report back on both a short- and long-term plan to address entrance and/or gateway signage in an effort to improve the branding and promotion of the City of Hamilton.”

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no policy implications.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

In order to determine the results of consultant reports and requirements of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), staff reviewed and referenced previous documentation. Staff also consulted with Planning and Economic Development staff, MTO, Canadian TODS (Tourism-Oriented Directional Signing) Limited, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Traffic Operations, and the Public Works Department in the drafting of this report.

Due to time constraints and based on the information received during numerous discussions, staff recommend that in the short-term, a permanent Civic Gateway feature

be proposed to the MTO for approval in the vicinity of Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange prior to the Pan Am Games in July 2015.

Public Consultation

In the spring of 2008 a series of Public Information Centres (PIC) were held to receive input from the public on the design of Civic Gateways for the City of Hamilton (see Appendix "C" attached to Report PW14044). Four design concepts were presented to the public and voting was completed through PIC's, the City of Hamilton website, or visiting the local Municipal Service Centre. Option #4, which consists of free standing three dimensional letters on a landscaped background, was chosen as the preferred design concept (see Appendix "D" attached to Report PW14044) receiving 28 votes out of 91 voters.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Staff have completed a preliminary site review at the Highway 403 / Highway 6 and Highway 403 / Alberton Road locations. These locations require minor revisions to the design of the original concept gateway to suit the existing landscape. In addition, the landscaping will provide a year round backdrop that compliments and highlights the gateway feature. This strategy deviates from the 2008 design concept that recommended vegetation that is consistent with the locality of each site.

Each recommended site referenced in this report includes its own challenges, but the rationale for the recommendations in this report come as a result of the application requirements of the Ministry of Transportation and the time sensitive nature of installing a single Civic Gateway in time for the Pan Am Games.

The MTO requires the following documentation prior to providing any feedback or approval:

1. A Scope of work letter outlining the project.
2. Aerial photographs showing the exact location and dimensions of the proposed structures and signs.
3. Proposed start date of the project and expected duration of work.
4. Equipment planned to be used at site.
5. Traffic Control Plan (as per Ontario Traffic Manual Book 7) and planned access plans to the work area.
6. Drainage plan (if affected).
7. Site Plan and Grading Plan of site.
8. All other related plans and drawings (e.g. - showing dimensions of proposed signage/setback of structure from MTO highway).

The previous studies included a location analysis on all 5 sites referenced in this report. The criteria used to determine suitability was: location, sightlines, topography, aesthetics, corridor proximity, land ownership, and construction/maintenance access.

However, the analysis was preliminary and did not include detailed site investigations including surveying.

The following feedback on each site is based on information from the previous Planning and Economic Department's studies and Public Works' preliminary site analysis in 2014:

Site #1 - Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange

The proposed site is located approximately 500 metres west of the Highway 6 ramp and is owned by the MTO. The proposed site is approximately 6 metres above the road elevation creating high visibility. The existing landscape contains undulating slopes that will require additional fill removal, grading, and potential slope stabilization.

The site is not accessible from a municipal roadway or highway ramp. The only available access would be from adjacent private lands to the north of the site or from Highway 403. Therefore, access is a significant challenge for the proposed site.

Site #2 - Highway 6 at Freulton Road

The 2008 study included the option of labelling the Freulton Water Tower as a gateway into Hamilton subject to further consultation with Public Works. Public Works staff have noted the Freulton Water Tower is located approximately 400 metres from Highway 6 and isn't clearly visible as a gateway feature from Highway 6. Furthermore, labelling the water tower is not consistent with the proposed gateway concepts or the nomenclature used on other water towers in Flamborough. Staff have identified a small parcel of City-owned land in the vicinity of Highway 6 and Freulton Road. Pending a detailed site review the parcel may be suitable for a permanent gateway feature. If the city-owned parcel is insufficient, the MTO Right-of-Way will need to be pursued.

Site #3 - Highway 403 at Alberton Road

The proposed site is located west of Alberton Road and is owned by the MTO. Sightlines at the proposed site are relatively clear, with an unobstructed view for approximately 300-400 metres. The topography of this site contains an undulating slope and the rear of the site rises approximately 6 metres at a 3:1 slope to meet the bridge overpass. The site can be accessed from Alberton Road for construction and maintenance activities.

Site #4 - QEW at Fifty Road

The proposed site is located east of Fifty Road and is owned by the MTO. There is a relatively clear unobstructed view for 300 metres due to the flat nature of the site. The elevated embankment at the rear of the site provides the only topographic interest. Construction and maintenance access is available from the adjacent highway ramp and from Fifty Road. The existing "Stoney Creek" gateway sign at Fruitland Road presents a challenge at this site. MTO policy stipulates only one gateway feature per highway per direction. Therefore, to install a "Hamilton" gateway at the proposed location would require the removal of the existing "Stoney Creek" gateway.

