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HIGHWAY 404 EXTENSION UPDATE AND FUNDING CONTRIBUTION

(Regional Council at its meeting on May 25, 2006 amended the following Clause 3, recommendation 4 to add “and must include a full interchange,” after the words “(Queensville Secondary Plan)” in the fourth line;)

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends:

1. The presentation by Patrick Puccini, URS Canada Inc. and John Klowak, Ministry of Transportation Ontario be received; and
2. The recommendations contained in the following report, May 9, 2006, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be adopted, subject to replacing Recommendation 3 with the following:
 3. “The Minister of Transportation be advised that the construction of the Highway 404 crossing of Mount Albert Road (Y.R. 13) must accommodate a future four lane cross-section and sidewalks on *both sides of* Mount Albert Road (Y.R. 13), and that the Region considers the construction of this four-lane crossing a requirement related to provincially-approved growth, and therefore a provincial infrastructure responsibility.”

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Staff be directed to assist the provincial Ministry of Transportation in its immediate acquisition of lands required for the extension of Highway 404 from Green Lane East (Y.R. 19) to its interim termination point at Woodbine Avenue (Y.R. 8)/ Ravenshoe Road (Y.R. 32) by facilitating any required discussions with affected property owners, regulatory agencies, local municipal representatives, and any other potentially affected parties.
2. Regional Council advise the Minister of Transportation that the interim termination of the Highway 404 extension must include a direct connection to Ravenshoe Road (Y.R. 32) east of Woodbine Avenue (Y.R. 8) to properly distribute the future traffic at this interim termination point without introducing operational problems at the Woodbine Avenue (Y.R. 8)/Ravenshoe Road (Y.R. 32) intersection, and that consideration be given to earlier resolutions from the Town of Georgina and the Regional Municipality of York seeking a further interim extension to Glenwoods Avenue (Y. R. 33) as part of the initial construction.

3. The Minister of Transportation be advised that the construction of the Highway 404 crossing of Mount Albert Road (Y.R. 13) must accommodate a future four lane cross-section and sidewalks on Mount Albert Road (Y.R. 13), and that the Region considers the construction of this four-lane crossing a requirement related to provincially-approved growth, and therefore a provincial infrastructure responsibility.
4. The Minister of Transportation be advised that the Highway 404 crossing of Doane Road (Y.R. 45) must be constructed on the alignment approved as part of the Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan Amendments 89 and 115 (*Queensville Secondary Plan*), and that the Region is prepared to contribute financially towards this construction on the basis of the Net Present Value of the difference (estimated in 2005 to be \$1.7 M) between the value of a crossing on the current Doane Road (Y.R. 45) alignment and the value of a crossing built on the Official Plan Amendment approved alignment, to be calculated with a time horizon of 15 years.
5. Staff be directed to finalize an agreement for the contribution to the Doane Road (Y.R. 45) crossing with the Ministry of Transportation, to be executed by the Regional Chair and the Regional Clerk.
6. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Ministry of Transportation and to the Clerks of the Towns of East Gwillimbury and Georgina.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on discussions with Ministry of Transportation (MTO) staff concerning the extension of Highway 404 north of Green Lane East, and to seek Council endorsement of design related and funding issues under discussion with Ministry of Transportation staff.

3. BACKGROUND

The province has long had plans for the extension of Highway 404 north of Green Lane East to Highway 12 east of the York Regional Boundary. An Environmental Assessment was completed in August 2002 and a route (*see Attachment 1*) was approved. Funding for the construction of the interim extension of Highway 404 was announced in the 2006 provincial budget. Over the last number of years Regional staff have had discussions with MTO staff concerning the plans for an interim extension to Woodbine Avenue. Through these discussions a number of issues have arisen which now require Council direction as the Ministry has recently initiated the detail design of a number of components to allow for the imminent construction of the proposed extension.

The issues requiring Council direction include:

- Potential Regional assistance to facilitate the construction of the interim extension.
- Distribution of traffic at the interim terminal of the Highway 404 extension.
- Request for Regional funding towards the Highway 404 crossing over Mount Albert Road.
- Doane Road crossing alignment and associated funding responsibilities.

