

3

ADOPTION OF REGIONAL OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 56 – REGIONAL TRANSIT POLICIES UPDATE

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends that Council adopt the recommendations contained in the following report dated November 4, 2008, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be authorized, under Section 17(23) of the *Planning Act*, to issue a Notice of Adoption with respect to Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 56.
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report for information purposes to the nine local municipal planning departments, and to the Provincial Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Energy and Infrastructure (formerly Public Infrastructure Renewal).

2. PURPOSE

Although technical in nature, ROPA 56 is important to support transit planning implementation by YRT, Rapidco and the local municipalities

This Amendment has been initiated by York Region to bring the transit policies of Chapter 6 – Regional Infrastructure into conformity with recent changes to the *Planning Act*, and to reflect programs that have emerged since ROPA 43 (Centres & Corridors policies) was approved in 2005. This report recommends the approval of this Amendment, attached to this report as *Attachment 1*. A framework for a more substantive, policy-focused Regional Official Plan Amendment – building on the technical changes through ROPA 56 – is being presented in a separate report to this same meeting of the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee.

This technical Amendment is proceeding at this time to support the implementation efforts of York Region Transit, York Region Rapid Transit and the local municipalities by updating, at an operational level, the Regional transit policy framework and related tools. Although transit infrastructure and service delivery is a Regional function, planning implementation is largely dependant on local planning instruments such as secondary plans and the subdivision of land. Updating these transit policies will serve to clarify and enhance Regional and local planning implementation.

3. BACKGROUND

ROPA 56 updates urban structure policies, related to transit, in effect since 2005

The policy updates being proposed under ROPA 56 are in response to new conditions, directly impacting transit, that have emerged since the enhancement of the Region's urban structure through the approval of ROPA 43 in 2005. These include:

- The launch of Viva rapid transit services and the service requirements of subsequent phases.
- The announcement of and funding for the construction of the Spadina Subway north to Highway 7 in the Vaughan Corporate Centre.
- The announcement of the planned extension of the Yonge Subway north to Highway 7 in the Richmond Hill Centre.
- Regional Council adoption of Regional Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines.
- The approval of the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- The inclusion of new planning implementation tools within the *Planning Act*, including those in effect January 1, 2007 under Bill 51.

The proposed Amendment has been drafted in consultation with York Region Transit, Rapidco and local municipal staff over the Summer of 2007. After incorporating comments from these stakeholders, a statutory public meeting under Section 17(15) of the *Planning Act* was held on October 31, 2007 as part of the Planning & Economic Development Committee's regular meeting. No public submissions were made.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

ROPA 56 is consistent with existing Regional and Provincial policies, and supports transit implementation by the Region's transit partners

Consistent with the guiding principles adopted by Committee and Regional Council in June 2007, the proposed Amendment is consistent with new Regional and Provincial policies and programs, and clarifies existing policies and terms. While the changes being proposed are of a practical and technical nature, they provide greater certainty in planning implementation for York Region Transit, Rapidco and the local municipalities.

Highlights of these proposed changes are:

- New definitions of transit-related terms including "Transit Operation and Maintenance Facility", "Transitway" and "Travel Demand Management".
- Making reference to the Regional Council-adopted Regional Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines in Policy 6.2.7.

- An updated description of the regional rapid transit network in policy 6.2.10 to include subway extensions from the City of Toronto to the Vaughan Corporate Centre and the Richmond Hill Centre.
- A new policy in 6.2.18 pertaining to the safe and efficient movement of transit vehicles and other traffic within the Regional Rapid Transit Corridors.
- The renaming of Map 10 from “Conceptual Transit Network” to “Transit Network”.

In addition to the above, an important change under ROPA 56 is a new policy under 6.2.16 for the dedication, at no cost, of lands outside of the transit rights-of-way to the Region for transit stations and related infrastructure. This addition will bring the Regional Official Plan in-line with existing municipal land dedication powers contained in Section 51(25)(b.1) of the *Planning Act*. Local municipal planning administration, in particular, will be supported by this new policy as York Region Transit and Rapidco secure the necessary lands and related facilities through such local planning instruments as draft plans of subdivision.

Further refinements made, arising from public meeting and further consultation with stakeholders

The discussion among Committee members at the Fall 2007 public meeting, and follow-up consultation with York Region Transit and Rapidco, has led to further clarifications and refinements to the proposed Amendment. No public submissions have been made before the Committee on this matter. The following changes clarify the intent of the policies, and are consistent with the guiding principles of the Amendment:

- Renumbering of the policies to reflect the addition of two new policies (these policies were included in the previous version of the Amendment, but were not appropriately numbered).
- Removing proposed references to Viva Phase I and Viva Phase II throughout, in favour of “initial phase” and “next phase” of rapid transit services (e.g. policy 6.2.4).
- Adding “public streetscape enhancements” and “surface and sub-surface rights-of-way” to the transit network elements described in policy 6.2.11.
- Removing reference to “restricting vehicular access” from proposed policy 6.2.17, which is intended to promote the safe and efficient movement of all traffic modes while accommodating transit operations.
- Adding “rail” to the proposed “Transitway” definition as a potential rapid transit mode.

Relationship to Vision 2026

Enhancing the transit-related policies of the Regional Official Plan is consistent with and will serve to advance the goals of Vision 2026, especially “Managed and Balanced Growth” and “Infrastructure for a Growing Region.”

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Ensuring that the policies of the Regional Official Plan are responsive to the challenges of urban structure implementation will support the Region's significant long-term investment in conventional and rapid transit. In particular, implementation of new planning tools under Section 51(25) of the *Planning Act* with respect to land dedications for transit stations and related facilities will optimize the cost-effectiveness of Regional transit infrastructure and services.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Staff from the local municipal planning departments have been consulted in the drafting of ROPA 56, and will have a significant role to play in the planning implementation process to support the Region's planned transit infrastructure and services. The local municipalities are primarily responsible for the implementation of the Region's urban structure through such local planning instruments as official plans, secondary plans, land subdivision, zoning by-laws site plan review. Adding clarity to the transit-related policies of the ROP will provide an enhanced level of direction to these local planning instruments and help support their implementation.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed policies of ROPA 56 represent a technical amendment to the transit policies in Chapter 6 of the Regional Official Plan. They are consistent with new Regional and Provincial policies and programs that have emerged since the last substantive urban structure update to the Plan through ROPA 43 in 2005. This Amendment clarifies existing policies, conforms with new Provincial legislation, and therefore represents good planning.

The adoption of ROPA 56 sets the stage for a comprehensive Centres and Corridors review and associated Amendment to further advance urban structure, built form and design. Guiding Principles and an Action Plan to initiate this work are set out in a separate report at this meeting of the Regional Planning & Economic Development Committee.

For more information on this report, please contact Sean Hertel, Senior Planner, at (905) 830-4444, Ext.1556 or Heather Konefat, Director of Community Planning at Ext. 1502.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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