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Memorandum

To/Attention	Jason Ferrigan	Date	July 22, 2011
From	Brian Hollingworth	Project No	28852
cc	Dave Kivi, David Kalviainen, David Shelsted, Ross Burnett	Steno	tpw
Subject	Elm Street On-Street Parking		

Background

Over the past several years, there has been a growing discussion on the merits of permitting on-street parking on Elm Street within Downtown Sudbury. Specifically, businesses along Elm Street feel that on-street parking would increase their attractiveness to a broader customer base.

The feasibility of on-street parking on Elm Street was first examined in 2010 as part of the Strategic Parking Plan for the City of Greater Sudbury. In that City-wide parking plan, it was recommended that as a general policy, on-street parking be maximized. In addition to addressing the high demand for on-street parking, it was noted that *"increased capacity of on-street parking means that parking supply increases without using more land or major construction."* However, with respect to Elm Street, on-street parking was not recommended owing to the traffic congestion that would likely occur with only one lane in each direction. It was also noted that if an alternative route through the Downtown for Highway 55 is created via College Street and Ste. Anne Road, Elm Street would become a candidate for on-street parking.

Downtown Master Plan Recommendations

Through the Downtown Master Plan exercise, the desire for increased on-street parking was re-emphasized by a number of stakeholders, including businesses on Elm Street. The **Draft** Downtown Sudbury Mobility and Infrastructure Study (which was prepared by IBI Group as part of the overall Master Plan) included a recommendation to "provide on-street parking wherever possible with simple pricing structures that are responsive to parking demand." With regard to Elm Street, the mobility study noted that *"on-street parking could be permitted on one or both sides of the street as a pilot project. This would become permanent when the Ste Anne Road/College Street connection is completed. Initially the parking could be free to avoid the need for new meters."*

Analysis

Given that both the City-wide Parking Plan and the Downtown Master Plan acknowledge the desire to provide on-street parking on Elm Street, but caution about the potential traffic impacts and need for a diversion route, the City requested that additional analysis of the options and impacts be undertaken. The analysis presented herein supplements the analysis undertaken by City staff and documented in the report to council on June 1, 2011.

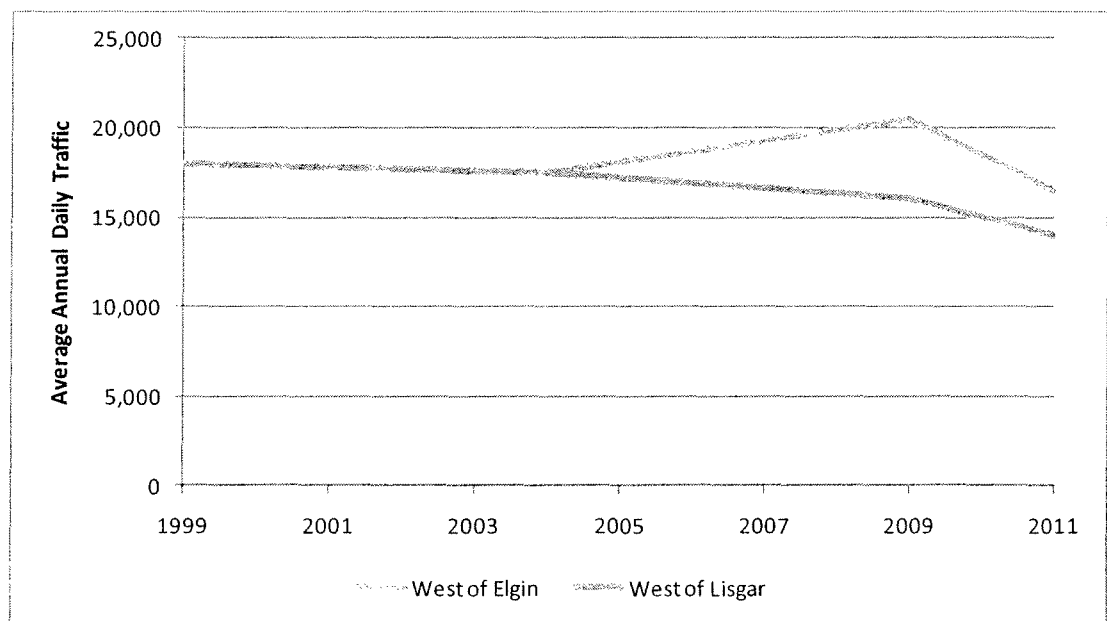
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Historic Traffic Levels

The historic traffic levels along Elm St are shown in Exhibit 1. It shows that traffic levels west of the intersection with Lisgar have been steadily declining over the past 12 years, and are now 22% lower than in 1999. Traffic levels west of Elgin are 9% lower than 12 years ago, although traffic levels were highest in 2009.