3.1 Potential Regional Assistance to Facilitate Highway 404 Construction

In recent discussions with Ministry staff, Regional staff, have been repeatedly advised that the MTO is committed to the construction of the interim extension of Highway 404 from its current terminus at Green Lane East northerly to the Woodbine Road crossing. Unfortunately, MTO staff have not yet been able to supply a concrete schedule or completion date for this work. MTO staff have asked whether the Region could assist in some way in moving towards the early construction of a project.

3.2 Interim Terminus of Highway 404 at Woodbine Avenue and Ravenshoe Road

Conceptual MTO plans discussed to date suggest that the Highway 404 interim connection will terminate at the planned crossing or interchange with Woodbine Avenue south of Ravenshoe Road. Regional roads staff are concerned that the configuration of the terminus point could result in significant operational concerns with the distribution of traffic in the vicinity of the terminus.

On October 21, 2004, Regional Council endorsed a resolution of the Town of Georgina asking the Province to extend Highway 404 to Glenwoods Avenue which is located north of the currently planned terminus.

3.3 Mount Albert Road Crossing

The MTO's current plans for the Highway 404 crossing of Mount Albert Road include two rigid frame bridges - one for the north bound lanes and one for the southbound - to carry Highway 404 over two lanes on Mount Albert Road. The ministry has taken the position that only a two-lane opening under the bridges is required, as Mount Albert Road is currently only a two-lane road. In June 2005, MTO's consultant indicated that the Ministry would be prepared to expand the bridge opening to accommodate a future four lanes, and sidewalk on one side of Mount Albert Road, provided that the Region commit to the additional cost of \$350, 000.

Rigid frame bridges, such as those proposed by MTO to carry the highway over Mount Albert Road are not easily extended in the future. Future changes to the structure opening underneath the highway would essentially require the complete reconstruction of these bridges.

3.4 Doane Road Crossing

The MTO's current plans for the Highway 404 crossing of Doane Road include a bridge to carry Doane Road over Highway 404 on the current alignment of Doane Road. The

Region's plans for Doane Road include its realignment to provide for a future interchange with Highway 404. The need for the interchange and the associated realignment were identified during the development and approval of East Gwillimbury Official Plan Amendments 89 and 115 for the *Queensville Secondary Plan* (see Attachment 2). The Region identified and included these future Doane Road needs in the Development Charges By-law in June 2003, and it was anticipated that the future construction of both the interchange and the realignment would be undertaken by the Region and funded through both tax levy and development charge revenues.

The Ministry's consultant working on Highway 404 has indicated that the MTO is prepared to consider building the Doane Road crossing on the approved ultimate alignment of Doane Road, with temporary tie-ins back to the current alignment, thereby minimizing the future cost to the Region. This approach would preclude the need for the future removal and replacement of a bridge over Highway 404. In 2005, the consultant estimated that the additional cost of the bridge on the ultimate alignment and the temporary tie-ins to Doane Road would be approximately \$1.7M. This cost would be in addition to the \$2.5M which MTO has estimated to be the cost of constructing the crossing on the current Doane Road alignment. Regional staff have not been afforded the opportunity to review detailed cost estimates in this regard, however the proportion of the incremental cost to the original cost would appear to be reasonable.

MTO representatives have indicated that the Ministry would consider building the Doane Road crossing on its ultimate alignment if the Region were to fund the incremental cost.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Potential Regional Assistance to Facilitate Highway 404 Construction

There a number of additional ways in which the Region could assist MTO in the implementation of the interim Highway 404 extension. When considering this request the Region should consider, as a minimum, the following issues.

The province of Ontario has directed and approved growth to the northern part of York Region. In the November 2005 release of the *Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, the province identified that York Region will be expected to accommodate an additional 600,000 people by the year 2031. As identified in Schedule 2 of the *Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (see Attachment 3) this accommodation will require a number of transportation improvements including the interim extension of Highway 404.

In addition to the provincial highway requirement to service the planned growth, the Region has long maintained that the extension is required now to service the northern area of the Region, as this area is already under-served from a provincial highway standpoint, as compared to other areas of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Improved

highway service in this area also facilitates access to transit facilities – including the new GO rail station on Green Lane.

