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

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, June 6, 2005, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works and the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Staff report back in September, 2005 on the final recommended alignment and resolution of outstanding issues.
2. The Regional Clerk forward copies of this report to the Clerks of the Town of Markham, City of Toronto and Durham Region.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Committee and Council on the project team's progress since April, 2005 in identifying and resolving key stakeholder issues regarding the Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA) for a new road from the Markham Bypass / Highway 407 interchange south to Morningside Avenue.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 General

The IEA included an evaluation of all reasonable alternatives to address transportation demand in the study area. The preferred alternative 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.

At the April 6, 2005 Transportation and Works Committee meeting, the Project Team presented the key findings of the IEA, including the need for a new four-lane road link from the Markham Bypass / Highway 407 interchange to the existing terminus of Morningside Avenue in the City of Toronto. On April 6, the Technically Preferred

Alignment for the proposed road (*Attachment 1*) was presented to Committee in advance of the final round of Public Consultation Centres (PCC's).

At its meeting on April 21, 2005, Regional Council adopted recommendations contained in Clause 1 of Report No. 4 of the Transportation and Works Committee including the following:

“ 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 in June 2005.”

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, Toronto staff have been involved throughout the project and have provided key input related to issues within the City of Toronto.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Consultation

Following the April 6, 2005 presentation to Committee, the project team presented the EA findings to the Town of Markham Transportation Committee on April 18, 2005. At both the Regional and Markham Committee meetings, representatives of the Box Grove Hill Developments Inc. and the Highcock landowners made deputations regarding the proposed road alignment immediately south of the Highway 407 interchange to the CP Rail line. Subsequent discussions have occurred between staff and these landowners and will continue until the next report to Committee and Council.

The final round of public consultation centres (PCCs) were held on April 20, 2005 at the Box Grove Community Centre and April 21, 2005 at the Heritage Park Public School in Scarborough. A PCC notification was published in the Markham Economist and Sun, the Scarborough Mirror and the Toronto Star in addition to direct mail-out to interested or potentially affected stakeholders and the public. At the April 20 and 21 PCCs 38 and 111 people signed in, respectively. Key public and stakeholder issues are presented in section 4 of this report.

At and following the final round of PCC, the owner of Parkview Golf Club expressed concerns about the viability of his operation from the impact of the proposed Markham Bypass Extension. Staff are in discussion with the owner and have retained a golf course designer to assist in developing a mitigation plan.

As noted previously, Toronto staff have been involved throughout the EA and have attended all PCCs and Technical Advisory Committee meetings. Toronto staff requested

that the Project Team present the EA findings to City of Toronto's Works Committee following the final round of PCCs. The presentation was made on May 26, 2005.

At that meeting, Toronto Works Committee indicated their opposition to the technically preferred alignment south of Steeles Avenue. They also indicated preference for a discontinuous alignment that jogs at Steeles Avenue and that the project team re-evaluate this option. A copy of the recommendations endorsed by the Toronto Works Committee is included as *Attachment 2*.

4.2 Summary of Outstanding Issues

The following lists the outstanding issues to be resolved before a final preferred alignment for Markham Bypass Extension can be developed.

- Alignment south of Highway 407 to the CP Rail line – mitigate property impacts on the Highcock and Box Grove Secondary Plan Phase II properties.
- 14th Avenue intersection – develop alignment and configuration of an interim at-grade intersection, taking into consideration the proximity of the CP Rail line.
- Alignment at south end of Box Grove Secondary Plan – resolve potential impacts on an existing storm water management pond.
- Construction phasing – explore opportunity to improve the construction staging as agreed to in the Box Grove Community Memorandum of Understanding.
- Alignment from Box Grove to Steeles Avenue – resolve potential noise impacts on an existing residential area and mitigate economic impacts on the Parkview Golf Club.
- Alignment south of Steeles Avenue – work with City of Toronto staff and Council to resolve concerns of Morningside Heights residents.

4.3 Next Steps

The project team will continue to work towards resolving the outstanding alignment issues listed above and will report back to Committee and Council in September 2005. As well, the project team will continue to prepare an EA Study Report to be draft circulated to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and Government Review Team (GRT) for review in July and August 2005. Formal submission of the EA Report for the statutory public review and Ministry of the Environment approval will occur in the fall of 2005. EA approval is then expected in early 2006.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. There are sufficient funds in the 2005 Roads Budget to cover expected 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 (TAC) and have attended and provided input at all PCCs.

The project team will continue to work with staff at the City of Toronto and Town of Markham to resolve any outstanding alignment issues and to provide additional information/analysis to address concerns raised by the City of Toronto.

Both the Town of Markham and City of Toronto are key members of the TAC and GRT for this project and will have an opportunity to review the draft EA report before it is formally submitted for approval.

7. CONCLUSION

The report presents the project team's progress since April 2005 and identifies key stakeholder issues regarding the alignment of a planned new road from the Highway 407/Markham Bypass interchange south to Morningside Avenue in the City of Toronto.

The alignment presented to Transportation and Works Committee on April 6, 2005 is being refined to address input received from the public and area landowners. The project team will continue to work toward resolving outstanding issues or concerns, particularly as it relates to input received from the City of Toronto, the Parkview Golf Club and the Highcock landowners.

The Commissioner of Transportation and Works will report back in September with a final recommended road alignment.

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

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)