MTO Traffic Volume

To assist in determining the focus site for this recommendation, staff obtained information regarding the volume of traffic for each of the sites. The following chart shows the Ministry of Transportation’s Traffic Volumes – Provincial Highways 2010:

Site	Highway	Location Description	2010 AADT*
1	403	Waterdown Road to Highway 6 junction	116,900
2	6	Carlisle Road to Highway 97 (Freelton)	30,100
3	403	Highway 52 to Hamilton / Brant boundary	44,900
4	QEW	Fifty Road to Fruitland Road	104,400

*AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic)

Short-Term Timeline

Considering the limited timeframe, MTO approvals and site challenges, staff will focus on Site #1, Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange due to its high volume of traffic and its location along the route for Pan Am athletes coming from Toronto. Staff are not able to receive confirmed timeline information from the MTO until detailed designs and all necessary paperwork is submitted, therefore staff estimate the timeline for a short-term implementation to be as follows:

	2014								2015						
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Approval from Council	X														
Web based public consultation		X													
Site Specific Detail Design	X	X	X												
MTO Application Process			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Request for Tender										X	X				
Fabrication, Foundation, Site Prep.												X	X	X	
Installation															X

Long-Term Timeline

Staff are unable to determine an exact timeline to complete the remaining three gateways, based on the MTO application process, detailed site assessments and

funding. Each gateway design requires a separate application to the MTO for approval as the gateway locations are in the MTO Right-of-Way with the exception of Highway 6 at Freelon Road. Previous staff experience with lengthy MTO application processes lead staff to believe the process would take an additional 12-24 months minimum assuming there are no additional delays relating to weather and MTO requirements. As noted, the remaining three gateways would also be subject to future capital budget submissions and scheduling.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Discussions have revolved around the following alternatives:

Temporary entrance signs:

Staff evaluated the installation of temporary signage that would act as a gateway feature and promote Hamilton for the Pan Am Games. The temporary signage would consist of an image or graphic that identifies Hamilton along with a tag line or slogan. However, through preliminary discussions with the MTO staff were advised that only one entrance sign may be installed per highway. Given that existing population signs act as entrance signs and the MTO controls approval of temporary signs within the Right-of-Way, the City would be required to remove the population signs in order to facilitate the temporary signage. Therefore, staff do not recommend this alternative.

Temporary Pan Am signs:

In an effort to promote the City of Hamilton for the upcoming 2015 Pan Am Games staff explored the opportunity to install solid banner panels (ex. "Host City to Pan Am Soccer") on Hamilton population entrance signs on the Provincial Highways leading to Hamilton. City staff have already installed banners on existing entrance signs on roads that are owned by the City. Any temporary signage on the MTO Right-of-Way is subject to their approval. The timeframe for approval of temporary signage by the MTO is similar to the permanent gateway features. Therefore, staff do not recommend this alternative.

Completion of all five gateways prior to Pan Am Games:

The existing QEW Pedestrian Bridge serves as a gateway at Site #5. However, council may direct staff to pursue completing the four remaining gateways prior to the 2015 Pan Am Games. The remaining sites require detailed analysis and MTO approval. Expanding the program to include the additional sites may jeopardize the completion of the Highway 403 and Highway 6 site. Furthermore, the 2014 Capital Budget submission indicated that the four remaining permanent gateway projects were not affordable. Therefore, staff do not recommend this alternative.

Updated public consultation for the Highway 403 and Highway 6 gateway:

The previous public consultation was in 2008 and only 91 people participated. Staff value public engagement in developing projects; however, a full public consultation would require a minimum of three months to complete and staff would not be able to complete installation of a gateway prior to the Pan Am Games in 2015. Therefore, staff

do not recommend this alternative. Staff have utilized information gathered from the 2008 Public Information Centre as the basis for the revision of the preferred gateway concept to suit the site conditions and will post the revised concept on the City of Hamilton website for comments.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

2.2 Improve the City's approach to engaging and informing citizens and stakeholders.

Strategic Priority #3

Leadership & Governance

WE work together to ensure we are a government that is respectful towards each other and that the community has confidence and trust in.

Strategic Objective

3.1 Engage in a range of inter-governmental relations (IGR) work that will advance partnerships and projects that benefit the City of Hamilton.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" attached to Report PW14044 - Map of Potential Gateway Locations

Appendix "B" attached to Report PW14044 - Revised Gateway Design

Appendix "C" attached to Report PW14044 - Public Consultation Results

Appendix "D" attached to Report PW14044 - Original Preferred Gateway Design