



**TOWN OF
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE**

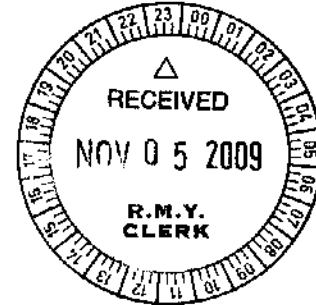
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October 30, 2009

The Regional Municipality of York
Mr. Denis Kelly, Regional Clerk
17250 Yonge Street, Box 147
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 6Z1



Dear Mr. Kelly

RE: GO TRANSIT, RICHMOND HILL LAYOVER FACILITY AND TRAIN STATIONS,
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT & PRELIMINARY DESIGN (T03)

Please be advised that the above-noted matter was placed before Council at its meeting held on October 20, 2009.

It was the decision of the Council, at that time, to pass the following resolution:

- 1) THAT the Report on GO Transit's Environmental Assessment & Preliminary Design for additional Train Stations and Layover Facility for the Richmond Hill corridor (dated August 2009) be received;
- 2) AND THAT GO Transit be requested to continue to give consideration to the Vandorf Sideroad and/or Aurora Road sites within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and that the current Environmental Assessment & Preliminary Design document should establish a framework for future Environmental Study Reports that would assess alternative station parking lot sites and demand analysis for the Vandorf Sideroad and Aurora Road stations;
- 3) AND THAT a copy of this Report be submitted to the Region of York, GO Transit, the Ministry of Transportation and Dr. Helena Jaczek, MPP for Oak Ridges – Markham.

Please find a copy of the report attached.

Yours truly,

Gillian Angus-Traill
Acting Council Coordinator

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Council in Committee Report
October 20, 2009

**GO TRANSIT
RICHMOND HILL LAYOVER FACILITY AND TRAIN STATIONS
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT & PRELIMINARY DESIGN (T03)**

Report Prepared By: Director of Planning & Building Services

RECOMMENDATION:

The Director of Planning & Building Services recommends:

- 1) **THAT the Report on GO Transit's Environmental Assessment & Preliminary Design for additional Train Stations and Layover Facility for the Richmond Hill corridor (dated August 2009) be received;**
- 2) **AND THAT GO Transit be requested to not abandon the Vandorf Sideroad and/or Aurora Road sites within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and that the current Environmental Assessment & Preliminary Design document should establish a framework for future Environmental Study Reports that would assess alternative station parking lot sites and demand analysis for the Vandorf Sideroad and Aurora Road stations;**
- 3) **AND THAT a copy of this Report be submitted to the Region of York, GO Transit, the Ministry of Transportation and Dr. Helena Jaczek, MPP for Oak Ridges – Markham.**

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Report is to advise Council of the conclusions / recommendations arising from GO Transit's Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Design for new train stations and a layover facility for the Richmond Hill rail corridor.

2. BACKGROUND:

GO Transit is proposing to expand its facilities along the Richmond Hill rail corridor to establish more efficiency in the operation of the line, and, to prepare for eventual all day service.

Currently the Richmond Hill corridor includes five (5) GO Stations throughout its length, namely: Union, Oriole, Old Cummer, Langstaff and Richmond Hill (at Major Mackenzie Drive). The trains are "dead-headed" at Richmond Hill and return to the Willowbrook Rail Maintenance Facility in Mimico (west Toronto on the Lakeshore Line) at the conclusion of the evening service. Dead heading is referred to as the movement of empty trains.

GO Transit currently leases the CN Rail Bala line to support its Richmond Hill corridor service. The corridor is shared by GO Transit, CN and Ontario Northland rail services.

Earlier work completed by GO Transit in 1993 and 2002 revealed that ridership within the Richmond Hill corridor had increased by more than 60%, or, approximately 10% per year. It was also noted that the Richmond Hill GO Station had reached its design capacity and that congestion was now evident at the facility.

The Richmond Hill Environmental Assessment & Preliminary Design for additional train stations and layover facility established a Study Area boundary that commenced 500 metres to the south of Major Mackenzie Drive through to a point 500 metres north of Aurora Road within Whitchurch-Stouffville.

3. ANALYSIS & OPTIONS:

At the outset of the project, GO Transit identified seven (7) candidate sites within the Study Area for train station and layover facilities. Two sites were within the boundaries of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, namely, Vandorf Sideroad and Aurora Road.

