



Meeting Date: September 18, 2024

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Report No: PWE 47-2024

Subject: Old River Road Update

Recommendation:

THAT Report PWE 47-2024 Old River Road Update be received for information;

Purpose:

To provide Council and residents with a status update on the Old River Road Project.

Background:

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre through the completion of a schedule B Environmental Assessment in 2011 and a subsequent [schedule C Environmental Assessment \(EA\)](#) in 2018 has reviewed Old River Road for several alternatives to provide slope stabilization to sections of the road, improved intersection alignment and sightlines, as well as reduce and minimize cut through traffic.

On October 12, 2022, Council awarded the detailed design of Old River Road to IBI/Arcadis Group to carry out the design and move this project forward to completion. And on July 5, 2023, Council received a staff report providing an update concerning the ongoing [Old River Road Project](#).

Analysis:

Old River Road is a long curving and winding road that extends from Glendon Drive to Pulham Road with a project length of approximately 1.89km. The roadway is located within a narrow non-standard right of way with varying right-of-way widths, adjacent to the Thames River. During the spring or in heavy rain events the roadway frequently floods in low lying areas, and due to slope instability, a portion of the road is subsiding (slipping) towards the river.



Figure 1: Project Area

This project will improve the following:

- roadway stability and long-term erosion control;
- user safety;
- ride comfort;
- road drainage;
- intersection sightlines (upon the completion of the Glendon Drive intersection work by the County at a later date);
- roadway cross-section where feasible; and

- flood resilience where possible.

The primary deliverables for this detailed design assignment include field investigations, public consultation, preliminary and final design, approvals, contract preparation and delineation of property acquisition. Particular focus areas for the assignment include:

- Improved slope stability;
- Intersection improvements;
- Flood resilience improvements where possible;
- Stormwater drainage improvements;
- Property acquisition refinement;
- Public consultation;
- Preparation of the complete tender package, and contract administration.

Public Consultation:

A public information centre (PIC) was held on March 2, 2023, from 4-6pm at the Komoka Wellness Centre. All property owners were mailed notice of the PIC, in addition to information being provided via the municipal website. Staff and the consultant displayed a number of boards to reacquaint residents with the project, as well as gather feedback on how the proposed emergency access gate at Pulham Road might operate.

Property Acquisition:

Staff have sent several letters to residents advising of the potential property impacts and provided detailed property impact plans. Several meetings between staff and property owners have occurred. Now that staff have received a 90% design package and refined the impacts to private property, staff will initiate further discussion related to property needs related to the project with the intent to reach amicable agreements of purchase and sale where acquisitions are required.

Project Status/Schedule:

The consultant recently provided the 90% design drawings, tree impact plans, and geotechnical report in support of this project.

Middlesex County will be leading and undertaking the Old River Road and Glendon Drive intersection improvement work, as identified in the EA, this work is expected to be undertaken in 2026. It is expected there will be an interim arrangement at Pulham Road that will permit full access until the realignment of the intersection has been completed at which point Pulham Road would be gated for emergency access, as per the recommendations of the EA.

The design work is nearing completion with a completed tender package and drawings still expected to be completed and ready for tender issuance late 2024 or early 2025, however, the project could be impacted by delays associated with property acquisition.

Natural Heritage Considerations:

Additional natural heritage field investigation was required to support an application to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). This application is required in support of the proposed slope stabilization method which requires in-water work within the Thames River.

An additional period of monitoring and a field review with an ecologist was required and determined that the previously identified potential badger den was not currently inhabited by a badger, and that further monitoring and design accommodations are not required.

Project Risks:

Permits and approval from the DFO are critical to allowing the project to be constructed with the preferred slope stabilization measures. If additional natural heritage investigation is required there could be a delay in tendering and construction.

Through the natural heritage field investigation, a number of invasive species were noted, particularly Japanese Knotwood. Additional care and costs will need to be included into the tender to properly deal with and dispose of this invasive species.

Depending on the timing of the County intersection works for Old River Road and Glendon Drive, the Municipality may need to provide full access to Pulham Road as an interim measure. The gating near Pulham Road is only recommended/feasible when the required intersection improvements allowing full access to Glendon Drive are complete.

During initial property acquisition discussions all property owners were open to further discussions with the Municipality. Should the Municipality and property owners be unable to come to an amicable agreement on acquiring property needed to support this project, expropriation may be required which may delay the construction timing of this project and potentially increase property acquisition costs and construction costs.

Largely due to an increase in the slope stabilization footprint and inflation in construction costs, the estimated construction cost based on the 90% design drawings is 11% higher than the 60% design drawings. Recently inflation has somewhat cooled from record highs, however if there is a return to higher inflation this will add additional cost pressures to this project.

Financial Implications:

The current 2024 Council approved budget for Old River Road is \$950,000. This budget will be used for design, tender preparation which was previously awarded to IBI/Arcadis. The remaining budget will be used to cover property acquisition costs which will be discussed in greater detail through a subsequent report to Council for approval.

The estimated construction cost based on the 90% design submission is estimated at \$5,375,448.01 (estimate excludes; property acquisition costs, landscaping costs, utility

relocation costs and HST). This is \$555,619.00 or approximately 11% more than the 60% design estimated construction cost and 34% higher than the 2024 Budget forecast estimate.

