

Ministry of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks

Ministère de l'Environnement,
de la Protection de la nature et des
Parcs

Office of the Minister

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DEC 10 2018

357-2018-1073

Mr. Don Elliott
Director of Engineering, Public Works and Engineering Services
City of Sault Ste. Marie
99 Foster Drive
Sault Ste. Marie ON P6A 5X6

Dear Mr. Elliott:

On August 5, 2018, I received one Part II order request asking that the City of Sault Ste. Marie be required to prepare an individual environmental assessment for the proposed improvements to Northern Avenue.

I am taking this opportunity to inform you that I have decided that an individual environmental assessment is not required. This decision was made after giving careful consideration to the issues raised in the request, the project documentation, the provisions of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment, and other relevant matters required to be considered under subsection 16(4) of the Environmental Assessment Act.

The reasons for my decision may be found in the attached table. In the interest of transparency, I encourage you to make this letter available to the greater public on the City's website.

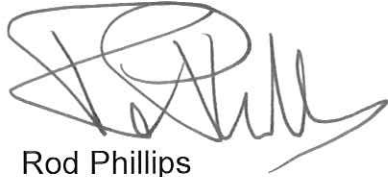
With this decision having been made, the City can now proceed with the Northern Avenue Improvements project. The City must ensure the project is implemented in the manner it was developed and designed, as set out in the project documentation, and inclusive of all mitigating measures, commitments and environmental and other provisions therein.

Lastly, I would like to ensure that the City understands that failure to comply with the act, the provisions of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment, and failure to implement the project in the manner described in the planning documents, are contraventions of the act and may result in prosecution under section 38 of the act.

Mr. Don Elliott
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I am confident that the City recognizes the importance and value of the act and will ensure that its requirements and those of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment are satisfied.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rod Phillips', with a large, stylized initial 'R' and 'P'.

Rod Phillips
Minister

Attachment

c: Requesters
EA File No. 18070 – Northern Avenue Corridor Improvements

Northern Avenue Improvements – City of Sault Ste. Marie

Municipal Class Environmental Assessment

Minister's Review of Issues Raised by Requesters

Issue	Response and Analysis
<p>Vehicular access into to P-Patch subdivision is not justified and will negatively impact the neighbourhood.</p>	<p>The City looked at traffic improvements in the P-Patch subdivision in response to complaints about traffic congestion at Pine Street and Pleasant Drive.</p> <p>Four alternatives were considered, which included a “do nothing” scenario, two different road accesses and installing traffic lights at the Pine Street and Pleasant Drive intersection. The City’s evaluation found that traffic heading north or west from the P-Patch subdivision will likely be diverted from that intersection onto Northern Avenue and reduce congestion. It also determined that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian and cyclist traffic would not change; • Natural environmental impacts would be minimal as it is being built within an existing right-of-way; and, • That it would reduce vehicular idling. <p>The City’s evaluation noted that neighbouring properties may be negatively impacted, as traffic from within the P-Patch subdivision would be redirected from the Pine Street and Pleasant Drive intersection to the new access road. Overall, the City’s preferred alternative ranked above the others when all criteria (e.g. technical, natural environment, economic) were considered.</p> <p>I am satisfied that the City has evaluated the project alternatives against environmental criteria and selected the alternative that achieves its objectives.</p>
<p>The three-lane configuration proposed for Northern Avenue will encourage aggressive driving, creating safety risks to all road users.</p>	<p>The City anticipates that the changes on Northern Avenue will have a calming effect on traffic by reducing travel speeds. As part of its traffic study for the project, the City cited results of similar road conversions in other North American cities, where road space was reduced from four lanes to two with a centre turn lane, and bike lanes were installed. These changes have consistently resulted in reduced collisions without increases in traffic delays.</p> <p>Some Ontario examples include a 44% reduction in</p>

Issue	Response and Analysis
	<p>collisions on Frederick Street in Kitchener, and a 40% reduction in collisions on St. George Street in Toronto. Based on these results, the City anticipates that the changes on Northern Avenue will create similar reductions in rear-end and side swipe collisions between vehicles. The City also stated that it conducted similar changes on Queen Street with successful results.</p> <p>I am satisfied that the project's purpose is to increase safety for all road users.</p>
<p>The City did not consult with students, faculty, staff or Indigenous community members at Sault College.</p>	<p>The City shared project notices with Sault College and Indigenous communities surrounding Sault Ste. Marie throughout the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Commencement: March 18, 2016 • Notice of Public Information Centre 1: June 17, 2016 • Notice of Public Information Centre 2: September 18, 2017 • Notice of Completion: July 4, 2018 <p>The City had a direct meeting with a representative from Sault College on July 13, 2016 to discuss any concerns on the college's behalf. Sault College emailed the City on September 4, 2018 to express its support for the changes on Northern Avenue and new access to the P-Patch subdivision. The City has committed to working with Sault College during detailed design on future access changes to the site and creating pedestrian crossovers.</p> <p>I am satisfied that the City consulted with Sault College and Indigenous communities.</p>
<p>Climate change was not considered in the proposed project.</p>	<p>The City considered climate change as part of the project. The changes on Northern Avenue will reduce Northern Avenue from four through lanes to two, and redistribute this road space to dedicated cycling lanes.</p> <p>The proposed access road into the P-Patch subdivision is expected to accommodate nearby residents by providing the option to walk, cycle, or drive while providing connections between sites, neighbourhoods, and modes of transportation.</p> <p>The City cited a review by Transport Canada that found that</p>

Issue	Response and Analysis
	<p>similar installations of bike lanes in Toronto increased cycling traffic. The City is expecting a similar increase in this active transportation option instead of using other modes of transportation that emit greenhouse gases.</p> <p>I am satisfied that the project's design has climate change considerations.</p>
<p>The City did not consider the impacts of spending money on the project instead of allocating it elsewhere. The project will benefit wealthy residents that use automobiles, and discourage active transportation and transit usage, including by vulnerable populations.</p>	<p>The City considered the cost of the project in its evaluation. The changes to Northern Avenue involve line painting and some modifications to existing curbs and sidewalks. These changes can be implemented in conjunction with required resurfacing, which reduces the cost of the project.</p> <p>The project will make changes to Northern Avenue that will reduce traffic lanes, create dedicated cycling lanes and fill in sidewalk gaps. This is expected to encourage more active transportation usage. The new road into the P-Patch subdivision will connect to Northern Avenue, and provide access both vehicular and active transportation users.</p> <p>I am satisfied that the city considered the project's costs and access for active transportation users.</p>