It is reasonable to expect that traffic levels have stabilized and that the most recent counts from 2011 are representative of near term future conditions.

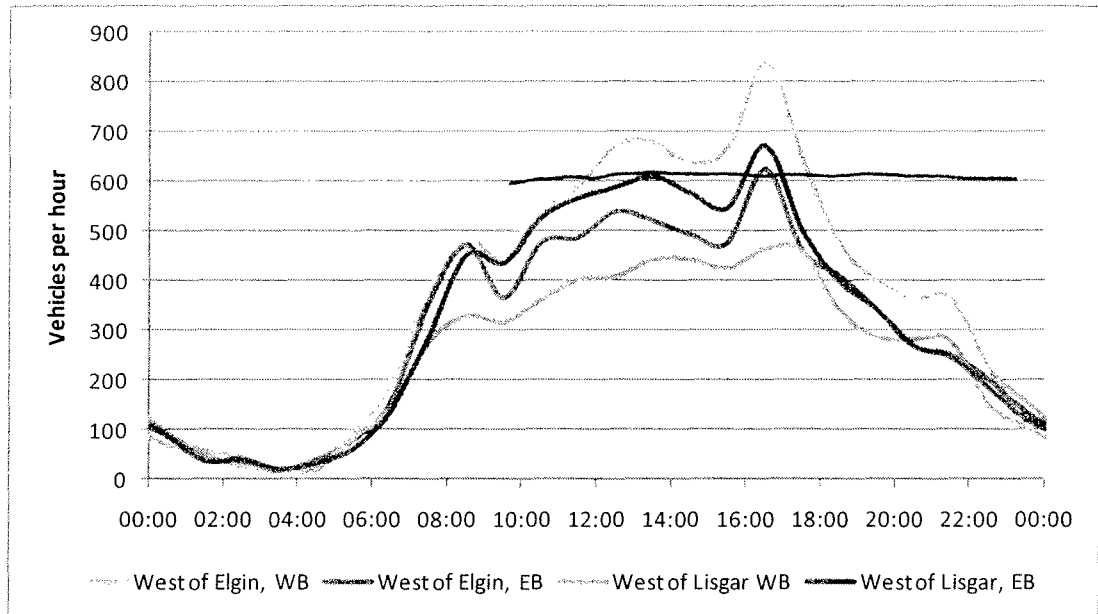
Exhibit 1: Historic AADT Levels



Temporal Distribution

The hourly traffic volumes by time of day at the two locations on Elm St are shown in Exhibit 2. They show that volumes are generally highest in the PM peak period, and that volumes during the day are generally higher than in the AM peak period. The exhibit also shows that westbound traffic volumes on Elm St west of Elgin are above 600 vehicles per hour (the typical nominal capacity of a single lane in a downtown area) from noon until 18:00. However, eastbound traffic volumes west of Elgin and west of Lisgar rise significantly above 600 vehicles per hour for only a single hour in the day.

