

# River crossing hotly debated before approval

by Jim Windle  
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New technology could be the answer to the proposed Northwest Industrial Area sewer service river crossing. Native land claims and environmental concerns have been two major stumbling blocks in this project.

At least one of these problems has been addressed with a relatively new drilling technology which would put the proposed pipelines beneath the river bed rather than open trench excavation both on the river and on the island.

The new proposal would incorporate a trenchless technology called "direct drilling". Essentially, this involves a very specialized method whereby the drill head is steered to a predetermined location both horizontally and vertically underneath the river to emerge again on the other side.

A number of safety and environmental monitoring measures have also been added to the proposal to address the major-

ity of environmental concerns. In a report submitted by the

City Engineer Alf Gretzinger he sums up the advantages, "It is my opinion that the advantages of this method outweigh the disadvantages and I am optimistic that this alternative will appeal to the Six Nations Band Council and so expedite negotiations with respect to the river crossing agreement."

## Other Concerns

There are still a number of other concerns relative to aboriginal land claims and compensation expressed by some city councillors, however the current proposal has received a positive endorsement in general.

Councillor Paul Urbanowicz said, "After 5 or 6 years of trying to resolve this issue, I see this as the best resolve to the river crossing di-

lemma. The Six Nations elected council and city council have

discussed many concerns including environmental issues and I believe, at this point, that the agreement that we have in place is the best of what I can see we can get at this time."

He went on to say, "We need to get this industrial site, on side in preparation to have this land available to those who want

to come to Brantford to build here. We have to look 10, 20, 30 years down the road. The Braneida industrial site 10 years ago, saw controversy at that time as well."

Veteran city councillor Max Sherman expressed some uncertainty but was also generally in favour. "I'm not 100 per cent enthused with the wording in

a couple of clauses. I've always felt that in dealing with the Six Nations people, we have to go the extra mile. This council has gone the extra mile. I hope the Six Nations Council will recognize this. The economic future of this city, present and future, hangs on the approval of this document and, of course, the approval of the Six Nations council."

Sherman also took opportunity to congratulate the efforts of Mayor Friel directly. "I have found that you're negotiating skills have been excellent and I want to congratulate you because I believe we've reached this point because of your negotiating abilities as well as our friend of the Six Nations."

Councillor Marguerite Ceschi-Smith was far less enthusiastic. "I really don't support this project to develop the Northwest." She addressed comments made earlier that the future hangs on the Northwest by saying, "I think it's just the opposite." She then quoted from an earlier city report on economic development, "Gone are the days when employment can be created by large auto manufacturers and other long term employment in the city."

Her comments and similar ones by Councillor Carpenter sparked Urbanowicz to deliver an impassioned speech which underlined his belief in the project and the resolve to partner with the Six Nations people.



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**SALE**

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7