Attachment Nos. 1 and 2 to this Report conceptually identify the location and facility configurations for the Vandorf Sideroad and Aurora Road sites respectively.

The Vandorf Sideroad station is proposed to be located on the north side of Vandorf Sideroad, on the east side of the CN rail corridor. The station is proposed to include a station platform, building, bus loop, "kiss & ride", and up to 1,070 parking spaces (with opportunities for expansion). Access to the facility is provided from Vandorf Sideroad. The design of the facility contemplates the construction of an additional CN track leading to and from the station which would involve the construction of a new bridge over Vandorf Sideroad at Woodbine Avenue.

The Aurora Road station is proposed to be located on the south side of Aurora Road, on the east side of the CN rail corridor. The station is proposed to include a station platform, building, bus loop, "kiss & ride", and up to 760 parking spaces (with opportunities for expansion). Access to the facility is provided from Aurora Road via an approximately 310 m long access road. This option also contemplates a 6 train, 12 car layover facility, and, additional CN track leading to and from the station.

The Study assessed continued rail service within the corridor and the need for expansion and enhanced services to meet the growing demand of ridership. Four alternatives were assessed as part of the review, namely:

1. Do nothing;
2. Store additional trains at an existing GO rail station within the corridor with no expansion to the existing facilities;
3. Expand an existing GO rail storage facility to accommodate additional trains for storage; and,
4. Develop a new location and build new facilities within the Study Area for train storage and passenger station access.

Based upon the population projections within Richmond Hill / Aurora and the historic demand for GO Transit rail services along the corridor, it was concluded that additional train stations and a layover facility be constructed.

Each of the seven potential station locations were then assessed and evaluated based on four broad environmental criteria, namely:

1. Natural environment;
2. Socio-economic environment;
3. Transportation / technical environment; and,
4. Cultural environment.

Arising from this screening, the Study concludes that:

- Two train stations are to be constructed at Stouffville Road (north of Stouffville Road, between Leslie Street and Highway 404), and, Bloomington Road (south of Bloomington Road between the CN rail corridor and Highway 404) within the Town of Richmond Hill; and;
- A layover facility designed to accommodate six 12 car trains should be constructed on the south side of Bethesda Road, on the east side of the CN rail corridor within the Town of Richmond Hill.

The Study further recommends that construction of the layover facility should commence immediately with work scheduled for March 2010 and the project being completed by May 2011. Construction of the Stouffville Road GO Station is recommended to commence in the immediate term so as to alleviate congestion at the current Richmond Hill GO station. As the Stouffville Road facility approaches capacity, which is anticipated shortly after opening, it is recommended that work commence on the Bloomington Road GO Station.

The Aurora Road site within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville was discounted as preferred location for a station / layover largely due to the presence of environmentally sensitive features and potential impact upon their ecological functions. The Vandorf Road site was discounted because of access constraints associated with the intersection of Woodbine Avenue / Vandorf Road, and, Vandorf Road itself. In addition, there was a moderate to high potential impact on area environmental systems adjacent to the site.

Staff are of the opinion that further assessment and consideration of both the Vandorf Sideroad and the Aurora Road sites are warranted and that they should not be dropped from further consideration. Future consideration and additional detail should be provided in the Environmental Study Report (ESR) concerning any future expansion of the Richmond Hill GO Transit corridor to include the Vandorf Sideroad and/or Aurora Road sites when the recommended Stouffville Road and Bloomington Road stations reach capacity. The current ESR should establish a process that would include additional details on developing alternative station parking lot sites and demand analysis for both the Vandorf and Aurora stations.

With the eventual introduction of all day rail service along the Richmond Hill GO Transit corridor and the proximity of the two new rail stations to the Town's employment districts in Gormley (approximately 120 ha gross) and Vandorf (approximately 180 ha gross), benefits will be realized by businesses and their employees. The Town, in consultation with York Region Transit, should monitor the continued improvements to service levels along the Richmond Hill GO Transit corridor and the possibility of extending bus routes from the respective new rail stations to the Town's employment areas.

