

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPONENT: City of Winnipeg
PROPOSAL NAME: Provencher Bridge
CLASS OF DEVELOPMENT: 2
TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT: Transportation
CLIENT FILE NO.: 4554.00

OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL:

The Proposal was dated and received on September 12, 2000. The advertisement of the Proposal read as follows:

“A Proposal has been filed by the City of Winnipeg Public Works Department to replace the existing Provencher Bridge with two new paired bridges. The first of the two new paired bridges will carry vehicular traffic, and the second will be dedicated to pedestrian and cyclist use. The vehicular bridge will provide two lanes of traffic in each direction separated by a central median. A partial eastbound turning lane will be constructed to service traffic turning south onto Tache Avenue. The vehicular bridge will also include a sidewalk on the north side. The pedestrian bridge will be a cable stayed structure which features a plaza on the south side near the west bank that will include fully serviced year round commercial space. A complete description of the proposed project and the detailed design will be presented in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Receipt of the EIS will be advertised separately and will be made available for review. Completion of the EIS is targeted January 2001.”

The Proposal was advertised in the Winnipeg Free Press on Saturday, September 23, 2000. It was made available for public review at registries located at the Main Registry, 123 Main Street, Winnipeg, the Manitoba Eco-Network, the Centennial Public Library. It was also distributed to the Federal and Provincial Government "Transportation" TAC members for comment. All comments were requested by October 23, 2000.

Public Response on the Proposal

The following correspondence was received from the public in response to the Environment Act advertisement of the Proposal. Comments are summarized below.

Gerald Boily and Jeff Lowe
Friends of Provencher Bridge
200 Provencher Boulevard
Winnipeg, MB
R2H 0G3

- letter dated October 22, 2000
- request that a public hearing be held on the basis that the project is not environmentally

and economically sustainable. Specific reasons provided include:

- a bridge built for the ages should not be destroyed.
- archaeological artifacts and human remains may be disrupted or destroyed.
- the existing bridge is monument of unique historic, engineering and aesthetic importance which would be replaced by a structure that is not an object of design and will never qualify as a landmark.
- increased traffic volume will result in an increase in noise levels, fuel consumption and a degradation to air, soil and water quality.
- riparian habitat will be lost.
- should the pedestrian bridge not be built because of lack of funding, the vehicular bridge would have only one sidewalk.
- a precedent was set when the CEC held hearings on the Charleswood Bridge.
- the City is responsible to demonstrate full environmental compliance through the CEC hearing process.

Monique Mulaire
Old Saint Boniface Residents'
Association

- E- mail sent October 20, 2000
- note that the Association is on record as supporting the concept underlying the City's proposal as described. However, the Association will not be taking a position for or against a specific proposal until details are made available in the EIS. Request that a full and complete public review process including public hearings with intervenor funding be held to address the following concerns:
 - impact of the proposed structure on heavy truck traffic passing through the community on Provencher Boulevard.

- impact of other vehicular traffic in terms of pedestrian safety, noise and quality of life.
- impact of increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic on use of neighborhoods as a utility, including parking at the Forks, Canwest Stadium, and nearby facilities.
- pedestrian safety on the pedestrian bridge, particularly during off hours.
- aesthetic compatibility of the new structures with the community on the St. Boniface side of the river.

Maurice E. Therrien
 464 Langevin Street
 Winnipeg, MB R2H 2V8

- letter dated January 9, 2001
- Mr. Therrien is a member of Old Saint Boniface residents' Association. He wrote in support of the project as filed by the City and to clarify the position of support for the project by the majority of the Association's membership, which he feels is not accurately reflected in the Association's e-mail, dated October 20, 2000, to Manitoba Conservation. He is of the opinion that the environmental review process is being used by a minority as a means to delay construction of a project which has received overwhelming support of the stakeholders and residents. Is of the opinion that further consultation is unnecessary and the project should be approved as applied so as not to delay construction.

Comments on the Proposal from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):

Provincial Departments

Manitoba Conservation (Policy Coordination Branch) Request that the proponent provide substantial geologic and groundwater background information in order to properly evaluate and mitigate any impact that saline groundwater flow may have on the environment and the bridge structure. Recommend that river bottom conditions be assessed at the old bridge site.

Mines Branch No concerns.

Historic Resources Concerns for heritage resources that might be impacted by replacement of the present structure are recognized in the Proposal Workplan. These concerns will be addressed in the EIS, as outlined in the draft EIS Table of Contents. Consequently, Historic Resources Branch considers that adequate provision will be made for the identification, protection and mitigation of heritage resources affected by the project.

