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**TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS
MARKHAM BYPASS EXTENSION SOUTH OF HIGHWAY 407
TO MORNINGSIDE AVENUE**

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends:

- 1. The presentation by Paul May, Director, Infrastructure Planning and Martin Scott, McCormick Rankin be received;**
- 2. The following deputations and/or written submissions be received;**
 - (a) David Stewart, representing Box Grove Hill Developments Inc., and written submission;**
 - (b) Marina Pilkington, Markham resident;**
- 3. The recommendations contained in the following report, March 17, 2005, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be adopted, subject to the following:**
 - (a) Replace the word “endorsed” in Recommendation 1 with “received”; and**
 - (b) Delete Recommendation 2 and replace with the following:**

“2. Upon completion of the public and agency consultation and consideration of comments received, including a meeting with the Town of Markham Transportation and Works Committee on April 18, 2005, the Commissioner of Transportation and Works report back to the Region of York Transportation and Works Committee with the preferred alignment on June 1, 2005.”

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 1. The technically preferred alignment for the extension of the Markham Bypass from Highway 407 to Morningside Avenue as recommended through the Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA) study and outlined in this report be endorsed.**
- 2. Upon completion of the public and agency consultation and consideration of comments received, the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be authorized to submit the Markham Bypass EA Report for the statutory public review and Ministry of Environment approval.**

3. Upon approval of the EA by the Ministry of the Environment, the Commissioner of Transportation and Works, together with the Town of Markham, investigate opportunities to begin implementation of the Markham Bypass Extension in conjunction with area land development and report further to Council.
4. A copy of this report be sent by the Regional Clerk to the Clerks at the City of Toronto and Town of Markham and to the Ministry of Environment.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Committee and Council on the progress of the Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA) for Transportation Improvements in the Markham Bypass Corridor South of Highway 407 to Morningside Avenue and to present the technically preferred alignment. This report provides a brief summary of project findings that will be expanded in more detail during a presentation to Committee by the project team.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Project History

Numerous transportation studies have identified the need for additional north-south transportation capacity in the eastern part of the boundary area between Toronto and York Region. The Town of Markham and York Region have completed the EA for the Markham Bypass north of Highway 407 and the Region has begun construction of this important transportation corridor.

In order to accommodate the growth forecast for the eastern parts of York and Toronto and the western part of Durham Region, extension of the Markham Bypass south of Highway 407 to connect to the arterial road network in Toronto is required.

Markham and York Region have been ensuring that all development applications in the area protect for all reasonable alternatives for the alignment of a potential Markham Bypass Extension south of Highway 407. The uncertainty of the Bypass alignment has made development planning for this area more difficult. From this perspective, there is a need to establish the final alignment for the new road as soon as possible.

In the Ontario Municipal Board approval of the Morningside Heights Secondary Plan within the City of Toronto, potential alignments for a new transportation link to Morningside Avenue were protected. A timeline for the completion and submission of the EA by December 31, 2005 was included in the Secondary Plan through the OMB approval process.

In June 2002, staff reported to Committee and Council on the consultant selection to carry out the EA. The consultant team of McCormick Rankin Corporation and Totten Sims Hubicki was retained to assist Transportation and Works staff with this assignment.

York Region is the sole proponent for the EA. Although the City of Toronto has not agreed to participate in this study as co-proponent, City staff have been involved through the Technical Advisory Committee and have attended all Public Consultation Centres (PCCs) to provide input on public questions and comments related to issues within the City of Toronto.

3.2 EA Terms of Reference

The main purpose of the Terms of Reference (ToR) phase of an Individual EA is to set out in detail the requirements for the preparation of the environmental assessment. The TOR sets out how the EA will address the following EA Act requirements:

- a) A description of the purpose of the undertaking.
- b) A description of the rationale for:
 - The undertaking.
 - Alternative methods of carrying out the undertaking.
 - Alternatives to the undertaking.
- c) A description of the environment that may be affected, effects caused to the environment and the actions required to mitigate the environmental effects.
- d) An evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages to the environment.
- e) A description of public and agency consultation.

