

TO: Secretary, Executive Committee
FROM: General Manager, Infrastructure Services Department
DATE: September 13, 2013
SUBJECT: Transportation Infrastructure Priorities
FILE NO: IS. 6330-1

RECOMMENDATION: that the following report be submitted to City Council recommending that the information be received.

TOPIC AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding the results of a comprehensive evaluation of major transportation projects and to provide information on 10-year transportation priorities.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

1. The major transportation infrastructure priorities have been identified for the next 10 years.
2. A strategy for implementation has been developed that outlines the project rationale and timing.
3. Funding options for these projects will be outlined in the 2014 Capital Plan.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The identification of transportation infrastructure priorities supports the City of Saskatoon Strategic Goal, Moving Around and the long-term strategy to develop an integrated transportation network.

BACKGROUND

A mandate of the Infrastructure Services Department includes the identification of infrastructure needs throughout the city as the urban fabric grows and changes. There are currently a wide variety of required roadway, interchange and transportation capital projects, each with its own timeline and funding strategy.

With the advent of the Integrated Growth Plan and its related projects, including the North Commuter Parkway, each project and its timing needed to be re-examined and re-prioritized. The Transportation Branch, therefore, undertook a comprehensive evaluation of proposed major transportation projects and has prepared a 10-year transportation priorities list.

REPORT

The development of the 10-year infrastructure priorities list utilized a process which identified current capacity, levels-of-service and collisions; and also forecasted traffic

conditions for a city population of 300,000. This is based on an estimated 2% population growth and is consistent with the current Transportation Model.

The Transportation Branch met with Saskatoon Transit and Community Services to discuss existing concerns and to review traffic forecasts. From those discussions, a long list of potential projects and policy reviews was developed. This report only relates to the major transportation infrastructure projects. Work continues on policy changes and smaller projects.

Initially, 52 major infrastructure projects were identified, including arterial road segments; interchanges; railway grade separations; and river crossings. All of these projects were evaluated and ranked with respect to their overall contribution to the transportation system, including: city-wide user benefits; network connectivity; facilitation of land development; and whether the project addressed an existing or future need.

While each project has its own merits, it was also important to evaluate them as groups of projects. For example, a river crossing bridge may be of high value, but only if there is a roadway system that connects to it.

Several iterations of the list were undertaken in order to develop a list that represents the immediate (10 year) projects that have the highest benefit to the transportation system for the investment required. There are 20 projects in total included in this list which are shown in Attachment 1. There are additional projects that have been identified beyond the 10-year time frame, including Circle Drive/Laurier Drive and McKercher Drive/Berini Drive.

The projects have been grouped together according to development area, and an implementation strategy has been developed in order to stage the developments over a 10-year time frame. For each project, a rationale for its timing has been prepared, as shown in Attachment 2. The following is a summary:

Projects related to the North Commuter Parkway Project

The goal of this project, which was established by City Council, is to have the North Commuter Parkway Project (NCP) available for traffic by the fall of 2016. The Administration is aggressively pursuing that goal for the bridge and connecting roadways. The NCP Project included the extension of Central Avenue to Attridge Drive and improvements to the Attridge Drive and Central Avenue intersection. The Idylwyld Drive and Marquis Drive intersection forms a key connection to this roadway network. The construction of an interchange at this location prior to the introduction of additional traffic from the NCP is required to ensure efficient traffic flow through the intersection. If it is not completed in concert with the NCP being open to traffic, the intersection will have a very poor level of service.

The value of the Traffic Bridge was established by the Traffic Bridge Needs Assessment and Functional Planning Study, and its value to pedestrian and cycling traffic would be realized immediately upon completion.

The Traffic Bridge has been bundled with the NCPP and submitted to PPP Canada with the goal of this approach funding the project.

Projects related to the Holmwood Sector and Blairmore Sector

The Holmwood Development Sector has been identified as a key growth area on the east end of current city development. The same is true for the Blairmore Development Sector on the west end. In order for the developments to be successful, access is critical. A staging strategy has been developed to identify the key infrastructure required to provide safe and reasonable access as development proceeds.

Development Driven Projects

A variety of transportation infrastructure projects have been identified as part of previous or current land development and city growth initiatives. These projects have been identified with timing associated with the level of growth and development completion.

OPTIONS TO THE RECOMMENDATION

These priorities were developed to reflect the needs of the Projected Growth Plan for the city. Changes to the plan may change the needs and priorities for transportation infrastructure.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A funding plan for each project will be developed prior to final approval.

PUBLIC AND/OR STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

As each project progresses, stakeholder engagement will be included as part of the planning process.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Information regarding the City's transportation infrastructure priorities will be made available on the City's website. As individual projects progress, more specific information will be shared with the community through open houses and flyers to ensure awareness and to engage the community in the functional planning work.

DUE DATE FOR FOLLOW-UP AND/OR PROJECT COMPLETION

A further report will be provided to outline options for funding the priority infrastructure projects. The report is expected by the end of 2013.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed projects will result in significant environmental implications associated with land use, consumption of resources and greenhouse gas emissions once construction proceeds. However, the overall impact of construction activities will be mitigated somewhat by an efficient and effective transportation network that meets the needs of a growing population. The environmental implications relating to each individual project will be communicated in subsequent reports.

PRIVACY IMPACT

There are no privacy implications.

SAFETY/CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

There is no requirement for a CPTED review of these projects at this stage.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice, pursuant to Section 3 of Policy C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Project Locations.
2. Timing Considerations.

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Executive DC Major Transportation Priorities