Environment (Water Quality Management Section) WQM concerns with respect to the environmental impact assessment framework have been generally been addressed in the Proposal except with respect to the biotic component. Recommend that a pre and post biotic survey of the macroinvertebrate population be undertaken to establish ambient and post construction conditions.

(Winnipeg Region) It is not clear whether noise during construction and related mitigation will be addressed in the EIA. Recommend that decommissioning and demolition of the old bridge and associated structures should be addressed in the EIA.

Intergovernmental Affairs No comments or concerns.

Health Specific comment on health impacts will be made during review of the EIS. Commend the City planners for engaging the community in the planning process. Concur with the statement in the Proposal that the extensive public consultation that has taken place will simplify the EIA process since many impacts will have been minimized or avoided.

Federal Departments

Fisheries and Oceans DFO is a responsible authority for the review of the project and will screen the project as prescribed by CEAA before an Authorization under the Fisheries Act or permit under the Navigable Waters Protection Act are issued. Recommend that a description of the proposed fish habitat compensation works and monitoring of the works be incorporated in a compensation agreement separate from the EIS.

Parks Canada Parks Canada has an interest in the project in the project and offers to provide specialist advice with respect to heritage resources. Note that land held by the Forks National Historic Site which is required for the pedestrian bridge either through sale, lease or disposition, or issuance of a licence under the Federal Real Property Regulations, would trigger an environmental assessment under CEAA.

Disposition of the above Public, Provincial and Federal comments

All comments were forwarded to the City's environmental consultant for follow-up and consideration during the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment. The Director of Environmental Approvals notified the public respondents in writing that their

comments will be considered during the preparation of the EIA of the project and that a decision on a recommending a public hearing will not be made until the EIS has been filed and reviewed by all affected parties.

OVERVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was filed on January 29, 2001. The advertisement of the EIS read as follows:

“An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Provencher Bridge Project has been filed by the City of Winnipeg Public Works Department. The EIS has been prepared by InterGroup Consultants on behalf of the City of Winnipeg as part of the licencing requirements under the Manitoba Environment Act for the project. A complete description of the proposed project is presented in the EIS.”

The EIS was advertised in the Winnipeg Free Press on Saturday, February 3, 2001. It was made available for public review at registries located at the Main Registry, 123 Main Street, Winnipeg, the Manitoba Eco-Network, the Centennial Public Library. It was also distributed to the Federal and Provincial Government "Transportation" Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members for comment. All comments were requested by March 5, 2001.

Public Response on the EIS

The following correspondence was received from the public in response to the Environment Act advertisement of the Environmental Impact Statement. Comments are summarized below.

Paul E. Clifton
Group 5 Box 16 RR#1
St. Norbert, MB R3V 1L2

- letter dated February 14, 2001
- request that any backwater effect which may be caused by the Provencher Bridge piers and other manmade obstructions to Red River flows from the south floodway control structure to Lockport be quantified over the range of river levels.

Disposition of the above public comment:

The letter filed by Mr. Clifton was forwarded to the City's environmental consultant with a request to provide Approval Branch with information on backwater effects which would

address this concern. The City's environmental consultant provided Approvals Branch with information on backwater effects caused by the piers of the proposed Provencher Bridge and shoreline abutment invert elevations on March 12, 2001. This information was provided to Mr. Clifton by Approvals Branch on March 14, 2001. At the same time, Mr. Clifton was advised that conducting an assessment of the cumulative restrictions to Red River flows caused by all present man made structures from south of the floodway control structure to Lockport is beyond the scope of the Provencher Bridge environmental assessment process.

Comments on the EIS from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):

Provincial Departments

Manitoba Conservation (Policy Coordination Branch) Recommend that some effort be made to contain the noxious weed, Purple Loosestrife, which has been noted to be extremely invasive following bridge construction.

Disposition: Comment can be accommodated as condition of licencing.

Mines Branch No concerns.

Historic Resources Report that the potential impacts, proposed mitigation actions and monitoring strategies identified in the EIS have satisfied Historic Resources Branch's concerns for potential impact to heritage resources.

Environment (Water Quality Management Section) Water Quality Management's concerns with respect to aquatic biota have been addressed in the EIS. The mitigation and monitoring activities described in the EIS are appropriate to minimize impacts with respect to aquatic biota.

(Winnipeg Region) No concerns in terms of how the project relates to the Winnipeg Region's program areas.

