

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Infrastructure and Engineering Services

Engineering and Transportation Division

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Chris Thibert, P.Eng.
Director, Engineering

Date: February 12, 2021

Subject: Revised Bridge Divestment Criteria

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Revised Bridge and Culvert Divestment Criteria Matrix (Table 1) be approved and applied to all future bridge rehabilitation/replacement capital projects.

Background

At the November 9, 2020 Council meeting, Council approved the following motion when presented with the Bridge Divestment Criteria Report (attached as Appendix A):

- “That the report be referred back to administration for further public engagement and more detail around the public consultation and the agricultural vehicle consideration.”

Administration presented the Bridge Divestment Criteria to the Infrastructure, Bridge, Culverts and Roads Innovation Committee (hereafter known as the Committee) during the January 25, 2021 meeting.

The Committee discussed the various categories identified in the bridge divestment criteria matrix. Key points were as follows:

- The detour travel time of 10 minutes or less based on the posted speed is an issue for the agricultural community as some farm equipment cannot travel at posted limits. This will impact the farmer’s ability to efficiently operate as well as potentially impact property values.
- A criteria any less than 10 minutes would eliminate any opportunity to divest any bridges in Chatham-Kent.
- In the past, farming equipment was typically on the road only during planting and harvesting months. It was stated that farmers are on the road with large equipment more often now than in the past.

- A concern was raised as to how the Safety category would be applied. Large equipment will be on the road longer and safety may be impacted.
- The approved Asset Management Plan (AMP) requires annual cost savings of 0.4% of property taxes (\$640,000) from the base budget to meet provincial obligations. Since the 2019 Infrastructure Committee report to Council, divestment of 3 bridges has been proposed but each was declined or postponed by Council. To date, no bridges have been fully divested. If divestment of bridges is not supported, additional financial resources in future budgets will be required to fulfill the AMP commitment to the province.

A motion was brought forward to accept the Bridge Divestment Criteria Matrix as presented in the November 9/20 Council meeting, but this motion failed.

A second motion was brought forward recommending that:

“The Bridge Divestment Criteria Matrix be revised to add a 6th criteria as follows - detailed conversation with adjacent affected landowners for alternate solutions to proceed prior to the divestment.”

This motion was carried and is included in this report.

Public Consultation Process Details

The November 9/20 Bridge Divestment Criteria report to Council recommended a process similar to the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) used by all levels of government. The Municipal Class EA will seek public input and assess the impact to adjacent residential, commercial, agricultural properties, and to the community as a whole.

As 95% of all bridges are located in rural settings representing 80% of the total Municipal base budget investment, it is important that all Chatham-Kent residents have an opportunity to comment during the public consultation process. These comments will be captured via on-line tools or hand written comments. Administration will summarize all feedback in the report to Council along with recommendations. To ensure fairness of the process, deputations will not be permitted on the day of the vote. This process ensures that all comments have equal weighting for Council consideration. The public will be informed of this process during the public consultation period.

A motion was brought forward by the Committee that:

“The 30-day consultation period that follows the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process for public consultation be included as part of the process of bridge divestment process.”

This motion was carried.

Bridge Matrix Implementation Process

The Committee discussed the work plan to implement the matrix. The pros and cons of contracting the work out as one project was compared to reviewing bridges for

divestment as they are in need of repair or replacement. Based on prior reports to Council, it was estimated that outsourcing as one project required an upfront investment of \$492,000 as per the November 21, 2019 Asset Divestment Timelines report to Council, whereas reviews as required could be contained within existing budgets.

A motion was brought forward by the Committee that:

“That the Infrastructure Innovation Committee supports that the bridge divestment criteria matrix will be applied on all future bridges that come up for renewal or significant investment.”

This motion was carried.

