



POLICY RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE: Political Action Committee

SUBJECT: Waterdown Road Interchange (WRI)

RECOMMENDATION: That the Burlington Chamber of Commerce fully support the call for a full interchange at Waterdown Road to provide for a new eastbound on-ramp and westbound off-ramp; and, that the Chamber, in conjunction with the City of Burlington, lobby to ensure the Waterdown Road Interchange project becomes an immediate priority in the Provincial Capital/Infrastructure budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Burlington has conducted extensive studies over the past several years for the Waterdown Road Interchange (WRI), along with currently undergoing the Environmental Assessment with Stantec Consulting. The Interchange would divert traffic (commuter and trucking) from Plains Road to the 403 Highway without making it necessary to further congest local arterial roads such as North Service Road. It allows further commercial development in Aldershot, an enhancement to tourism via the Royal Botanical Gardens, quicker 403 access for emergency vehicles and easier accessibility to Aldershot's industrial/commercial community.

Completion of the Environmental Assessment is expected in September 2003. The City Staff would then like to push forward on this project. It is already a top priority within the City's Capital Budget and can be advanced based on approvals and partnership funding from the MTO.

The MTO has expressed concern over the impact this Interchange will have on the 403 highway. Their concern is the highway is already reaching its capacity, and without widening, would not be capable of sustaining flow from another Interchange-especially near that of the Freeman Interchange. The Province also believes that, since assessment growth will directly benefit Burlington and the closely surrounding area, it is not a Provincial funding responsibility, let alone a priority.

The Burlington Chamber believes the Interchange will benefit the entire community, as well as those surrounding us. Therefore, the Province should be involved. Further, the Chamber believes the Waterdown Road Interchange to be a priority infrastructure project.

BACKGROUND REPORT:

The purpose of the Waterdown Road Interchange is to decrease the current levels of truck congestion along Plains Road due to a lack of access to the 403. The WRI will create greater accessibility to the Aldershot and Waterdown areas.

The process for the WRI has undergone extensive research and studies. The most important of the studies conducted was by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, a consulting firm who conducted a Business Case for the City of Burlington. Basically, to show the MTO there is a need and that this project is essential for future growth,

development and prosperity for the surrounding areas.

The Chamber up to this point has held a seat on the WRI Stakeholders Advisory Committee and has kept on the positions of both the City and the MTO. We also represent many members who have a legitimate business voice towards this project.

A number of valid points have been presented for the WRI. Some of these are listed below:

- The Plains Road Village Vision is a plan to revitalize the business district and image of Plains Road, to attract consumers and local businesses back into the area that has suffered from heavy volumes of truck traffic leading to a deterioration of Plains Road and its business community.
- The PriceWaterhouseCoopers business case states that the cost will be approximately 4.75 million to construct the two ramps.
- The Canada-Ontario Infrastructure Program has given the Royal Botanical Gardens a grant of \$18 Million. To protect this investment it would be wise to go ahead with the WRI as it will lead to increased visitor attraction allowing easier access to the Royal Botanical Gardens.
- Safety concerns on the 403 have been a prevalent issue recently. The accessibility for ambulance and fire trucks is greatly hindered by not having an off ramp at Waterdown Road. This results in circuitous routing to reach an accident scene for emergency vehicles. Response times, therefore, exceed the Ministry of Health protocols.
- Aldershot has an opportunity to further enhance the government's Smart Growth agenda. The Interchange expansion embraces the basic ideas of Smart Growth with major emphasis on utilization of the Aldershot GO station, as well as rehabilitating Brownfields.
- The increased involvement from many local groups, such as the Waterdown Interchange Partnership, local businesses and the Community Stakeholders Advisory Committee. These groups represent the public community within the surrounding areas and all express a community desire to proceed with this project.
- Currently, Aldershot has a strong business community and with the WRI put in place, they could accommodate up to 9000 new jobs along with 5.6 million square feet of potential industrial, commercial and retail development along the 403.
- The City of Burlington acknowledges the necessity of this project and is making it a major priority in its Capital Budget pending support funding from the Province.

The Waterdown Road Interchange is slated to proceed in the coming years according to Burlington's Capital Budget and it is now waiting for approvals and support funding from the Province. The Province currently does not have this project in its Capital Program. The City and Province must make committed efforts to be forthcoming in what their financial commitment to this project is. Furthermore, it is the Chamber's view that this project is imperative for people and businesses within the Aldershot, Waterdown and Burlington areas.

DISSEMINATION:

Burlington Chamber of Commerce Policy Manual.

External communication as required at a later date.

Date: July, 2003

Passed by Executive Council on July 9, 2003