The Region will have to upgrade its own infrastructure to meet the needs of the growth now directed by the Province to the northern part of the Region. Under Regional Council's direction, the Region's Capital Ten-Year Roads Program has been developed to address a number of current capacity and road infrastructure deficiencies. A number of the current priorities are planned to be financed over the coming ten years through a mixture of tax-levy contribution, development charge financing, and debt-financing. Provincially-directed growth will require future programming of costly expansions of Regional roads servicing these areas, such as Leslie Street, Woodbine Avenue, Mount Albert Road, Doane Road, Queensville Sideroad and others.

Over the last number of years, Regional Transportation and Works staff have developed stronger working relationships with a number of the key stakeholders affected by this project. Some of these relationships, particularly with some of the regulatory bodies, have been enhanced significantly through the Region's constructive engagement approach used on a number of recent Regional projects. Regional staff could readily assist MTO staff and consultants in facilitating future discussions with these key stakeholders.

Furthermore, the extension will require the provincial acquisition of land from a large number of private holdings. Some of these lands are held by individuals, others by corporate entities. As Regional staff has dealt with a number of these property owners in the implementation of earlier infrastructure projects or through earlier planning-related matters, Regional staff could also assist in facilitating discussions between MTO officials and specific property owners in an effort to accelerate the acquisitions.

4.2 Interim Terminal of the Highway 404

To ensure the efficient operation of the Regional road network in the vicinity of the proposed terminus of the Highway 404 interim extension, it is essential that it be designed in a way to allow the proper distribution of traffic getting onto and off of the highway. Although the MTO's plans for this terminus point have not yet been reviewed by Regional staff, the proximity of the planned Highway 404 interchange at Woodbine Avenue to the Woodbine Avenue/Ravenshoe Road intersection suggests that this intersection will experience significant traffic pressure.

In comparing other interim terminus points at the end of GTA provincial freeways, Regional staff have noted that the freeway terminus typically includes connections which allow for the effective distribution of vehicles onto both north-south and east-west arterial roadways, thereby lessening the operational impacts on both. Examples of such conditions exist at the terminal points of both Highway 410, where direct connections to both Bovaird Drive and Heart Lake Road were constructed, and Highway 407 east where traffic connections to both Brock Road and Highway 7 exist.

In light of this concern, it is suggested that Regional staff work with MTO staff to ensure that the interim terminus point of the Highway 404 extension include the construction of direct connections to both Woodbine Avenue and to Ravenshoe Road.

Further discussions should also be pursued with the MTO to consider Council's earlier request for extension of Highway 404 to an interim terminus at Glenwoods Avenue.

4.3 Mount Albert Road Crossing

York Region currently has no plans to widen Mount Albert Road in the vicinity of the Highway 404 crossing. The current two-lane cross-section can adequately serve current traffic volumes and those which had been anticipated for the foreseeable future. As identified in Section 4.1 however, the province's recently released *Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* has approved significant additional growth in the portion of East Gwillimbury along the interim extension of Highway 404, by 2031. This will significantly increase the need for widening of many of these roads in the 10–20 year timeframe.

As the rigid-frame bridges planned by MTO for the crossing of Mount Albert Road have a typical life of 50 years or more, and as they are not easily extended, the time to construct them to the future anticipated needs on Mount Albert Road is at the time of their initial construction. In the location of the crossing, traffic and community needs will include both a four-lane cross-section and sidewalks. As these needs are directly resulting from the growth directed and approved by the province in its November 2005 *Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, it is suggested that the MTO be responsible for the costs of these imminent future requirements, and that the fiscally-prudent method for meeting these needs is to construct openings wide enough to accommodate them.

4.4 Doane Road Crossing

A number of options exist with respect to the Doane Road crossing.

4.4.1 Construction on the Existing Alignment

The Region could indicate that it will continue with the original plan to reconstruct the Doane Road crossing over Highway 404 on the revised alignment at the time of the future interchange construction. This would reduce additional expenditures now and minimize the potential for complications related with the acquisition of property for the new alignment and the temporary tie-ins.

