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MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS HIGHWAY 50 TO WESTON ROAD, CITY OF VAUGHAN STATUS UPDATE, PROJECT 8066

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, September 27, 2006, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Chief Administrative Officer and the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be authorized to retain consulting services, as required, to complete the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements – Individual Environmental Assessment.
2. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Clerk of the City of Vaughan.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a status update on the Major Mackenzie Drive transportation improvements from Highway 50 to Weston Road and to secure Regional Council approval to expedite the procurement process for the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements – Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA).

3. BACKGROUND

The York Region Transportation Master Plan dated June 2002, identified a requirement to undertake transportation improvements along the Major Mackenzie Drive corridor between Highway 50 and Weston Road. Included in the recommendations of the master plan was the need to eliminate the jog at the intersection of Major Mackenzie Drive and Highway 27.

To implement the recommendations of the 2002 Transportation Master Plan and to accommodate the growth of western Vaughan, the approved 2006, 10-Year Roads Construction Program identified improvements to Major Mackenzie Drive as follows:

- Highway 27 to Weston Road 2009
- Highway 50 to Highway 27, including the jog elimination at Highway 27 2014

To meet the 2009 program year for the Highway 27 to Weston Road section, staff (during the fall of 2005), were undertaking the planning for this project. The section between Highway 50 and Highway 27 was added to the 10-Year Roads Construction Program in

2006, which necessitated an expansion of the project scope to include the section between Highway 50 and Highway 27.

During January 2006, staff completed the project planning for the section from Highway 50 to Weston Road and were preparing to issue a Request for Proposal to procure consulting services to assist with the preparation of a Schedule 'C' Class Environmental Assessment (EA). It is important to note that during the project planning phase staff, through consultation with external stakeholders, identified a significant risk to the successful project delivery by proceeding with this project as a Schedule 'C' Class EA. This risk is attributable to significant extent of potential environmental impacts, including potential impacts to the natural, social and natural heritage environments.

In parallel with the project planning for Major Mackenzie Drive, staff were working with the City of Vaughan staff as co-proponents on the Pine Valley Drive Corridor IEA. The Terms of Reference for the IEA identified a study area extending from Highway 407 to Teston Road and from Highway 27 to Weston Road. On December 3, 2004, the Terms of Reference were submitted to the Ministry of the Environment for approval. On February 13, 2006, the Ministry approved the Terms of Reference subject to six amendments.

Two of the six amendments had a significant impact on the planning of future transportation improvements in western Vaughan. The two amendments are:

1. In Section 3.1, under the purpose of the undertaking, the reference to "north-south" be deleted thereby implying that the study shall address not only north-south transportation deficiencies but also east-west transportation deficiencies within the study area.
2. Any alternative proposed to be located through the Boyd Conservation Area is excluded from consideration in the IEA.

In response to the decision rendered by the Ministry, York Region staff throughout spring 2006, worked with staff from the City of Vaughan and Ministry to understand the implications of the Ministry's decision and to develop a strategy for moving forward with the IEA.

Based on this consultation, it was concluded the intent of the Ministry in approving the Terms of Reference, subject to the amendments, was to encourage York Region to complete a comprehensive study that analyzes the transportation deficiencies and develops alternatives to address the deficiencies on a network-wide area basis and not to look only at individual corridors. Staff concluded the preferred approach to planning the transportation improvements within western Vaughan was to proceed with the Individual Environmental Assessment for a more comprehensive study based on the approved portions of the Terms of Reference. The study area and scope would be expanded to include all programmed projects within the western section of the City of Vaughan

bounded by Highway 407, Highway 50, Teston Road and Highway 400 (see the revised study area on the appended map, *Attachment 1*).

In June 2006, Regional Council adopted Clause 13 of Report No. 7 of the Transportation and Works Committee, endorsing the staff recommendation to complete the planning for all transportation improvements in western Vaughan under one IEA.

As a result, any improvements required to Major Mackenzie Drive from Highway 50 to Weston Road would be identified and EA Act approval would be secured as part of the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA and not a separate Class EA.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Proceeding with the planning for improvements to Major Mackenzie Drive from Highway 50 to Weston Road under the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements – Individual Environmental Assessment will result in an earlier clearance under the EA Act to proceed with the implementation phase of not only improvements to Major Mackenzie Drive, if any, but also any identified improvements within the study area.

