

O.M.B. Case No. PL970758
O.M.B. File Nos. O970140
O970216
O980104

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

Commission des affaires municipales de l'Ontario

The Morningside Heights Landowners Group has appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board under subsection 17(36) of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended, from a decision of the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to approve Proposed Amendment No. 974 to the Official Plan for the City of Scarborough, now the City of Toronto.

Ministry File No. 20-OP-0594-974
O.M.B. File No. 0970140

The Morningside Heights Landowners Group has appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board under subsection 22(7) of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 13, as amended, from Council's refusal or neglect to enact a proposed amendment to the Official Plan for the City of Scarborough, now the City of Toronto, to redesignate the subject lands from Industrial, Agricultural and Institutional to Residential and related categories to permit a residential community with ancillary uses including retail, institutional and golf course.

Scarborough Civic Centre Application No. P970003
O.M.B. File No. 0970216

The Morningside Heights Landowners Group has appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board under subsection 22(7) of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 13, as amended, from Council's refusal or neglect to enact a proposed amendment to the Official Plan for the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, now the City of Toronto, to revise Maps 5, 6 and 7 in the Plan as they apply to certain lands in the Tapscott Employment District Secondary Plan in the former City of Scarborough.

O.M.B. File No. 0980104

WITNESS STATEMENT OF ROBB MINNES

WITNESS STATEMENT

**Issue 10. &12. Need, location and design characteristics for the
Markham-Scarborough arterial road link**

Witness: Robb Minnes
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1. Qualifications

~~1.1 My resume is attached as Appendix 1.~~

1.2 I have 21 years experience as a planner for the Province of Ontario including 8 years with the Ministry of Transportation. Since joining MTO, I have managed transportation planning studies related to the Markham-Scarborough Link. They are as follows:

- Strategic Transportation Review Northeast Metro, Southeast York & West Durham, August, 1995
- Morningside Transportation Corridor Review, June 1994
- Morningside Corridor Transportation Alternatives Study, April, 1995.

1.3 I was one of two members representing MTO on the Steering Committee for the Markham-Scarborough Transportation Link Environmental Assessment Proposal study.

2. Opinion

2.1 A balanced transportation network comprising a hierarchy of roads and public transportation facilities is critical to the environment, the economy and quality of life.

2.2 Various studies have documented that future growth identified for the northeast Toronto, southeast York and west Durham area, will create demands in excess of the existing and committed transportation system.

- 2.3 To address the transportation needs in this area, an overall strategy is required. This strategy has been developed over a number of years through a variety of studies and needs to include the following elements:
- Construction of committed and planned road and transit improvements;
 - Development and implementation of policies for higher self-containment in York and Durham;
 - Development and implementation of policies for transit supportive land use;
 - Upgrading of local and inter-regional transit services;
 - Implementation of HOV (high occupancy vehicle) network and ride sharing policies;
 - Protection of a right-of-way for the construction of an ultimate 6-lane high order arterial in the Morningside corridor.
- 2.4 A continuous high order arterial road is needed to complete the arterial grid in this area of the GTA. In identifying a high order arterial road, I am referring to a major arterial road that functions at the highest level with no private entrances and access restricted to approved public roads. A complete arterial grid is necessary to move goods, services and people within and between development nodes. Given the interrelationship of the development nodes it is important that these connections cross regional boundaries and connect with the expressway network.
- 2.5 With the Provincial policy that no new roads will be permitted within the 1990 Rouge Park Boundary south of Steeles Avenue, the Morningside corridor provides the only remaining location for a continuous high order arterial corridor. The most recent planning document relating to this corridor is the Markham-Scarborough Transportation Link Environmental Assessment Proposal (EAP). This report confirms the need for a continuous high order arterial road between Highway 401 and 407 which crosses through the secondary plan area. The EAP therefore recommends proceeding with an Individual EA to finalize the alignment. MTO supports this recommendation (*Doc #*).
- 2.6 The York Region and Town of Markham Official Plans provide corridors for a major roadway on the east side of Markham. This is complimented by the Official Plans for the former Municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto and Scarborough which provide for a 36 meter arterial road alignment (Morningside Ave./Staines Rd.) In a location which can connect to the Markham/York corridor subject to an environmental assessment. Further, all the above official plans contain policies recognizing the need to coordinate interregional transportation infrastructure.
- 2.7 In addition to the protection provided by these official plan policies, the potential for a high order arterial connection to Highway 401 is also protected to a large extent by the fact that MTO and other agencies own most of the lands that would be required for a new interchange on Highway 401 between Morningside Ave. and Meadowvale Rd. for the

corridor to connect to Morningside Ave. at Morningview Tr.. These lands were originally acquired as the southern portion of the EMTC. Further, MTO monitors development applications and planning initiatives to ensure that the link is not precluded.