Intergovernmental Affairs No comments.

Health No comments

Federal Departments

Application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)*

Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO)

DFO declared itself to be a Responsible Authority for the review of this project under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (the Act). They advise that the project will likely require an authorization under subsection 35(2) of the *Fisheries Act* in order to harmfully alter, disrupt, or destroy fish habitat in the Red River, which will “trigger” the assessment. Should a permit be required from the Canadian Coast Guard under subsection 5(1)(a) of the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*, DFO Habitat Management will ensure that the requirements of the Act will be met on Coast Guard’s behalf.

Western Economic Diversification (WED)

The Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Secretariat received an application from the City of Winnipeg for funding, under the *Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Agreement*, of the Pedestrian Bridge component of the project. An environmental assessment under the Act would also be required by Western Economic Diversification should this component of the project be recommended for funding under WED’s program. WED has reviewed the information in the Provencher Paired Bridges Project EIS and have confirmed that the scope of the project, as set out in the EIS, would meet their assessment requirements.

Heritage Canada (HC)

Heritage Canada confirmed that they are not a Responsible Authority under the Act with respect to the Paired Bridges Project. Section 3.3 of the EIS specifically states that the Pedestrian Bridge will be located immediately north of the Forks National Historic Site. Therefore, federal lands administered by HC will not be required in order for the project to proceed.

Federal Technical Review Comments On The EIS

Section 6.2 Aquatics and Water Quality

Section 6.2.2.1 - Drainage Area

- “*The drainage basin encompasses approximately 278,000 km², including much of northern Minnesota, northern North Dakota, south eastern Saskatchewan and southern Manitoba.*”

Comment:

A more accurate description is that the drainage basin includes substantial portions of North Dakota, north-western Minnesota, south eastern Saskatchewan and southern Manitoba as well as a small portion of north eastern South Dakota. A map of the Red River drainage basin would be useful.

- *“The Assiniboine River, which converges with the Red River in downtown Winnipeg, accounts for approximately 153,000 km² of the total drainage area (Environment Canada, 1991). Approximately two-thirds of the water flowing past the Provencher Bridge arrives via the Red River, and one-third via the Assiniboine River (Gurney 1991). At Lockport, 45 per cent of the flow originates from Manitoba, 46 from the United States and 9 per cent from Saskatchewan (Gurney 1991).”*

Comment:

The references (Environment Canada 1991, Gurney 1991) used for the information in this paragraph are dated. More current references (Environment Canada HYDAT CD-ROM Version 98-1.05.8) indicate that the gross drainage area of the Assiniboine River is closer to 154,000 km². In addition, the proportion of flow at the Provencher Bridge from the Red and Assiniboine River drainage basins is closer to 80% Red and 20% Assiniboine based on average annual flows for a common gauged period from 1963 to 1998. Similarly, the estimated flows originating from the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the United States would be different using available data current to 1998.

Section 6.2.2.2 - Discharge and Water Levels

- *“Weekly median and upper and lower decile flows from 1970 - 1999, are shown in Appendix 6.2.1 (Provisional data, MDNR).”*

Comment:

The description and presentation of the Red River flow data could be improved and would add clarity to the report. The following comments are offered:

- The weekly flow data is described as provisional. This is inaccurate. Provisional data is unpublished data which has not been fully quality controlled. At present, hydrometric data for Red River flow stations is published to 1998 (Environment Canada HYDAT CD-ROM Version 98-1.05.8) and 1999 data will be published shortly. Furthermore, true provisional data for the remainder of 2000 (i.e. Oct.5th to end of year) should be available to complete the table in Appendix 6.2.1.
- The hydrometric station associated with the data in Appendix 6.2.1 is not identified. There is no hydrometric station on the Red River near the Provencher Bridge, but active hydrometric flow gauges exist upstream (05OC012, Red River near Ste. Agathe, data: 1958 to present) and downstream (05OJ010, Red River near Lockport, data: 1962 to present). The

hydrometric station associated with the data should be identified and its full period of record presented (i.e., not limited to 1970 to 2000 period).

- In addition to the table of weekly flows presented in the Appendix, median flow hydrographs and flow duration curves for each week would enhance the understanding of the variability in the annual flow regime at the site.
- Frequency analysis of the weekly flows during the proposed construction period would quantify the probability of various flows and allow more informed decision-making regarding the risk of temporary interruption of upstream fish passage due to the work bridges (see Section 6.2.3.3.2 - Construction - Temporary Work Bridges).