The continued investment by the public sector in key infrastructure and transportation facilities, such as the expanded commuter rail service, in and around Vandorf and Gormley once again legitimizes the Town's long-standing position that these two settlement areas represent strategic employment areas in the context of both the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the Region's inventory.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There is no financial impact upon the 2009 Operating or Capital Budgets associated with the consideration of this Report.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN:

The consideration of this Report is aligned with the Town's Strategic Plan in the following manner:

Balanced Growth & Community Sustainability

- Balanced land use planning – environment, economic & social considerations
- Economic development and job creation

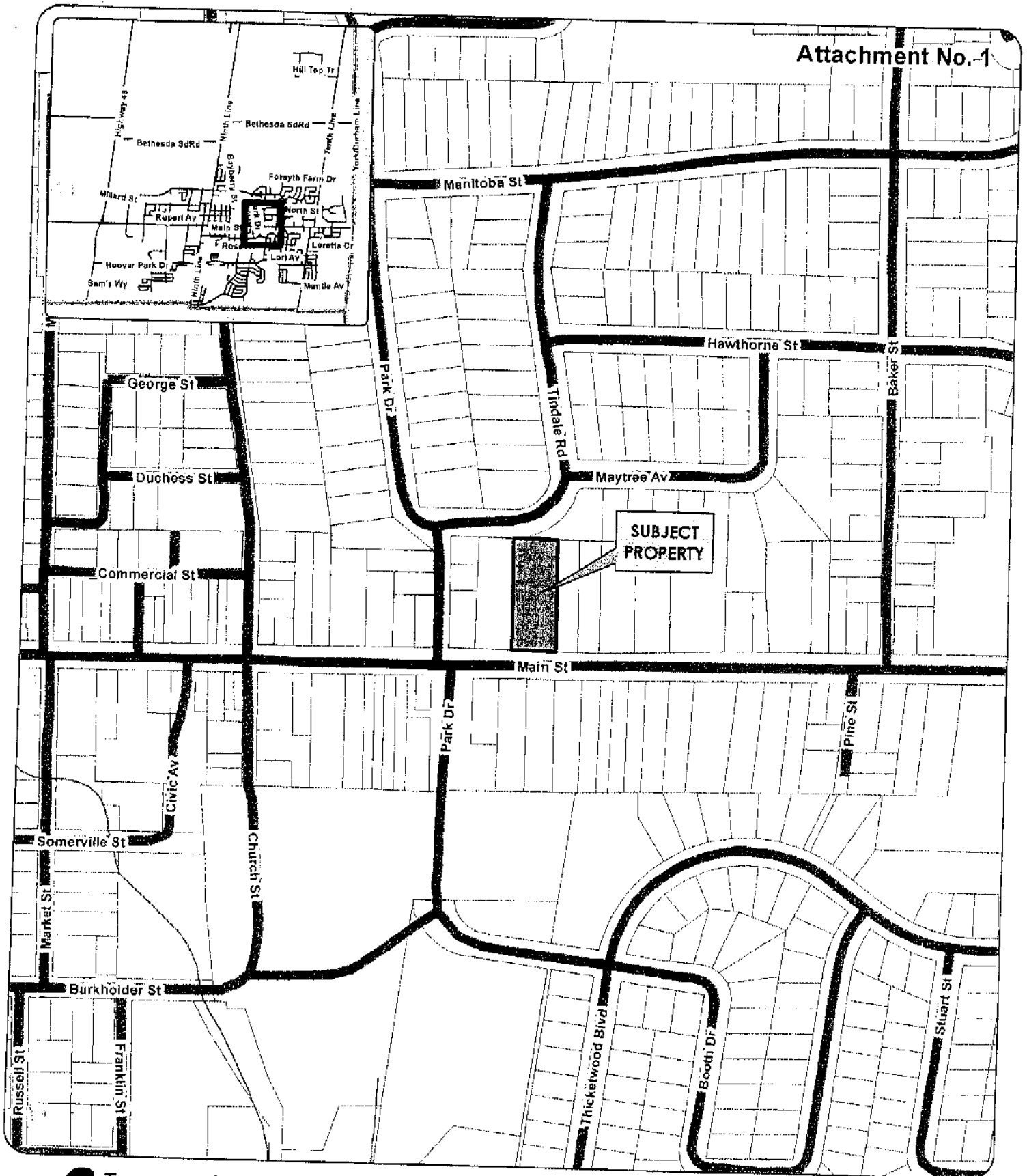
6. CONCLUSION:

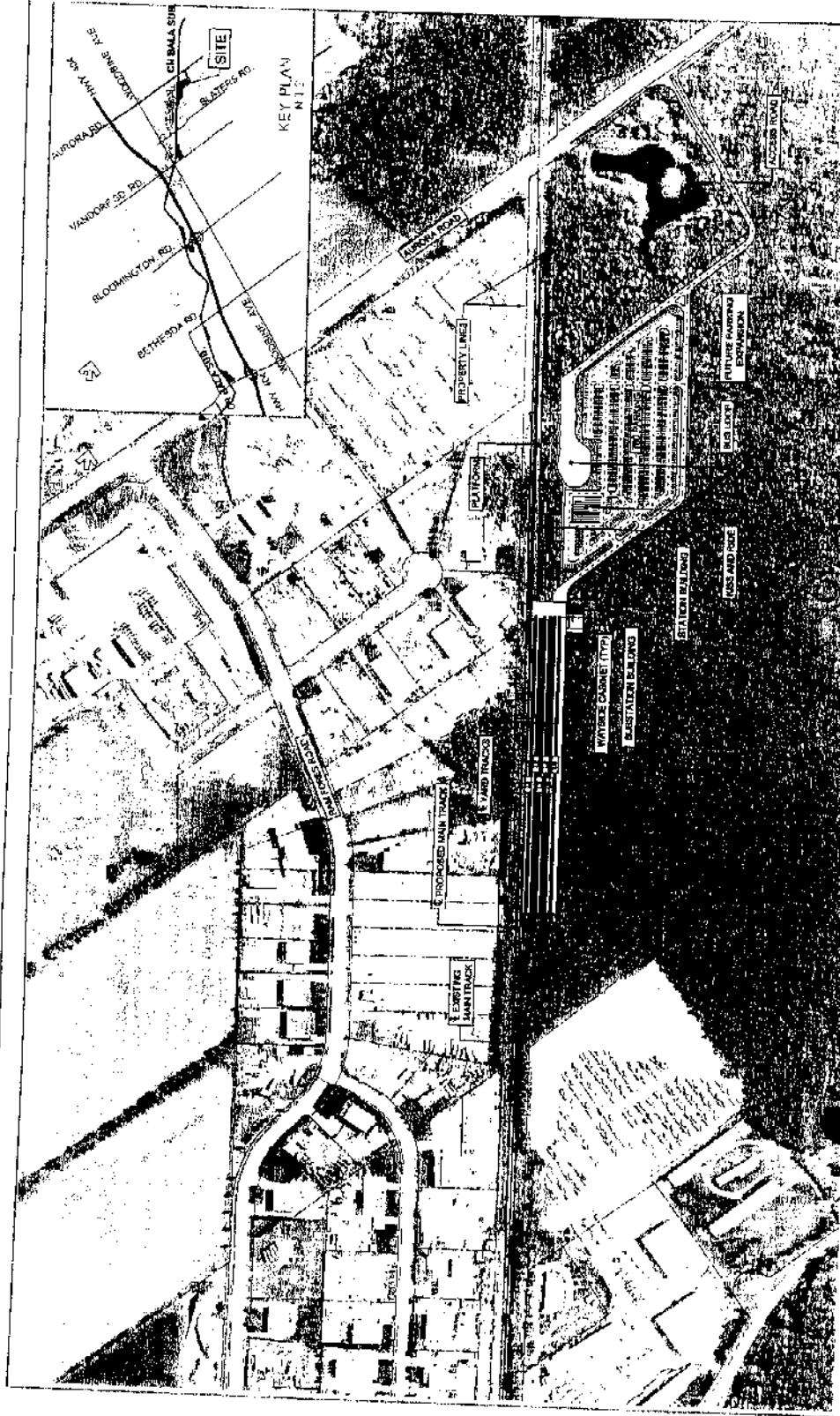
GO Transit has embarked upon an Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Design Study to assess the opportunities to construct additional rail stations and a layover facility along the Richmond Hill corridor. The objective of the Study is to assess possibilities to enhance and expand commuter rail service along the corridor. The GO Transit Study concludes that two new rail stations and a layover facility be constructed within the boundaries of the Town of Richmond Hill. The proposed new facilities are designed to improve rail efficiency and provide added commuter rail capacity to the existing network.

For further information on this Report, please contact Andrew McNeely, Director of Planning & Building Services, at 905-640-1910 or 905-895-5299 ext. 270 or via email at andrew.mcneely@townofws.com

7. ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed GO Station at Vandorf Sideroad
2. Proposed GO Station and Layover Facility at Aurora Road





LAYOVER AND GO STATION AT AURORA RD



GO Transit
Richmond Hill
EA and Preliminary Design

Figure 14



AECOM