This conclusion is based on several key reasons including:

- The Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA has an approved ToR, which provides York Region with the necessary approval to proceed with a comprehensive study to identify the transportation deficiencies within the study area and to develop alternative solutions to address the identified deficiencies by not only looking at north-south corridors but also east-west corridors. This is a two year process that has already been completed. As such, for planning road improvements under an IEA within the study area the project is already well underway and potentially two years ahead of starting a separate EA for Major Mackenzie Drive.
- York Region staff have confirmed that the MOE and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) are supportive of the macro scale approach to be used by York Region to undertake the IEA. Proceeding with separate Class EA's for the projects identified on the 2006, 10-Year Roads Construction Program will result in significant criticism from MOE, TRCA and others claiming that York Region is "piece-mealing" the planning of their road improvements. Further, separate planning for each road project will allow opponents to the undertakings to object to each one of the projects individually, thereby potentially delaying all road improvements within western Vaughan.
- Single study coordination between the ongoing Highway 427 Extension IEA, presently being undertaken by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO). This single study coordination will not only allow the York Region initiative to provide input into the MTO study on a network wide basis but also allow York Region to analyze

transportation deficiencies resulting from the Highway 427 extension on a network wide basis. This is a key component of the pending Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA as it will allow a single study to address the east-west corridor requirements at the location of the terminus of the Highway 427 extension.

4.1 Consultation

As part of the project planning for the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA, York Region staff, on August 10, 2006, met with representatives from the City of Vaughan, Township of King, the Town of Caledon, the Region of Peel and MTO. Representatives from the City of Brampton, TRCA, MOE and Ministry of Natural Resources were also invited but were unable to attend.

The purpose of that meeting was to brief the Region's municipal and provincial partners and the key environmental stakeholders on the status of the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA and to seek input on key issues and concerns which must be addressed by the region as part of the IEA.

The meeting was productive and led to meaningful discussion and collaboration between the local, regional and provincial governments on the Region's intention to move forward with the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA.

4.2 Schedule

York Region staff have been working on the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA (formerly the Pine Valley Drive Corridor IEA) since spring 2004. At this time, staff have progressed with the completion of the project including preparing the Terms of Reference (ToR), securing MOE approval of the ToR, refining the ToR in light of MOE amendments and project planning for the completion of the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA.

With reference to the schedule milestones presented under Section 3.0, progress has been made as follows:

Finalize ToR with expanded study area, proponentcy and name	Complete
• Retain IEA Consultant	
• Expression of Interest issued	Sept., 2006
• RFP to be issued	Oct., 2006
• Consultant selection and award	Nov., 2006
• Issue Notice of Commencement	Fall, 2006
• Complete IEA (anticipated two year duration)	Fall, 2008
• Secure MOE Approval	Winter/Spring, 2009
• Issue Notice of Completion	2009
• Earliest construction start	2009

Staff anticipate completion of the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA in fall 2008 with submission to MOE for approval in winter 2009.

To meet the scheduled dates, a contract for consulting services to complete the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA will be awarded in November 2006 by the Chief Administrative Officer under the authority delegated by Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the approved 2006 – 10 Year Roads Construction Program \$1,732,000 has been allocated for the planning of the projects within the study limits of the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA. Staff have estimated the cost to complete the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA to be in the range of \$2,000,000 to \$2,500,000. Additional funds will be requested as part of the 2007 – 10 Year Roads Construction Program budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The planning, design and construction of major capital road infrastructure improvements in western Vaughan is required in order to relieve current congestion and accommodate future growth. While proceeding under the recommended approach may delay the delivery of road projects programmed for the near term, there is benefit associated with securing EA Act approval for all road improvement projects in western Vaughan.

York Region staff have engaged staff from the City of Vaughan in meaningful consultation on their key issues and concerns with the Region proceeding with the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA.

7. CONCLUSION

The 2006, 10-Year Roads Construction Program includes the planned construction of Major Mackenzie Drive from Highway 50 to Weston Road between 2009 and 2014. This project is of such complexity and the potential environmental sensitivity of the cultural and natural heritage resources (including Boyd Park, the Kortright Centre, Kleinburg, the Humber River, the pending Highway 427 extension and the major CP Rail intermodal freight terminal), that it may have warranted completion as an IEA. Including Major Mackenzie Drive as part of the Western Vaughan Arterial Road Improvements IEA will actually accelerate delivery of this project as an approved ToR is already in place.

Further, proceeding with a separate study for Major Mackenzie Drive will result in significant opposition from environmental stakeholders who may allege that the Region is “piece-mealing” the planning of road improvements under the EA Act.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)