

10

SHARED SPACE RAPIDWAYS - MARKHAM TOWN CENTRE CIVIC MALL

The Rapid Transit Public/Private Partnership Steering Committee recommends the adoption of the following:

- 1. The presentation by David Clark, Chief Architect, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, be received; and**
- 2. The recommendation contained in the following report, June 4, 2008, from the Vice-President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation and Commissioner of Transportation Services, be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Council endorse the design concept for the shared space rapid transit facilities in the Markham Town Centre Civic Mall as the basis for completion of the final design and preparation of construction documents for the rapidways through this segment of the Highway 7 – Richmond Hill Centre to Warden Avenue (H3) corridor.

2. PURPOSE

This report seeks Council endorsement of the design concept for the development of the transit rapidways through the Markham Town Centre Civic Mall as a shared use corridor, accommodating pedestrians and cyclists and urban landscape facilities and features. The report also updates Committee on the progress made in discussions with Town and Regional stakeholders into the operations, policing, enforcement, emergency access and maintenance of the civic corridor space as a key piece of urban park and transit infrastructure, as well as discussions into the granting of rights to the Region for access to construct the rapidways, and for the long term rapid transit operations in the corridor.

3. BACKGROUND

On February 14, 2008, Council endorsed shared space rapidway design principles to guide the development of a design concept for the Markham Town Centre Civic Mall. The report focussed on a number of key design principles aimed at assuring that all users of the civic mall are given an equal stake in the use and enjoyment of the corridor. The principles promoted integrating the mall physically and visually into the larger development context through sustainable barrier-free design. The principles also promote safety and security through best practice models of environmental design.

The February report also set out a number of key design criteria for shared use facilities, including locational criteria for the positioning of the rapidways within the corridor, transit design speed, and visual safety zones to allow unobstructed views to and from transit vehicles, and design strategies to distinguish the rapidways from pedestrian and landscaped areas.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

A design concept for the shared use corridor has been developed

Following the endorsement of the shared use principles by both Regional and Town of Markham Councils, the Town retained the services of Janet Rosenberg and Associates, Landscape Architects to develop a design concept for the civic mall in consultation with the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation team. A number of design meetings were held and a concept developed (see Attachment 1). The design concept built on the work undertaken by the York Consortium 2002 team, as well as Rosenberg's own award winning design for the Town's 10 acre major urban park in the Markham Downtown plan shown in the Master Plan below. The concept carries the shared use design language and features through the entire length of the approximate one kilometre corridor, connecting the east and west precincts of the downtown in a seamless manner to the central park.

Master Plan



Forested Pedestrian Mall Precedent – Las Ramblas



Forested Pedestrian Mall Precedent – London



Forested Pedestrian Mall with Transit Precedent - Bordeaux



The design features an inventory of tree species aimed at providing a sustainable tree canopy along the entire length of the corridor, echoing the look and feel and the amenity of some of the great international streets as shown in the following precedent photos.

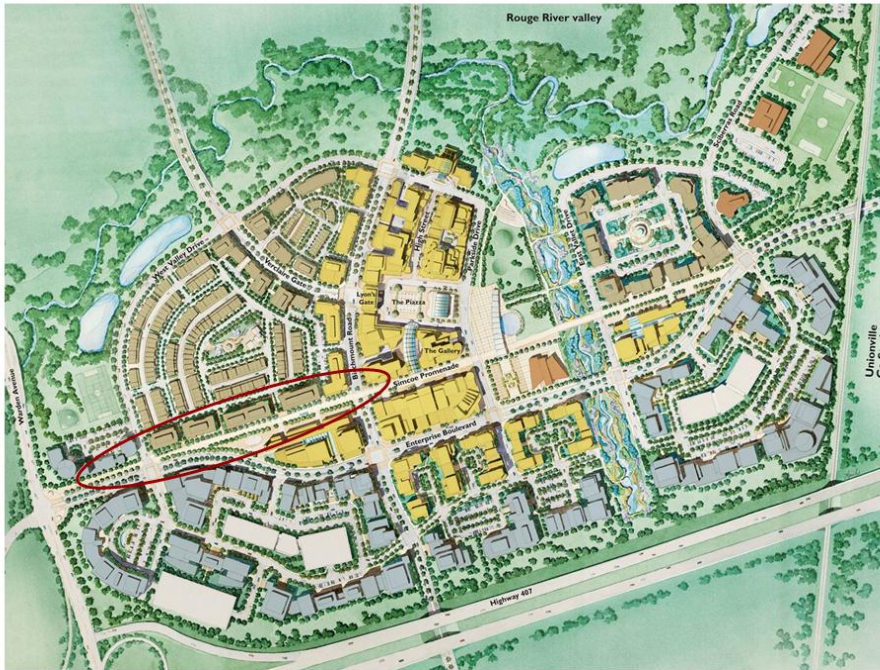
The procurement process will be staged to construct the rapidways initially and the parks works will be implemented in a subsequent phase. Dependent upon Town funding sources, the parks works may need to be implemented over one or more construction budget cycles.

The Civic Mall corridor will be dedicated to the Town

The Civic Mall corridor is a feature of the Remington Markham Downtown plan and a part of the development's first phase of subdivision approvals. The mall is identified in Remington's Draft Plan of Subdivision as a series of special open space blocks. The Civic Mall lands, including the rapid transit corridor, are to be transferred to the Town as park space as a component of Remington's park dedication obligations under the Planning Act. The first phase of the Draft Plan is in the final stages of registration and the two first blocks of the Civic Mall, from Warden Avenue to West Valley Drive and

from West Valley Drive to Birchmount Drive, will shortly be in Town ownership. The location of the first phase of the Civic Mall is shown in the following plan.