The ToR was developed and submitted for the EA Act statutory public review starting April 15, 2004 and ending May 21, 2004. The ToR was approved by the Minister of the Environment on July 13, 2004.

3.3 EA Progress and Public Consultation

There are a total of four rounds of Public Consultation Centres (PCCs) planned for this project, two during the ToR phase of the study and two during the follow-on EA. The first PCC was held on December 11, 2002 at the Rouge River Community Centre. During this PCC, a request was made by a City of Toronto Councillor to include a location within Toronto for the next round of consultation.

The second round of PCCs included a session held on June 12, 2003, at the Rouge River Community Centre and a second session on June 17, 2003 at the Scarborough Civic Centre.

Following the approval of the ToR, the third round of PCCs was held on October 13, 2004 at the Box Grove Community Centre and on October 14, 2004 at the Scarborough Civic Centre. This round of PCCs included a presentation that summarized the need and justification for the undertaking, a recommendation on the preferred solution (planned

road/transit/TDM improvements plus a new road in the Markham Bypass Corridor South of Highway 407) and presentation of alternative alignments to be assessed.

In general, most PCC attendees agreed that transportation improvements in the study area are required. Alternatives were thoroughly discussed and debated. The need for improved transit services as a partial solution to growing congestion was a repeated theme noted at the PCCs.

The need to protect and preserve the natural environment in and around the Rouge Park was identified as a key issue. The need to define the final alignment for this transportation corridor was also an important issue raised by area developers.

The fourth and final round of PCC's are planned for late April 2005. Following the last round of PCC's, the project team will prepare an EA Report.

3.4 Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been involved at all key stages of the EA. Representation on the TAC includes staff from the City of Toronto, Town of Markham, MTO, TRCA, CP Rail, Region of Durham, Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, York Region Planning Department as well as the project team.

The feedback received from the key technical agencies helps identify relevant issues to be addressed through the EA and is also an important quality control process.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 The Proposed Undertaking

The EA included an evaluation of all reasonable alternatives to address transportation demand in the study area. The alternatives to the undertaking were considered individually and, where applicable, in combination. The alternatives listed individually included:

- a) Do nothing.
- b) Widen existing roads.
- c) Construct dedicated transit facility.
- d) Other transit initiatives.
- e) Transportation demand management (TDM).
- f) New road alignment (Markham Bypass Extension).

The preferred alternative being recommended is a multi-modal solution that combines various transportation strategies that include a base case of planned road network improvements, transit initiatives, TDM initiatives plus a new road in the Markham Bypass Corridor South of Highway 407. Detailed alignment alternatives for a new road were developed and assessed in consultation with government agencies and the public.

The technically preferred alignment that is being recommended by the project team and will be presented to the public at the last round of PCCs is shown on *Attachment 1*.

North of Steeles Avenue, the proposed Undertaking includes the extension of the Markham Bypass from the new interchange at Highway 407 southerly to Steeles Avenue as a higher order arterial road with a multi-use function. The alignment utilizes the transportation/utility corridor identified in the Box Grove Secondary Plan and generally parallels the north limit of the CP Rail corridor. The alignment continues west across the Rouge River, Hydro Corridor and CN Rail north of Steeles Avenue, intersecting Steeles Avenue between the CP Rail and the Morningside Tributary.

The proposed basic right-of-way width is 36 m which will accommodate a four-lane cross section with protection for an ultimate six-lane cross section. A wider right-of-way width would be required at intersections and to accommodate grading slopes as applicable. This is consistent with the Markham Bypass north of Highway 407.

