

4

STATUS REPORT ON HIGHWAY 404 EXTENSION

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends:

- 1. The presentation by Tim Sorochinsky, URS Canada Ltd. and John Klowak, Ministry of Transportation Ontario, be received; and**
- 1. The recommendation contained in the following report, February 16, 2005, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Transportation and Works Committee and Council of the current status of plans for the extension of Highway 404 north from Green Lane and to advise that there will be a presentation by Ministry of Transportation staff on the status of environmental assessment work on Highway 404 Extension at the March 2, 2005 Transportation and Works Committee meeting.

3. BACKGROUND

Highway 404 was most recently extended to Green Lane by the Ministry of Transportation in February 2002, as part of an exchange with the Province which involved York Region assuming Davis Drive/Highway 9 east of Highway 400 and upgrading it to a four lane facility.

In August 2002, the Ontario Minister of the Environment approved an Individual Environmental Assessment (EA) for the extension of Highway 404 from Green Lane to the south junction of Highways 12/48 (see Map 1). The Province announced in October 2002 that construction of this project would start in 2006. Since that announcement, Regional Councillors and staff have worked hard to pursue early construction of Highway 404 Extension. However, no definitive construction dates have yet been announced by the Province.

The Highway 404 Extension is needed to address the transportation capacity needs of proposed developments in East Gwillimbury and Georgina. Regional Council in dealing with the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing for plan of subdivision 19T-03001 in

Queensville, East Gwillimbury, on February 19, 2004, recommended that draft plan approval of 19T-03001 should only occur provided that “*satisfactory arrangements have been made for the extension of Provincial Highway 404 to provide two additional lanes of north-south road capacity*” is a condition of approval. Subsequently on September 23, 2004, Regional Council, in considering the 19T-03001 OMB hearing, further recommended that the following be a condition of draft approval:

*Prior to final approval, the following shall have taken place:
Execution of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Transportation and York Region that establishes:*

- *a commitment to extend Highway 404 to Queensville Sideroad or a point further north;*
- *a schedule of milestone events for the Highway extension that includes, but is not limited to, approval of all required Environmental Assessments, acquisition of all land, tendering date of the road works to provide at least two lanes of road capacity in the Highway 404 right-of-way, and anticipated completion date(s);*
- *a commitment to include the Highway’s extension in the Province’s 10 year capital plan*
- *funding arrangements and the timing of funding*

Before full property acquisition and construction can begin for the Highway 404 Extension, it is necessary for the Province to develop higher levels of engineering detail for the approved route to address Federal and Provincial EA requirements associated with the additional level of design. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) initiated a study in the summer of 2004 to develop a Preliminary Design level of detail for the section of Highway 404 Extension from Green Lane to Woodbine Avenue to meet approval requirements of the Ontario EA Act and the Canadian EA Act (CEAA). This will be done in two parts. The first part is Green Lane to Mt. Albert Road and the second part is Mt. Albert Road to Woodbine Avenue. The rest of the Highway 404 Extension from Woodbine Avenue to the south junction of Highways 12/48 will be developed to the Conceptual Design level of detail to meet CEAA requirements.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The MTO study will allow for public input throughout the course of the project. The first set of Public Information Centres (PIC #1) have been arranged for March 29, 2005 and March 30, 2005 at the East Gwillimbury Municipal Offices. PIC #1 will be open to the public between 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. on both dates. At the March 29 session, representatives of governmental agencies will have an exclusive one hour time period prior to the PIC to view the presentation materials and ask questions.

Key information to be presented at PIC #1 includes:

- Background and purpose of study.

- Overview of environmental work undertaken.
- Mainline and interchange alignment alternatives considered.
- Evaluation and rationale for selecting the preferred alternatives.
- Summary of environmental impacts and mitigation measures.
- Next steps.

MTO has also planned a technical staff meeting in advance of PIC #1 to update municipal representatives on the project status and to provide an overview of materials to be presented at PIC #1. Municipal representatives to be invited to this meeting will include staff from York Region, Town of East Gwillimbury, Town of Georgina and Town of Newmarket.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no financial implication resulting from this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The extension of Highway 404 from Green Lane to Keswick will satisfy many of the transportation requirements for the proposed development of the Community of Queensville in East Gwillimbury and other developments in Georgina, allowing these developments to proceed. As well, this extension of Highway 404 is expected to spur future industrial and commercial developments, i.e. employment opportunities, in East Gwillimbury and Georgina, thereby resulting in less travel to employment areas to the south.

7. CONCLUSION

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation has initiated a Preliminary Design study for the extension of Highway 404 from Green Lane to Woodbine Avenue to address further requirements of the Provincial Environmental Assessment Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. The first Public Information Centre of this study is planned for March 29-30, 2005. Completion of this study will allow the Province to conduct the final detail design work necessary before actual construction work can begin.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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