Comments

As a result of the Committee meeting recommendations and approved motions, administration is proposing the revised Bridge Divestment Criteria in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Bridge Divestment Criteria Matrix

Criteria	Description	Decision
1	Safety	The divestment of the structure does not pose any direct or indirect safety concerns to the public.
2	Road Class/Type	The road must be local, gravel or surface treated to be considered for divestment. Collectors or arterials will not be considered for divestment.
3	Traffic Volume	Consider for divestment if the road is less than 400 Annual Average Daily Traffic volume (AADT).
4	Traffic Impacts	Consider for divestment if the detour associated with the bridge closure is less than 10 minutes based on the posted speed limits and alternative routes exist.
5	Overall Transportation Network	Divestment of this road/bridge does not conflict with the Transportation Master Plan, Cycling Master Plan, Official or Secondary Plans.
6	Public Consultation	If criteria 1 through 5 above pass, administration will conduct meetings with adjacent affected landowners to consider alternate solutions, followed by the 30 day Municipal Class Environmental Assessment.

All matrix data and staff recommendations will be included in a Council report for final divestment approval.

As per the recommendation of the Committee, this matrix will be applied to every structure greater than a 3.0 m span on an individual basis and as the structures are required to be rehabilitated or replaced. If the structure fails any of the first five (5) criteria in Table 1, administration will proceed with detailed design and construction as required.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendation in this reports supports the following areas of strategic focus:

- Economic Prosperity:
Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy
- A Healthy and Safe Community: Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth
- People and Culture:
Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community
- Environmental Sustainability:
Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendation in this reports supports the following critical success factors:

- Financial Sustainability:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable
- Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership
- Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors
- Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

The Committee was consulted on the preparation of this revised report.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications as a result of this report. Financial implications will be finalized as reports are approved by Council.

Prepared by:

Chris Thibert, P.Eng.
Director, Engineering
Engineering and Transportation

Reviewed by:

Thomas Kelly, P.Eng., MBA
General Manager
Infrastructure and Engineering Services

Attachments: Appendix A – Bridge Divestment Criteria (RTC #4296)

(RTC:\Infrastructure & Engineering\I&ES\2021\4345 – Revised Bridge Divestment
Criteria

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Infrastructure and Engineering Services

Engineering and Transportation Division

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Chris Thibert, P.Eng.
Director, Engineering

Date: October 27, 2020

Subject: Bridge Divestment Criteria

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Bridge and Culvert Divestment Criteria Matrix (Table 1) and public engagement process detailed within this report be approved and applied to all future bridge rehabilitation/replacement projects.

Background

As per the recommendation in the Report to Council titled "Council's Growth and Recovery Next Steps" which was approved at the October 19, 2020 Council meeting:

"That Council accept the Growth and Recovery Strategy next steps as presented in the Growth and Recovery Strategy Next Steps Gantt Chart."

- Item 23 of the Gantt Chart depicts "Bridges/Culverts matrix – RTC"

This report is being written to provide recommendations for consideration from an internal bridge review in support of the Growth and Recovery Strategy which is also in line with the 2018-2022 Council Term Priorities under "Growth - Rationalize current inventory of bridges, roads, parks and buildings in support of new infrastructure investment".

In 2013, Council approved a bridge and culvert investment/divestment strategy with a list of 25 structures to be divested over a period of ten years. Divestment indicates that no funds will be allocated to maintain or renew a given bridge site. Public safety will be ensured by means of bi-annual inspection and the use of load ratings as required. When a structure reaches its lifecycle and warrants closure due to safety, it shall be eliminated from service and ultimately the bridge inventory.

This strategy outlined a divestment criteria which evaluated the following conditions at each bridge and culvert location:

- Minimize impact on property, residence, emergency services and businesses
- Select low use structures
- Prioritize paved roads and major arteries
- Ensure transportation network redundancy exists
- Minimize distance around the closure via adjacent roadways

At the July 15, 2019 Council meeting, Council approved the 2018-2022 Council Term Priorities which identify Growth as a priority and to “Rationalize current inventory of bridges, roads, parks and buildings in support of new infrastructure investment.”