South of Steeles Avenue, the proposed Undertaking extends through the Morningside Avenue extension corridor (1998 OMB Hearing) to the Morningside Avenue extension south of the CP Rail Havelock Subdivision. North of the CP Rail, these lands are designated for employment uses (Tapscott Industrial Area). The proposed basic right-of-way width would be 36m with a four-lane cross section including the protection for a future six-lane cross section, which is consistent with the previously established rights-of-way for the sections of the Morningside Avenue extension.

4.2 Implementation Through the Box Grove Secondary Plan

Through the Box Grove Community Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Box Grove Landowners will be constructing the 9th Line Bypass as a four-lane urban cross section from the existing 9th Line just south of the Highway 407 interchange to fully bypass the Hamlet of Box Grove and reconnect to the existing 9th Line south of the Hamlet and just north of the CN Line / CP Line crossings. The Regional Finance Department is currently finalizing the details of a DC Credit Agreement with the Box Grove Landowners for the construction of this infrastructure (*Attachment 2, segments 1 and 2*).

A section of this 9th Line Bypass has been identified in the EA as part of the Markham Bypass Extension to Morningside Avenue alignment (*Attachment 2, segment 2*) and is planned to be constructed as part of the Phase 1 Box Grove Development.

The MOU also commits the Box Grove Landowners to the construction of the road link between Highway 407 and the 9th Line Bypass (*Attachment 2, Segment 3*) as a two-lane Town of Markham road with a rural cross section. This road is currently proposed to be built in conjunction with Phase 2 of the Box Grove Development and coincides with part of the alignment identified in the EA for the Markham Bypass Extension to Morningside Avenue.

Rather than building this road as a two-lane rural cross section as envisioned in the MOU, the Region and the Town of Markham will investigate the opportunity to have this link constructed as a four-lane urban road as part of the Phase 2 Box Grove Development. Construction of this link would provide a good quality continuous arterial connection from the Markham Bypass north of Highway 407 to Steeles Avenue via the existing 9th Line south of the CN / CP crossings until such time as the ultimate connection to Morningside Avenue can be constructed.

4.3 Next Steps

As noted previously, the fourth and final round of PCC's are planned for late April 2005 to present the recommended alignment for the new road and to present a summary of the key EA study findings.

Following the last round of PCC's, the project team will prepare an EA Report to be draft circulated to the MOE and Government Review Team in May 2005. Formal submission of the EA Report for the statutory public review and Ministry of the Environment approval is scheduled for late summer 2005. EA approval is expected in early 2006.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. There are sufficient funds in the 2004/2005 Roads Budget to cover project costs this year.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Town of Markham staff have been actively involved in every aspect of the EA project.

Although the City of Toronto is not a co-proponent in this study, City staff have been involved through the Technical Advisory Committee and have attended and provided input at all PCCs. City staff are in general agreement with the evaluation of the alternatives and selection of the technically preferred alignment.

The EA project team propose to present the recommended alignment and key study findings to the Markham Transportation Committee on April 18, 2005 and to the Toronto Works Committee on a date still to be determined. The Commissioner of Transportation and Works will report further regarding key municipal and stakeholder input after the last PCC and presentations to Markham and Toronto Committees.

7. CONCLUSION

This report presents the technically preferred alignment for the Markham Bypass extension from Highway 407 to Morningside Avenue. The project team are seeking Committee and Council endorsement prior to presenting the study findings to the public and other stakeholders.

The fourth and final round of PCC's are planned for late April 2005 to present the recommended alignment for the new road and to present a summary of the key EA study findings. Following the last round of PCC's, the project team will prepare an EA Report to be submitted to the MOE for approval.

Once the EA is approved by the Ministry of the Environment, the Commissioner of Transportation and Works, together with the Town of Markham, will investigate opportunities to begin implementation of the Markham Bypass Extension in conjunction with area land development.

There is strong interest from most stakeholders to have the EA completed in order to identify transportation solutions in the study area as well as to eliminate uncertainty for proposed development plans.

Additional information is available on the project website "www.markhambypass.ca".

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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