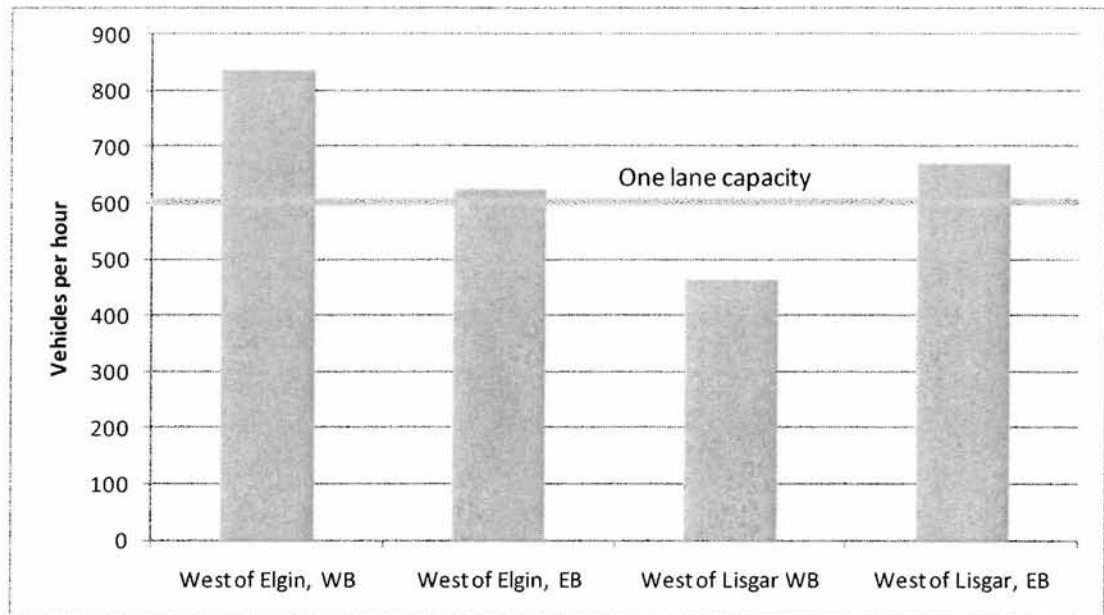
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Exhibit 2: Traffic Volumes by Time of Day***Volumes in Relation to Capacity***

Traffic volumes in the busiest hour at the two locations are shown in Exhibit 2. The horizontal orange line (at 600 vehicles per hour) indicates the typical maximum capacity of a single lane in a downtown urban environment. The exhibit shows that current volumes on Elm Street west of Elgin exceed the capacity of a single lane, especially westbound. Similarly, the eastbound volumes on Elm St west of Lisgar also exceed the capacity of a single lane. Accordingly, it is reasonable to expect that if lanes are reduced by allowing on-street parking, there will be some congestion and/or need for traffic diversion.

It should be noted that this simple analysis does not account for the impacts of trains at the at-grade crossing west of Elgin Street, an issue that has been raised by City staff.

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Exhibit 3: Elm St Peak Hour Volumes

Identification of Alternatives

If parking is to be provided on Elm Street, there are several potential options including:

- Allowing parking on both sides of the street
- Allowing parking only during the off-peak hours
- Allowing parking on one-side of the street
- Allowing parking only on a portion of the street.

Any of the above could be implemented as a pilot project to test the impacts on traffic.

Recommended Alternative

As a pilot project, it is recommended that a "least-risk" option (from a traffic perspective) be pursued. This would consist of allowing parking on the south side of Elm Street (eastbound lane). Parking would be limited to the sections between Elgin Street and Lisgar Street. Staff estimate that this would provide for approximately 18 on-street spaces.

As a pilot project, the parking would be free such that the cost of installing metres is avoided. Time limits would need to be set to limit parking to 1 hr or 2 hrs to ensure it is not simply used by employees.

The rationale for this alternative is as follows:

- Traffic volumes are lower in the eastbound direction
- Avoids issues with queuing due to train crossings
- Rainbow Centre on the north side has on-site parking

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Consistency with Previous Recommendations

As noted previously the Strategic Parking Plan, which has been presented to Council, did not recommend on Elm Street until the College St/Ste. Anne Road connection was completed. This recommendation was based on the proposal to provide on-street parking on both sides of the street on a permanent basis. A pilot project was not considered at that time.

Conversely, the Downtown Master Plan is supportive of allowing on-street parking on Elm Street, but under a different set of conditions; namely:

- That on-street parking be provided as a pilot project to test the impacts on traffic level of service. Ideally the pilot would occur during the summer when volumes are lower.
- That parking is permitted only on the south side between Elgin and Lisgar

It is also noted that since the Strategic Parking Plan was completed, there have been additional calls for on-street parking by businesses on Elm Street, expressed during consultations for the Downtown Master Plan. In addition, largely guided by the Downtown Master Plan consultation activities, there is also a growing Vision for the downtown to become more walkable and vibrant environment with a reduced emphasis on vehicle movement. An increase in parking activity and congestion levels is not inconsistent with that Vision.