- 2.8 In the first instance, the proponent's applications seek to delete this arterial road connection. In the second instance, it is proposed to relocate this connection. In the absence of providing an alternative corridor location that can fulfill the functional requirements of a high order arterial road including protection for a continuous connection into York Region, the applications do not represent sound planning.
- 2.9 The amendments to Metroplan and the Scarborough Official Plan should provide for the establishment and continue the protection of a high order arterial road in a location that can be directly continued into York Region.

3. Role of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) in strategic transportation planning

- 3.1 The Ministry of Transportation has a role in coordinating provincial with municipal transportation systems and supporting municipal transportation strategy initiatives. The primary objective is the provision of an adequate, balanced transportation system which includes participation in the resolution of inter-jurisdictional issues (*Doc #*).
- 3.2 MTO's role is to ensure the availability of data, engage in strategic transportation planning and provide input and technical assistance to regional and local official plans (*Doc #*). MTO's mandate is derived from Section 2(f), (h), (l), (m), and (n) of the Planning Act and Section 1.3.3.1 of the Provincial Policy Statement. With respect to the GTA in particular, the ministry formed the Toronto Area Co-ordinating Office in 1985 to provide this function (*Doc #*).

4. History of transportation planning in northeast Metro, southeast York & west Durham

- 4.1 In 1971 the Department of Highways (now MTO) recommended a new north-south freeway from Highway 401 in the east end of Metro north and around the east end of Lake Simcoe to south of Gravenhurst. The road was referred to as the East Metro Freeway and later as the East Metro Transportation Corridor (EMTC). At the same time the Department of Highways recommended a new east-west freeway which is now Highway 407.
- 4.2 In 1976-1977, MTO reassessed the need for the EMTC and concluded that the section between Highway 401 and 407 is required. The EA (*Doc #*) and Preliminary Design Reports (*Doc #*) for the EMTC were completed in 1982 which recommended a freeway

with a design speed of 70 mph, 2 lanes in each direction with flexibility for future expansion to 6 lanes with median transit or 8 lanes.

- 4.3 In March 1990 the Province announced its plans for the establishment of the Rouge Park and to not proceed with the EMTC (*Doc #*). The announcement stated that there would be no new roads within the 1990 Park boundaries south of Steeles Avenue. The announcement also stated that the Province would undertake a strategic planning study in cooperation with Metro, York, Durham, Scarborough and Pickering. As background to this study, the Province would consider two alternative transportation corridors in the Morningside area in Scarborough and the Brock Road Area in Pickering.
- 4.4 In July 1990, the **Brock Road Corridor Freeway Alignment Study**, which looked into the feasibility of locating an expressway link in the vicinity of Brock Road, was completed (*Doc #*). The province announced that due to the major social and environmental impacts of such a corridor in this area, the Brock Road proposal has been dropped from further consideration (*Doc #*).
- 4.5 An investigation of the Morningside corridor was completed in October 1990 (*Doc #*). **The Morningside Avenue Corridor Pre-Feasibility Study** concludes that an expressway type of roadway is physically possible in the corridor but would be comparatively expensive to construct and would have some direct and indirect impacts on adjacent residential uses and on parts of the Morningside Tributary. The study indicates that these impacts could be mitigated and are not of the magnitude of those in the Brock Road corridor which led to its rejection. The study recommends that the Morningside corridor be protected until the ongoing Strategic Transportation Review Northeast Metro, Southeast York & West Durham is completed to confirm the need for a corridor.
- 4.5 On the basis of the results of the Brock Rd. and Morningside Ave. corridor studies, MTO commissioned the **East Metro Transportation Corridor Study Of Alternatives** which was completed in December 1993 (*Doc #*). More specifically, the report was to provide a brief preliminary assessment of various arterial road alignments, as opposed to an expressway, for a new facility between Highway 407 and 401, generally in the eastern end of Metro and Markham. The study analyses alternatives for the section of the corridor north of Finch Avenue and concludes that three alternatives, all intersecting with existing Morningside Avenue, are worthy of more detailed review.
- 4.6 In January 1993, the Province announced the release of the Draft Rouge Park Management Plan for public comment (*Doc #*). The Government also indicated that the land set aside for the EMTC right-of-way in the vicinity of Old Finch Avenue will be included within the proposed park boundary.
- 4.7 In response to the January 1993 announcement, MTO commissioned the **Morningside Transportation Corridor Review** to examine the need for the Highway 401 407

connection, it's role and type of facility (*Doc #*). The study built on the technical findings of the Strategic Transportation Review and considered issues that had emerged since the completion of the Strategic Review analysis including new development initiatives in East Markham, higher population/employment forecasts for Markham and York Region, opportunities for staged Seaton development and an intermediate 2021 horizon year. The study also provides more detailed travel demand forecasts and determines the affects of new GTA land use forecasts and the potential airport in North Pickering.