As per the October 7, 2019 Council meeting, the following motion was approved:

“Administration was directed to return to Council with a report outlining the following:

1. Clearly defined terms of “right size” and “rationalize” in relation to municipal assets.
2. Drafted or confirmed “divestment lists” for any municipal assets in the categories of bridges, roads, parks and buildings, including information about the decision making process that led to the identification of those assets for divestment.
3. Confirms or establishes a decision-support matrix to be used for all municipal assets recommended for divestment. This decision matrix should consider not only lifecycle and capital costs, but also the following:
 - a. Safety
 - b. Agricultural impact, given the prominence of agriculture within the Municipality
 - c. Small business, and other economic development impacts
 - d. The environment
 - e. Traffic impacts to surrounding roads (when appropriate)
 - f. Comparable asset performance across Chatham-Kent
 - g. Any indicators that can be used to apply consistent decision making across assets for better understanding of their value and contribution to the community
 - h. Any other pertinent information
 - i. Consider if a building recommended for divestment could be repurposed for affordable housing
4. Confirms or establishes a community engagement strategy for any divestment, rationalizing or right sizing. This strategy should consider the importance of notifying impacted residents in discussing divestment of assets near their place of residence.

And, that this information can come to Council in a single report, or a series of reports focused on assets by category.

And, that no divestment of any asset be brought to Council until the information requested is received for that category of asset.

And, that Council receive a preliminary report in November as to the timeline they require to produce each report requested.”

Administration presented the report Asset Divestment Timelines (Appendix A) on December 9, 2019 which was approved as amended:

“Staff work on the divestment/rationalization decision support matrix for one asset area at a time, working within their existing resources. And that staff begin this work with a focused pilot, in the asset category of parks and buildings, specifically in the community of Wallaceburg, and to return to Council with a report on the initiative sometime within the 2020 calendar year, for discussion and lessons learned on the process. And, in the interim, the approved Council direction regarding asset divestment be maintained”.

As per the June 15, 2020 Council meeting and Task Force motion:

That Council direct administration to prepare the 2021 draft budget with a target increase of CPI as well as the additional annual asset management plan increase, and that consistent with the adoption of the CK Recovery Task Force recommendations by Council, administration provide further options to reduce the 2021 budget impact to 0%. Options for 0% requiring significant changes to infrastructure, facilities, or services require administration to provide an interim report by October 19, 2020.

Comments

Table 1 below, is the recommended criteria matrix with a pass/fail criteria to be applied on all future bridges and culverts within the Municipality following Council’s approval.

Table 1 – Bridge Divestment Criteria Matrix

Criteria	Description	Decision
1	Safety	The divestment of the structure does not pose any direct or indirect safety concerns to the public.
2	Road Class/Type	The road must be local, gravel or surface treated to be considered for divestment. Collectors or arterials will not be considered for divestment.
3	Traffic Volume	Consider for divestment if the road is less than 400 Annual Average Daily Traffic volume (AADT).
4	Traffic Impacts	Consider for divestment if the detour associated with the bridge closure is less than 10 minutes and alternative routes exist.
5	Overall Transportation Network	Divestment of this road/bridge does not conflict with the Transportation Master Plan, Cycling Master Plan, Official or Secondary Plans.

To assess the impacts to adjacent residential, commercial and agricultural properties, administration recommends following the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process for public consultation. If the structure passes all five (5) criteria above and is recommended for divestment consideration, administration will post the outcome and divestment proposal online for a period of 30 days to obtain comment/feedback from the public. These comments will then be included in a Council report for Council's final consideration on an annual basis. This process will serve to capture all comments from Chatham-Kent residents and replace the requirement for deputations on the day the report is voted on.

Council also directed administration to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with this criteria as well. There is an environmental impact associated with the detour but also significant environmental benefits as a result of no longer having to maintain divested structures or impact to waterways. Therefore, the environmental category was not incorporated into the criteria above.

This matrix will be applied to every structure, greater than 3.0 m span, on an individual basis and as the structure is determined ready for rehabilitation or replacement. If the structure fails any of the five (5) criteria in Table 1, administration will proceed with detailed design and construction as required.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendation in this reports support the following areas of strategic focus:

- Economic Prosperity:
Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy
- A Healthy and Safe Community: Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth
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The recommendation in this reports support the following critical success factors:

- Financial Sustainability:
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- Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors
- Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

No other departments were consulted in the preparation of this report.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications as a result of this report. Financial implications will be finalized as annual reports are approved by Council.

Prepared by:

Chris Thibert, P.Eng.
Director, Engineering
Engineering and Transportation

Reviewed by:

Thomas Kelly, P.Eng., MBA
General Manager
Infrastructure and Engineering Services

Attachments: Appendix A – Asset Divestment Timelines (RTC #4193)

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