Section 6.2.2.4 - Water Chemistry

Comment:

- The water chemistry of the Red River is characterized based on a dated reference (Gurney 1991). More recent data is available and should have been used in this section.

Section 6.2.3.3.2 - Construction - Temporary Work Bridges

Comment:

- The adequacy of the construction plan with respect to fish movement is predicated on the assumption that “A temporary interruption to upstream fish passage during winter is not expected to have a significant impact on the Red River fish population for the following reasons: ...”. It is acknowledged in the report that flow velocities in the channel between work bridges could exceed those acceptable for fish passage depending on discharge conditions during construction.
- Prior to and during the anticipated construction periods (Nov.1 - Mar. 14), it is proposed that general discharge conditions be monitored and work bridge construction be modified to accommodate higher discharges leading to unacceptable flow velocities. This approach is reasonable, but implies that in order to meet the construction schedule, the work bridges may still be built when discharge conditions will lead to flow velocities impeding fish passage.
- Better quantification of the risk (i.e. probability) of exceeding acceptable flow velocities for fish passage would enhance decision-making regarding this issue. Discharge frequency curves for median weekly flows during each week in the construction period could be produced based on available historical stream-flow data.

The discharges at the each frequency level could in turn be related to maximum flow velocities in the channel using hydraulic modeling.

Section 6.2.5 - Monitoring and Follow-up

Comment:

- The only monitoring being proposed is for benthic invertebrates. Recommend that water quality monitoring for suspended solids, in particular, also be considered within the study area for shorter-term periods when construction activities are being carried out in the water (e.g., construction and removal of work bridges and coffer dams, augering of holes for pier caissons). This will provide additional data on which to assess the accuracy and quality of predicted impacts.

Section 6.3.2.4 - Setting - River Hydraulics

Comment:

- Water surface elevations and discharges associated with different return periods are summarized in Table 6.3.1 (Summary of River Flow and Water Surface Elevations). This information is not referenced (i.e., not in Technical References Section), and there is no date associated with the table. The adequacy of this hydrologic frequency analysis and the associated hydraulic design work (primarily used for riprap design; see Section 6.3.4.4.2) may need to be reassessed if the analysis is several years old and does not consider recent data, especially from the 1990s. The date of this work should be established by adequate referencing and if outdated, some consideration given to the need for reassessment of the hydrologic frequency analysis and hydraulic design associated with the riprap.

Section 6.8 Heritage Resources

Comment:

No deficiencies or concerns with respect to heritage resources were identified.

Disposition of the preceding Federal technical review comments on the EIS:

CEAA advised Approvals Branch that the preceding technical comments provided by Federal Departments on Section 6 of the EIS have been provided as information and should not be considered as a deficiency statement with regard to the EIS. Therefore, no follow-up or additional information is required.

In response to Approvals Branch request for clarification regarding the DFO comments, CEAA subsequently advised Approvals Branch that DFO confirmed that the scope of the project and the assessment considered in the EIS is adequate for purposes of screening

under the Act. Further, Approvals Branch were advised that DFO is satisfied the EIS has appropriately documented consideration of the environmental effects of the project as required by section 16 of the Act. Any additional information required by DFO relates to the application for authorization required under section 35(2) of the Fisheries Act, and is required so that a screening level decision can be made.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Following the review of the Proposal, the Environmental Approvals Branch requested that the City's consultant work directly with the respondents and continue to work with the Provencher Bridges Public Advisory Committee (PAC) to factor their interests, where possible, into the environmental assessment. It was concluded that as a result of this effort, the Department received only one response to the public review of the EIS.

The technical review of the EIS demonstrated that any impacts from the project as planned are minimal, mitigable, and satisfactorily fulfill the requirements of The Environment Act in accordance with the EIA Workplan. On April 3, 2001, the Director wrote to the respondents advising that public hearings on the Proposal would not be recommended. The reasons presented for not recommending public hearings include:

- 1) the absence of public response on the EIS review;
- 2) the effort made by the City to factor public interests into the project has been documented in the EIS and adequately demonstrates that the project as presented by the City incorporates measures acceptable for those potentially affected by the project; and
- 3) the technical merits of the EIS.

At the same time the respondents were advised that the decision not to recommend public hearings can be appealed to the Minister of Environment within 30 days in accordance with Section 27(1) of the Environment Act.

It is recommended that the Provencher Paired Bridges Project be licenced pursuant to The Environment Act as proposed.

PREPARED BY:

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April 20, 2001

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