- 4.8 The Morningside Transportation Corridor Review assumes a number of improvements would be in place within the study area by 2011. The study indicates that completion of the transportation improvements will supply a significant capacity increase in the study area, however, they are still significantly short of meeting the forecast growth in cross boundary traffic demand.
- 4.9 Based on a progressive assumption of modal split assumption of 23% (existing is 8%-10%) at the eastern York Toronto boundary and a self containment assumption of 50% for new growth areas (existing in Pickering and Markham is 25%-30%) together with committed and planned transit and road infrastructure, the analysis still shows significant levels of congestion in the vicinity of the Morningside corridor.
- 4.10 The study considered three alternative types of road facility in the Morningside corridor (arterial, major arterial, expressway) and concludes that a major 6-lane arterial connecting Highway 401 and 407 is required to support the anticipated development in West Durham and Southeast York by the year 2011, and to maintain acceptable transportation service. The study indicates that in 2011 of the traffic in the Morningside corridor 43% would be Metro related (36% to and from Scarborough), 23% Durham related and 31% York related. In 2021, 48% of the traffic is Metro related, 24% Durham related and 25% York related.
- 4.11 **The Morningside Corridor Transportation Alternatives Study** was prepared by MTO to test the conclusions of Morningside Transportation Corridor Review using a different methodology (*Doc #*). The study recommends protection of a right-of-way for the construction of an ultimate 6-lane high standard arterial in the Morningside corridor.
- 4.12 In May 1994, the Province announced a vision for Northeast GTA (*Doc #*). Among the contents of this announcement are the Rouge Park Management Plan and Northeast Metro Area Transportation Improvements. The transportation component of the announcement includes the following:
 - 1. there is a need for a north-south transportation link between Highways 401 and 407 in the Morningside corridor to respond to increased traffic volume resulting from development in Northeast Metro and vicinity including Cornell;

2. the alignment has not been determined but will avoid the 1990 Rouge park boundary, south of Steeles Avenue;
 3. the road will be subject to an Environmental Assessment and the Province is encouraging Markham and Scarborough to proceed with it immediately. The province will provide technical and financial support.
- 4.13 MTO undertook the **Strategic Transportation Review Northeast Metro, Southeast York & West Durham**, in cooperation with Metro, York, Durham, Scarborough and Pickering. The Technical Report for the study was completed in June 1993 (*Doc #*) and with the benefit of the above link studies, the Summary Report was released in August 1995, following the decision by Markham and Scarborough to proceed with the Environmental Assessment Proposal for a north-south road in the Morningside corridor in 1994 and the announcement of the Rouge Park Management Plan by the Province in May 1994 (*Doc #*).
- 4.14 The study area extends from Highway 401 in the south to Major Mackenzie Drive on the north and from Highway 404 easterly to the Whitby/Ajax boundary (Durham Regional Road 23). The study recommends a preferred strategy which includes:
- Greater self-containment in York and Durham Regions (i.e. closer live/work relationships).
 - More transit conducive urban form.
 - Additional inter-regional transportation infrastructure.
- 4.15 The additional inter-regional transportation infrastructure element builds on the provincial plans to expand Highways 401 and 404, build Highway 407 and upgrade the Lakeshore and Stouffville GO Rail services. However, the study states that this basic freeway and inter-regional transit network will not be able to handle all of the future increases in traffic and there will be increasing pressure on municipal arterial roads to play a greater role. Two facilities that should be completed and pursued in the short term are the widening of the Steeles-Taunton connection and the proposed north-south link in the Morningside corridor (Markham-Scarborough Link) connecting with the proposed Markham By-Pass.
- 4.16 The study also provides recommendations regarding the implementation of the strategy which includes the regions and municipalities being encouraged to continue with a program of upgrading the arterial road network including HOV lanes wherever possible. The study identifies the north-south link in the Morningside corridor (Markham-Scarborough Link) connecting with the proposed Markham By-Pass, initially as a 4 lane road and ultimately as a 6 lane road with HOV lanes, of specific importance. Both facilities afford opportunity for the future provision of HOV lanes.

