



**ENGINEERING AND OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT
ENGINEERING DIVISION**

Report Number: 2013-34

Date: September 23, 2013

**SUBJECT: INFORMATION REPORT – PORT COLBORNE OPERATIONS CENTRE
STATUS UPDATE**

1) PURPOSE

This report is prepared by Jim Huppunen, Manager of Engineering Services under the direction of Ron Hanson, Director of Engineering and Operations. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the progress of the Port Colborne Operations Centre (PCOC) development.

2) HISTORY, BACKGROUND, COUNCIL POLICY, PRACTICES

The City's Works Yard is no longer adequate for the present Operations and Public Works fleet and Council has agreed that a new facility is required, through presentations made at Strategic Planning and budget deliberations. In 2008 a Class Environmental Assessment (EA) was initiated to address the long term requirements of the Operations Division of the City. The Study was completed in November 2009 and after a site selection process, the City-owned land comprising of 5.7 hectares of industrial land on Stonebridge Drive was selected as the preferred site.

During budget deliberations for the 2012 Capital Budget, City Staff requested a debenture of \$800,000 which would be used to hire a Project Management firm and an Architectural firm to complete the detailed design during 2012 for construction in 2013.

In 2011, City Staff meet with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) to review the preferred site and discuss any environmental constraints. A 30.0m wetland buffer was found to be in place along the north property line and a 100 year floodplain transverses diagonally across the northeast quadrant of the property. Based on the preliminary site plan established through the EA process, it was determined that the building configurations would need to be manipulated to ensure that the site was still adequate for the New Operations Centre to be built within the environmental constraints. City Staff met with Staff from AMEC Environmental on February 23, 2012 to review the preliminary site plan. AMEC revised the buildings on the site to determine if the site was still adequate for the requirements of the Operations Department. AMEC sent a revised site plan to City Staff on March 8, 2012 showing that the site was still adequate for the requirements of the Operations Department.

During the March 26, 2012 Council meeting, Report # 2012-13 was presented to Council. Council approved the following recommendation:

- A. THAT The Council of the City of Port Colborne accept this information report;**
- B. AND THAT Council approve the next steps in the development of a detailed design for the New Operations Centre as per the steps outlined in this report.**

In August of 2012, Report #2012-26 was approved and PRISM Partners were selected as the Project Management firm. Subsequently in December of 2012, the City entered into an agreement with McCallum Sather Architects (MSA) to complete the detailed design under Report #2012-38. Preliminary design work was initiated and a Technical Advisory Group (TAC) was established. The TAC visited neighbouring municipalities to review their existing facilities to aide in the design of the City's facility. Once a concept design was completed, the TAC reviewed proposals for a cost consultant, geotechnical firm and topographical surveyor. In February of 2013, agreements were entered into with Clare Randall Smith Pendleberry Cost Consultant (CRSP), SPL Consultants Ltd. and Chambers & Associates Surveying Ltd.

3) STAFF COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

During the summer of 2013, a detailed topographical survey of the preferred site was completed along with the geotechnical investigation to determine the soil conditions.

Upon further review of the geotechnical data; the site consisted of mostly clayey silt, peat/organic silt, silty clay and organic silt from the surface to approximately 7.6 metres deep. This type of soil will not provide the bearing capacity required for the construction of the building or vehicle movement areas. The geotechnical report was analyzed by the engineer and they recommended that caissons approximately 10.0 metres deep be installed to support the buildings. There was also a recommendation that the material under the area for vehicle movements be removed and be replaced with engineered fill to ensure the surface is stable.

City Staff have been in consultation with the NPCA regarding the floodplain that traverses the property. City Staff received a conditional approval to fill in a portion of the floodplain for equipment/material storage. Prior to the area being filled in, a quantity of material would need to be removed and replaced with engineered fill in order to provide a stable base for storage. It is to be noted that only the City would be allowed to fill in this portion of the floodplain on this property as it is for Public use as a Municipality.

Based on the above findings from the geotechnical report, a Class 'D' estimate was completed to determine the cost of the additional work. It was estimated to cost approximately \$3 million in addition to the building construction costs for the installation of caissons to support the building on stable footings and to remove and replace the soil in the vehicle movement areas and equipment/material storage area with engineered fill. It was determined that the soil conditions of the site were not financially suitable to build an operations centre.

Staff met with the Project Manager on August 15, 2013 to discuss the findings of the

Class 'D' estimate and geotechnical report. At this time, it was determined that the project would be put on hold and a report to Council would be prepared to generate discussion and obtain direction to continue the development of the PCOC. Please see Attachment #1 for a letter to the TAC members.

Please refer to Attachment #2 for additional details and recommendations from the Project Manager.

As you will see in Attachment #2, the Project Manager is recommending that the City look for another site to build the Operations Centre. Staff has reviewed several possible locations. Even though the current EA has been submitted to the Ministry of Environment, an amendment can be submitted to select a new preferred site. It must also be noted that the current preliminary design work that has been completed can be utilized for another site deemed suitable by an amended EA.

It is Staff's recommendation to abandon the current preferred site on Stonebridge Drive and to review other possible locations within the City. This can be completed utilizing the current consultants that the City has contracted.

Staff has received an estimate for the current consultants to prepare an amendment to the EA document. The proposed estimated cost is \$15,000 which can be completed in approximately 8-10 weeks after approval from Council. This will allow Staff to continue with the development of the PCOC. The proposed additional cost can be accounted for within the current debenture of \$800,000.

4) OPTIONS AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

a) Do nothing.

- Not an Option. The existing Public Works building does not allow the Operations Staff to function effectively. (not recommended)

b) Other Options

- Cancel all agreements with the consultants and prepare Request for Proposal documents for a consultant to complete a new Environmental Assessment to select a new site. (not recommended)
- Build a new building on the current Public Works site at 11 King Street which is leased from the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation. (not recommended)
- Utilize existing consultants to prepare an amendment to the existing Environmental Assessment to select a new preferred site. **(Recommended)**

5) COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

- 2011 Strategic Planning Session: Engineering & Operations
 - Complete a review of preferred sites for a new Operations Centre and prepare a report to Council outlining a strategy for the location and building of the new facility.

6) **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Letter to TAC members dated August 23, 2013.
2. Class 'D' Estimate Evaluation & Site Recommendation dated August 26, 2013.

7) **RECOMMENDATION**

- A) That the Council of the City of Port Colborne receive this report for information purposes;**
- B) AND That Council direct Staff to engage the current consultants to prepare an amendment to the Environmental Assessment to select a new preferred site for the Port Colborne Operations Centre for a proposed estimated cost of \$15,000.**

8) **SIGNATURES**

Prepared on September 4, 2013 by:
09/09/2013

X Jim Huppunen

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Reviewed by:
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X 

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Reviewed and Respectfully Submitted:
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Robert J. Heil
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