

**DOWNTOWN RIVER PRECINCT – MASTER PLAN & 1<sup>ST</sup> AVENUE EAST, 800 BLOCK  
SCHEDULE B MUNICIPAL CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
NOTICE OF PROJECT INITIATION  
AND  
INVITATION TO PHASE 2 PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE**

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## **BACKGROUND AND PROJECT STATEMENT**

The City has identified a need to consolidate a vision for the Downtown River Precinct, which includes the 800 and 900 Blocks of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenues East and West. The basic intentions of this vision are to re-claim a pedestrian environment from the existing vehicular environment along the Sydenham River banks, and to reconnect the downtown commercial district with the river. The Master Plan approach is used to consolidate this vision under the Municipal Class EA, within the general Study Area.

A related, but project specific, intention of the process is to develop a preferred alignment for the 800 Block of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue East adjacent to the Farmer's Market building. Re-alignment alternatives under consideration have project specific triggers for a Schedule 'B' EA process, which follows the same process as for the more general Master Plan. Considering the significant degree of overlap between the Master Plan and this project specific Schedule 'B' EA, a single Project Statement is considered appropriate to address the intentions of both the Master Plan and the Schedule 'B' EA process, as follows:

"Previous studies and reports have identified an historic dis-connect of the Sydenham River from the pedestrian environment and from the downtown core. The proponent wishes to formalize recognized opportunities in traffic flow alternatives to address existing deficiencies in urban design, and to improve both the vehicular and pedestrian environments within the Study Area."

The City is, therefore, undertaking this combined Master Plan and Schedule 'B' EA process under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment to ensure that both the general road system within the Study Area, and the specific 800 Block of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue East road re-alignment, are appropriately planned.

## **STUDY PROCESS**

A Master Plan and Schedule 'B' Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process will be followed, as outlined in the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Manual prepared by the Municipal Engineers Association (2015).

The first Phase of this process involves preparation of a Project Statement, which addresses the Problem or Opportunity to be resolved through the process, as outlined above. The second Phase of the process involves development and consideration of alternative solutions to the identified Project Statement, and the relative impacts of the alternatives on various aspects of the "environment", including the Social, Natural, Cultural, Technical, and Economic "environments".

For the Master Plan, four alternative solutions are being considered to address the identified Project Statement within the Study Area;

- i) Do Nothing.
- ii) Full Two-Way Traffic
- iii) One-Way Pairs
- iv) Close to Through Traffic

For the Schedule 'B' EA process, related to the 800 Block of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue East, the following two alternatives are being considered:

- i) Do Nothing (maintain the existing alignment)
- ii) Relocate 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue East 800 Block from the west side to the east side of the Farmer's Market building.

Through the work completed to date, the Study Team has identified Alternative 3, One-Way Pairs, as the Recommended Solution to the Master Plan; and Alternative 2, Relocation of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. East, as the Recommended Solution to the Schedule 'B' EA. Documentation of the development and review of alternatives completed to date is provided in the Project File, which is available on the City's website at the address noted below. At this point in the process, the Recommended Solutions are presented to the Public and various Review Agencies for review and comment.

All comments are considered. Once comments are received, the Study Team re-evaluates the Recommended Solution and presents the findings to the Council of the City of Owen Sound for acceptance of Preferred Solutions.

Once Preferred Solutions to the Study process are adopted by Council, the Study Team will post a Notice of Study Completion. An updated Project File will be made available.

## PHASE 2 - PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE

Public involvement is an important component of this project planning. The public is encouraged to provide written comments to either of the contacts listed below at any time during the process.

A Phase 2 Public Information Centre (PIC) is planned to be held:

**Date: Thursday, September 28, 2017**

**Time: Informal Review Session from 4:30 to 5:30 – Presentation at 5:30**

**Location: Professional Centre - 945 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue East, Owen Sound, Suite 220**

Following an opportunity informally to review the current plans, a brief presentation of the Study process and findings to date will be made by the Study Team. Public discussion and comments will be further encouraged.

This Notice for the PIC is advertised in the Owen Sound Sun Times newspaper, and is also posted on the City of Owen Sound website, where additional information is provided.

This Notice first issued on September 14, 2017

The City of Owen Sound  
Public Works and Engineering Department  
Mr. Chris Webb, P.Eng.  
Manager of Engineering Services  
Mailing Address:  
808 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue East,  
Owen Sound, ON, N4K 2H4  
Temporary Location During City Hall Renovations:  
945 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue East, Suite 223  
Owen Sound, ON N4K 2K8  
Tel: (519) 376-1440  
cwebb@owensound.ca  
[www.owensound.ca](http://www.owensound.ca)

GM BluePlan Engineering Limited  
Consulting Professional Engineers  
Mr. John Slocombe, P.Eng.  
Project Manager  
1260 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue East, Unit 1  
Owen Sound, ON N4K 2J3  
Tel: (519) 376-1805  
John.Slocombe@gmblueplan.ca  
[www.gmblueplan.ca](http://www.gmblueplan.ca)