

## REPORT FOR ACTION

# Pedestrian Connection Beanfield Conference Centre and Hotel X

**Date:** January 16, 2018  
**To:** The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place  
**From:** Dianne Young, Chief Executive Officer  
**Wards:** 14 and 19

### SUMMARY

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This report provides information on the proposed elevated bridge connecting Beanfield Conference Centre and Hotel X to provide an enclosed pedestrian connection for attendees meeting in the Conference Centre and staying in the on-site hotel. Construction of this elevated bridge will allow these two facilities to meet the industry requirements to be considered a "self-contained conference facility" as detailed in Appendix A to this report.

As soon as Hotel X started construction in 2013, the Board directed staff to explore options for a covered pedestrian connection from Hotel X to either Beanfield Centre or to Enercare Centre. Exhibition Place engaged NORR Limited to undertake the study and seven possible options were explored: four tunnel options (along with several sub-options variants of one of the tunnel options) and three bridge options.

While the NORR study was considered by the Board in 2014, because of the delay of the opening of the hotel, this matter was put on hold. However, with the imminent opening of the hotel in 2018 and the allocation of Capital Program funding for a pedestrian connection in 2019, it is important to finalize with City Planning and City Heritage all issues related to this matter as soon as possible so construction contracts can be tendered.

Two recent meetings were held with City Planning / Heritage staff since November 2017, one of which was on site at Exhibition Place. Following these meetings, Exhibition Place received a letter from Mr. Corwin Cambray, Acting Manager, Community Planning dated January 16, 2018, which is attached as Appendix B. In that letter the City's outlined its concerns with the bridge option and concluded it did not support the proposal. However the letter also stated that should the Board proceed with a site plan application for the bridge option, prior input and consultation with the City, as set out in the letter, would be required in working with the Board towards any agreed solution, in addition to development of all supporting technical documentation identified.

As detailed in this report, Exhibition Place with its consultants, NORR Limited and ERA Architects Inc. have explored seven different options and Exhibition Place staff believe that for the necessary functioning of the hotel and conference centre, the elevated bridge is the only viable option. The proposed location of this elevated structure is at the southerly part of Newfoundland Drive between the second floor of the Hotel X tower to a window on the Beanfield Centre second floor.

However, Exhibition Place staff and its consultants also concur that there are multiple planning / heritage issues to be resolved, not the least of which is the final design of the bridge. The architectural expression of the bridge in the NORR study was not developed beyond a basic premise that focused on transparency of the structure and the suitable connection to the existing buildings. The intent was always to engage with City Planning and City Heritage in the further architectural development of the bridge and connection.

NORR Limited, consultants to the Board on this project, will attend the meeting and deliver a presentation on the preferred elevated bridge proposal developed to date, as reviewed by City Planning.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Chief Executive Officer recommends that:

1. The Board approve of the concept of an elevated bridge connecting Beanfield Centre to Hotel X.
2. The Board direct the Chief Executive Officer to take all necessary actions to give effect to this approval and work with City Planning to address all matters set out on pages 2 and 3 of the January 16, 2018 letter related to "Design Considerations"; "Heritage" and "Procedure" (Appendix B).
3. The Board enter into an agreement with NORR Limited to act as the Board's consultant in the site plan application for the elevated bridge at an upset cost of \$186,515.00 and on such other terms and conditions approved by the Chief Executive Officer and the City Solicitor.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The 10-year Capital Program approved by the Board has included funding for construction of the elevated bridge in 2019 and the recommended 2018 fee for NORR Limited will be included as a pre-engineering expense in the 2018 budget. The re-estimation prepared for inclusion in the 2017 Bridge Update of \$2.085M is also generally in agreement with the original 2013 figures for the south bridge option and the 2019 budget figure.

## DECISION HISTORY

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The Exhibition Place 2017 – 2019 Strategic Plan has a Business Development Goal to grow event activity especially at Enercare Centre and Beanfield Centre.

At its meeting of September 10, 2014, the Board had before it a report outlining actions that had been taken to date on discussions with City of Toronto Planning about the elevated bridge option.

[https://www.explace.on.ca/files/file/58c9a6dff1fc9/Item-18-Hotel\(3\).pdf](https://www.explace.on.ca/files/file/58c9a6dff1fc9/Item-18-Hotel(3).pdf)

At its meeting of November 22, 2013, NORR Limited, consultant to the Board, presented two options for a covered pedestrian connection from Beanfield Centre to Hotel X - one being an elevated bridge and the second a tunnel.

[https://www.explace.on.ca/files/file/58d1680422eb2/Item-1-Mins\(22\).pdf](https://www.explace.on.ca/files/file/58d1680422eb2/Item-1-Mins(22).pdf)

## COMMENTS

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### Covered Pedestrian Options

As summarized below, NORR Limited studied seven possible options for a covered pedestrian connection: four tunnel options (along with several sub-options) and three bridge options.