The project construction costs are generally broken out as follows:

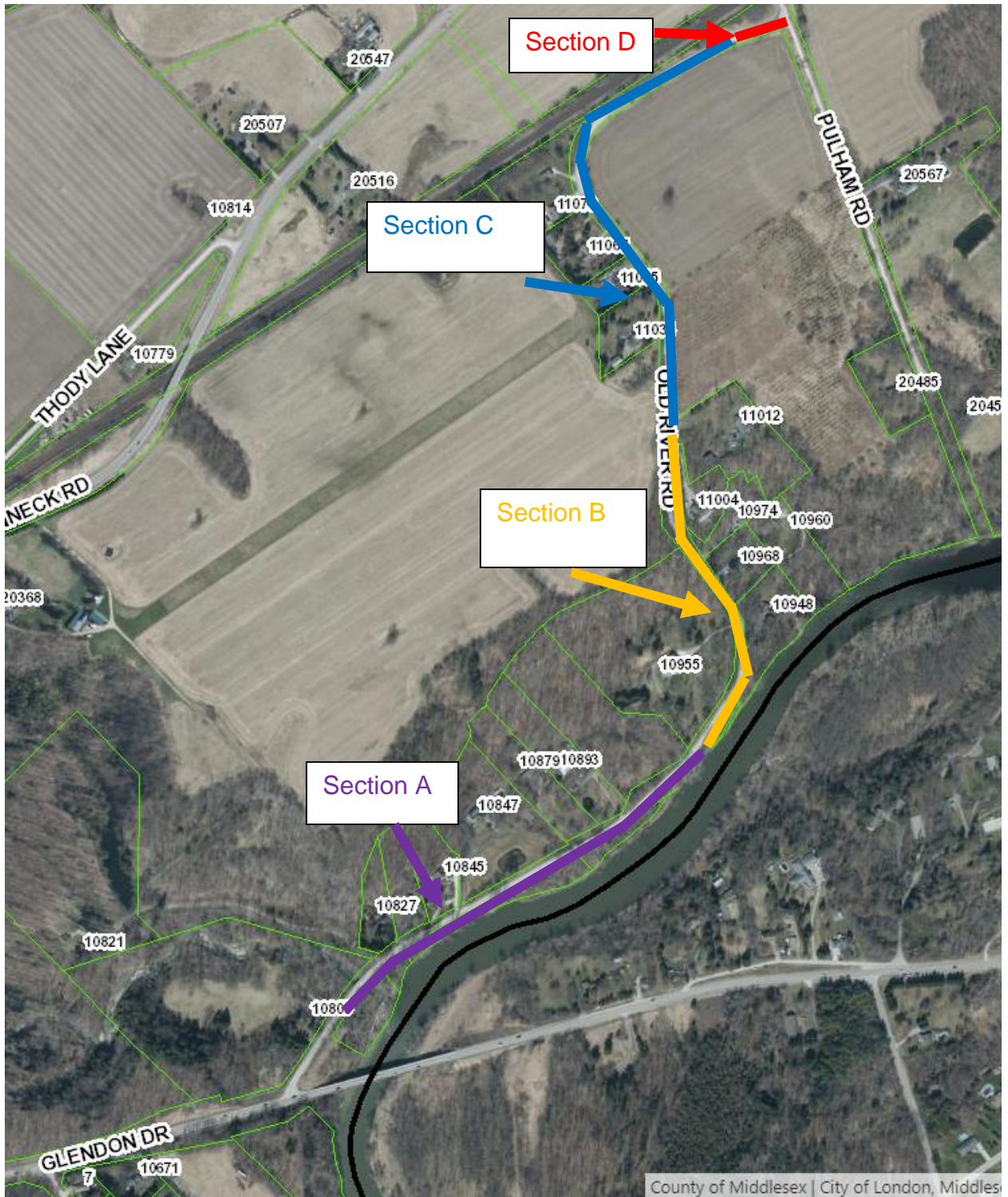


Figure 2: Project Sections

Section	Description	Cost (\$)
Section A	New storm outlets and sewers, widened road platform, new guiderail, and new asphalt road surface.	\$1,366,466.20
Section B	Slope stabilization, in water works, new storm sewers and outlets, and new asphalt road surface.	\$2,634,834.71
Section C	Widened road platform, ditching, and new asphalt road surface.	\$572,690.19
Section D	Widened road platform, cul-de-sac, emergency access gate, and new asphalt road surface.	\$100,311.53
15 % Contingency		\$701,145.39
	Total (incl 15% contingency)	\$5,375,448.01

Next Steps: Prior to moving forward with a construction tender staff will report back to Council seeking approval to move forward with construction, the report will contain updated costing, including landscaping costs, and utility relocation costs (if any), along with construction timelines.

Strategic Plan:

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Sustainable Infrastructure and Services

This project will ensure a robust, safe and efficient transportation network that builds on Council’s Strategic Plan and the Middlesex Centre’s Official plan, providing a long-term solution to identified issues with Old River Road ensuring a safe and reliable transportation network.

Attachments:

N/A