This option could however result in significant throw-away costs, and community criticism, if the construction of the interchange is required within the serviceable life of the Doane Road bridge. In light of the above-mentioned provincial *Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* and the approved *Queensville Secondary Plan*, the need for the interchange could very well materialize in 15 years.

4.4.2 Construction on the Ultimate Alignment at MTO Cost

In light of the approved status of the *Queensville Secondary Plan* and the provincially-approved growth directed to this area through the release of the November 2005 *Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* the Region could take the position that the MTO should construct the structure on its ultimate alignment today and bear all costs associated with it. This would result in the province assuming all responsibility for the incremental cost of \$1.7M (est. 2005) over the estimated \$2.5M cost of the crossing on the current alignment.

4.4.3 Construction on the Ultimate Alignment with a Regional Funding Contribution

The need for the future Doane Road interchange has been identified to service related development already approved by the Town of East Gwillimbury and York Region (through the approval of the *Queensville Secondary Plan*). As such, the Region could consider funding all or some of the estimated incremental cost to construct the crossing on its ultimate alignment. The exact estimated incremental amount would have to be confirmed through detailed review and the Region could establish some principles for its contribution.

The potential principles for the Region's contribution could be consistent with those which the Ministry used in partnering with the Region on construction of another development-related freeway interchanges. The construction of the Teston Road interchange with Highway 400 is being constructed by the Region, with a Ministry contribution to the project equivalent to the Net Present Value (NPV) of works that the Ministry planned to construct in later years.

A consistent application of the previously-applied cost sharing principles would have the Region contribute the Net Present Value of the \$1.7M incremental cost, assuming that the Region would have spent it at the time of the future interchange construction. Although this work is not programmed by the Region at this time, it is suggested that the horizon or discounting period be considered as being 15 years from the original crossing construction. This 15 year period is also consistent with the approach used in the Teston Road agreement.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial impact to the Region associated with facilitating future discussions with stakeholders and property owners towards the early construction of Highway 404 would be those associated with the periodic dedication of an internal staff resource. It is estimated that this effort could take up to a third of a project manager's time allotment, and as such is estimated to be approximately \$50,000 per year in salaries and benefits, for a period of two years.

There is no financial impact associated with the recommendation to direct MTO to be responsible for all costs of providing a widened structure opening under Highway 404 at Mount Albert Road. The Ministry's request for the incremental costs associated with this, if agreed to by the Region would result in an estimated capital contribution of at least \$350,000 (est. 2005.)

The financial impact of contributing to the construction of the Doane Road crossing on the ultimate alignment, if fully borne by the Region, would consist of a 2005 estimated cost of \$1.7 M to be paid following construction (construction year as yet unconfirmed by MTO). A potential Regional contribution of the NPV of that amount, based on a 15 year discounting period, is currently estimated to be approximately \$800,000.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The construction of the interim Highway 404 extension will provide substantial community and economic benefits to the Towns of East Gwillimbury and Georgina. The extension has long been a critical transportation infrastructure component of planning done in both of these municipalities. Provided that provisions can be included in the initial construction to accommodate both existing and imminent community needs at the arterial roads crossings and connections to the extended highway, the extension will greatly improve the transportation servicing to the adjoining communities.

Temporary construction impacts can be expected in the vicinity of the highway and the adjoining arterial and local municipal roadways, and these will have to be managed. A number of potential road closings during construction are anticipated, and these will be the subject of future reporting to Transportation and Works Committee and Council. Regional staff will continue to work with MTO staff to make sure that local municipal staff are consulted and involved during the preparation for the upcoming construction.

7. CONCLUSION

The long-awaited extension of Highway 404 from Green Lane East to the interim termination point at Woodbine Avenue/Ravenshoe Road has raised a number of issues. It is recommended that Regional staff continue to work with MTO staff to ensure early construction of the extension. It is further proposed that the Mount Albert Road and Doane Road crossings address the ultimate community needs at these locations, with the Region contributing a portion of the Doane Road crossing costs using the same cost-sharing principles established by the Province for cost-sharing interchange construction at Highway 400 and Teston Road. It is also recommended that the interim termination point at Woodbine Avenue include direct connections to Ravenshoe Road, and that the Ministry also consider an interim connection to Glenwoods Avenue as part of the initial construction.

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