### Tunnel Options

While many possible tunnel options were studied by NORR Limited, all of them posed considerable obstacles. Some of the challenges that were raised by NORR Limited were as follows:

- Beanfield Centre only has a basement level in the south 1/3rd of the building and that is the location of the kitchen and back-of-house which would require major reconstruction / relocation within Beanfield Centre to allow for a tunnel exit.
- The remainder of Beanfield Centre is “slab-on-grade” so connecting a tunnel exit would require major reconstruction and underpinning of Beanfield Centre.
- Three of the underground tunnels explored (terminating at the existing tunnel from Beanfield to Enercare Centre; terminating in the Enercare garage) were excessive lengths that would be very problematic and unsafe for pedestrians using it.
- The tunnel termination at Hotel X would have to be on the north end of the building and to get to this north east corner guests would have to walk from the guest tower for a distance of approximately 153 meters before reaching any tunnel entrance.
- All tunnel options are more costly because it involves relocation of major underground utilities that are located in Princes' Boulevard.

The final tunnel option considered by the Board as possible was one that started at the north east corner of Hotel X and terminated in a podium on the sidewalk at

the north west corner of Beanfield Centre. However, while this option avoided major reconstruction and underpinning of the Beanfield Centre, it had many obstacles for ease of use:

- To reach this tunnel entrance, a hotel guest would have to take the elevator from the hotel guest tower to the hotel parking garage level, walk 153 meters through the garage to the tunnel entrance; then through a 45 meter tunnel to another elevator up to a podium; and then cross 6 meters outside to go from the street level elevator exit to the interior of the Beanfield Centre.
- Very costly option estimated to be \$3.6M (2013).
- Very inconvenient for a guest / attendee.
- The elevator would be inadequate to meet the crowd demands associated with any major event.

### Elevated Bridge Option

Generally, the bridge options were a 40 meter elevated bridge - at various locations along Newfoundland Drive. It was determined that the south end option on Newfoundland would be best for the following reasons:

- Connect from the 2nd floor meeting room level of Hotel X tower directly to the south west corner of the 2nd floor meeting room level of Beanfield Centre.
- The bridge would not be visible in the major East / West view corridor of the ceremonial Princes' Boulevard.
- The design of the bridge would only require the removal (and safe keeping) of one existing window from Beanfield Centre and otherwise not impact the heritage facade.
- ERA Architects Inc. in its Heritage Impact Assessment on the bridge concluded that "the proposed bridge connection has minimal impact on the heritage value of the building [Beanfield Centre] while providing an all season connection between the hotel and the surrounding convention / event spaces".
- The estimated cost is \$2.5M (2013).
- To reach the bridge entrance the hotel guest would have to take the hotel guest tower elevator to the hotel meeting room level and then cross the 40 meter bridge to the meeting rooms in Beanfield Centre.
- The interior renovation of the Beanfield Centre to allow for a bridge exit and corridor is minimal and the interior changes have no impact on any heritage elements.
- The bridge would be sufficient to meet crowd demands.
- The bridge would connect the 97,380 net sf of Beanfield conference facilities to the 21,164 net sf offered by Hotel X which together would make our entire conference facilities more marketable.
- The bridge would allow Exhibition Place to market the Beanfield and Enercare Centres as "self-contained" convention facilities.

### Competitive Convention Marketplace

The size and Class A quality of the Beanfield Conference Centre along with the 5-star hotel convention facilities at Hotel X will allow Exhibition Place to work with Tourism

Toronto to attract national and international meetings to Toronto but only if these combined facilities provide what the industry expects from a "self-contained" venue.

A "Self-Contained Booking" is a booking where the meeting and the housing component are in one complex. It is a smaller event, so it can generally be held at a hotel complex where accommodation and conference facilities are "self-contained". Some facilities falling into this category are those where both features (meeting rooms / hotel rooms) are within one complex: Royal York; Sheraton Centre; Hilton; and MTCC (Intercontinental). Other facilities that meet this category definition are ones where there is a bridge connection: Westin Harbour Castle and MTCC (Delta).

The other industry classification is a "City-Wide Event" which is a booking that has more than 1,100 peak room nights and generally uses multiple hotels to accommodate the size. The major Toronto facility that can accommodate the meeting space required for such events is the MTCC.

While City-Wide Bookings are extremely valuable for the City and Province, the number of such events held in any one year are limited. Self-Contained Bookings by far make up the majority of national and international conferences. During the period from January 1, 2012 to September 20, 2017, Tourism Toronto booked 4,462 events, 97% were Self-Contained and 2% were City-Wide Bookings. Appendix A to this report provides more details on the Tourism Toronto statistics.

### Site Plan Approval Process

It is important to commence the Site Plan Approval process for the proposed elevated bridge as soon as possible. As set out specifically on pages 2 and 3 of City letter in Appendix B, there are several significant technical documentations to be developed and delivered to City Planning for consideration. If the work started immediately, it is estimated that completion of the entire process will be October 2018. With the break in Council, the first opportunity for presentation to City Council is estimated to be December 2018.

As NORR Limited has been the Board's consultant on this project to date, this report is recommending the contract with NORR Limited be extended to include completion of the Site Plan Approval process. In consideration of the preliminary comments received from City on January 16, 2018, the upset limit amount of \$186,515.00 includes the cost of NORR Architectural and Planning support, but NORR Limited has also budgeted for the following required supporting consultants: Rider Levett Bucknall (cost estimating), Entro (signage), ERA (heritage) and Dillon (landscape) with the lighting designer cost estimated but consultant as yet to be determined.

### **CONTACT**

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### **SIGNATURE**

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Dianne Young  
Chief Executive Officer

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Appendix A - Tourism Toronto Statistics on Conference Bookings - 2012 - 2017  
Appendix B - January 16, 2018 Letter From City Community Planning