Location of Civic Mall construction within Markham Centre



Access to the Civic Mall corridor for construction will be granted by the Town.

A temporary construction easement for the Region to access the lands for construction of the rapidways in the fall of this year will be granted by the Town following the approval of a design concept for the shared space corridor by the Town's Director of Planning and Urban Design. The easement for construction will be registered prior to commencement of the work to ensure that appropriate arrangements for insurance and indemnities are in place before construction commences.

The rapidways will need to be dedicated as a public highway

The Region's solicitors have determined that the travel portions of the transit rapidways will be required to be dedicated as a public highway under the jurisdiction of either the Town of Markham or York Region pursuant to the Highway Traffic Act and Public Vehicles Act. Region staff and their solicitor have met with Town legal staff to discuss the two options and the relevant legal and liability implications. The parties are considering Regional ownership of the rapidways either in fee or as a strata title. The results of the analysis and implementation procedures will be brought before Committee for consideration in a further report.

Outside of the Civic Mall, the rapidways are located within the rights-of-way of three Town owned streets in Markham Centre, Town Centre Boulevard, Cedarland Drive and

YMCA Boulevard. Easement agreements will be required to construct and operate rapidways on Town owned lands within Markham Centre as the Highway 7 - Richmond Hill Centre to Warden Avenue (H3) rapidways are implemented as part of the Centres to Centres programme.

The stakeholders have developed draft operating and maintenance principles

Since the endorsement of the shared use principles in February, 2008, Region and Town of Markham staff and stakeholders have met on three occasions in working sessions to identify operational and maintenance challenges, review of best practices of other current transit services operating in a civic mall, discuss options and identify a set of principles to guide the development of a memorandum of understanding amongst the parties. A future report will address operations and maintenance in greater detail and a memorandum of understanding will be forthcoming.

The discussions focussed on the primary users of the rapidways in the corridor, including transit vehicles, service vehicles for transit and the rapidway and emergency vehicles (police, fire, EMS). It is expected that YRT conventional and Mobility Plus service will not be scheduled users of the rapidways, although Mobility Plus may require use of the rapidway to access buildings fronting onto the civic mall.

The Town will take responsibility for routine maintenance of the rapidways

The parties discussed operations and maintenance in the corridor and a consensus emerged that the Town would assume responsibility for routine maintenance of the rapidways, including snow clearance, garbage pickup and cleaning/sweeping. Town staff recommended that the standards be similar to those used within the two Business Improvement Area districts in Markham, along Main Street Unionville and Markham Village. Region staff would maintain the Viva stations.

Lighting in the Civic Mall is under review, as park lighting standards are generally lower than road standards. Research into two similar corridors in Denver and Minneapolis confirmed that both have lower lighting levels than on public streets. Neither has experienced problems with safety issues at lower lighting levels.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Rapidway construction within the Markham Town Centre Civic Mall has the advantage of being constructed in a shared use space for pedestrians and cyclists and not within an existing street environment. Based on the Yonge Street rapidway – Steeles Avenue to Richmond Hill Centre (Y1) experience, the per kilometre cost of constructing the rapidways in an existing street environment is in \$25 - 30 million per kilometre range. In comparison, the cost of constructing the rapidways in the Civic Mall, notwithstanding the higher level of finish on the surface materials, is in the order of \$15 – 20 million per

kilometre not including the tributary crossing. Given the location of the rapidways within dedicated Town-owned open space, there will be no associated land acquisition costs compared to implementing rapid transit within a street environment where property may be required from adjoining private property owners. The rapidways represent a relatively narrow component of the Civic Mall corridor; the standard rapidway of two lanes at 3.5 metres each with associated rolled curbs and gutters comfortably fits within the overall 30 metre dimension of the corridor.

The Markham Civic Mall preliminary engineering work programme is being advanced as a contingency item under the Y1.OM contract with York Consortium 2002.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The preparation of an integrated concept for the rapidways in the Markham Town Centre Civic Mall corridor has been a cooperative initiative from the beginning. Town and Region staff have worked together with their respective teams to develop an exciting new concept for the shared use space that is an integral part of the Town's downtown Markham Centre vision. Both staffs have worked well together to recognize the unique operational and maintenance challenges this new shared use concept brings with it and to develop practical solutions. When completed, the shared use space will be a major destination and draw for Markham citizens and visitors to the Region. The rapidways will continue to support the intensification implicit in the Markham vision.

7. CONCLUSION

Following endorsement of the shared use principles by Council, the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation and Town teams began work on the development of an integrated design concept. The concept put forward by the Town's consultants, Janet Rosenberg and Associates incorporates the design and engineering of the rapidways into a dynamic visual design statement. The concept forms a sound basis for the completion of the detailed design and construction documents needed to commence construction of the rapidways later this year.

The parties will meet soon to begin the negotiations for the temporary easement for construction and for the permanent long term easement for the operation of the rapidways in the Civic Mall corridor. At the same time, Town and Region staff has developed draft principles for the operation and maintenance of the rapidways. Over the coming weeks, staff will be putting together a memorandum understanding for the operation and maintenance of the corridor and will report back on their findings.

For additional information please contact Mary-Frances Turner, Vice-President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation at (905) 886-6767 ext. 2226.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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