- 4.17 The strategy recognizes that, in the longer term, growth in York and Durham Regions will require the completion of a basic freeway network grid which at a minimum should include Highway 407 to Highway 35-115 and a north-south freeway connection in the vicinity of Durham Regional Road 23 (between Ajax and Whitby) in addition to the north-south high order arterial link in the Morningside corridor. Further, the inter-regional transit system should be expanded to include commuter rail services along the CP Havelock corridor and a transitway in the Highway 407 corridor. Depending on the timing and nature of the Seaton development, the study recommends that the Belleville corridor may also provide an opportunity for interregional transit and should not be precluded.
- 4.18 MTO, in partnership with the Greater Toronto Area Regions continues to undertake strategic transportation planning which addresses the future transportation needs in the GTA. The **Greater Toronto Area Transportation Planning Process** (presently underway) is to enhance the inter-regional mobility of people and goods, while supporting broad economic, social and environmental objectives of the GTA region. The process is addressing three critical themes;
- preservation
 - optimization
 - selective expansion
- 4.19 It is anticipated that the process will include recommendations for policy initiatives, capital expansion, implementation and funding strategies for all ground modes of transportation in the GTA.
- 4.20 With regard to the selective expansion theme, the process is currently analyzing various road and transit expansion scenarios to determine the way the system can be expanded to most effectively address the transportation system needs in the GTA. All of the Selective Expansion Scenarios under review include an arterial road linking Highway 401 and 407 in the Morningside corridor (Markham-Scarborough Link).
- 4.21 The GTA Transportation Planning Process builds on all previous transportation planning studies. Considerable work exists for the Markham-Scarborough Link including provincial studies and the Environmental Assessment Proposal. The results of these studies form an input to the GTA Transportation Planning Process. The technical analysis conducted as part of the process will examine improvements identified in the Markham-Scarborough Link corridor in an overall system context. Priorities and staging of individual improvements will be examined in the Implementation Phase of the GTA Transportation Planning Process.

5. Environmental Assessment Proposal

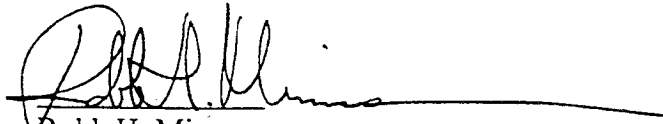
- 5.1 In 1995, following the completion of the Strategic Transportation Review and the other mentioned studies, the municipal proponents initiated (in consultation with MTO and other stakeholders) the Markham-Scarborough Link the "Individual Environmental Assessment" process. They determined that an "Environmental Assessment Proposal" (now "Terms of Reference") should be prepared as a means of initiating the Individual EA process. MTO agreed to fully fund the EAP and was represented on the study steering committee by two members including myself (*Doc #*).
- 5.2 The EAP indicates that the need and justification for a new Markham-Scarborough Transportation Link between Highway 401 and 407 has been adequately analyzed and documented in transportation studies already completed. The link is required as part of an integrated overall Master Plan for northeast Metro, southeast York and east Durham.
- 5.3 The EAP recommends that the follow-on Environmental Assessment should be started and focus on the Morningside corridor only.
- 5.4 Concerning the type of facility, the study determined that, due to environmental impacts and public opinion, it would not be appropriate to pursue a freeway/expressway facility in the corridor and that the follow-on Environmental Assessment should address only an arterial classification. The EAP also indicates, that given the demands on the link, it is necessary to maximize capacity. Therefore, with the arterial classification, no private entrances should be permitted, access being only via approved public road connections.

6. The Markham- Scarborough Link as identified in other studies

- 6.1 The Pickering Lands Access Study completed in 1995, is an internal Transport Canada study with funding from MTO (*Doc #*). It is a preliminary review of the possibility/feasibility of providing access to the federally owned property known as the Pickering Lands and recommends what further studies must be undertaken to protect the potential access corridors. Among the Key Transportation Network and Land Use Assumptions used in this study is a four lane Markham/Scarborough Link connecting Highways 407 and 401, operational by 2011.
- 6.2 The Markham Transportation Planning Study includes the implementation of the Markham-Scarborough transportation link in it's Transportation Plan (*Doc #*).

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 On the basis of the extensive work which I have outlined above, it is my professional opinion that there is a well documented need for a high order continuous arterial link between Highway 401 and 407 in the Morningside corridor. The link should be established as 36 meter high order arterial facility through the Morningside Heights Secondary Plan area with protection for the potential continuation of the same facility north to Steeles Ave. in a location where it can be connected to the proposed Markham By-Pass.
- 7.2 The Official Plans for both the former Municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto and Scarborough should continue to protect the potential for the future implementation of this key strategic interregional link.



Robb H. Minnes