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NORTH YONGE STREET CORRIDOR PUBLIC TRANSIT AND ASSOCIATED ROAD IMPROVEMENTS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REVISED WORK PLAN AND SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION

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

- 1. The presentation by Paul May, Infrastructure Planning, be received; and**
- 2. The recommendations contained in the following report, September 12, 2007, from the General Manager, Transportation and Works – Roads and the Vice-President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council endorse the revised work plan and schedule for completion of the North Yonge St. Corridor EA integrating the work of the Region's Class EA for Davis Drive Operational Improvements.
2. Copies of this report be forwarded by the Regional Clerk to the Clerks of the Towns of Newmarket, Aurora, Richmond Hill and East Gwillimbury.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Committee and Council of a revised work plan and schedule for completion of the North Yonge Street Corridor Public Transit and Associated Road Improvements Environmental Assessment Study ("the Study").

3. BACKGROUND

In August 2005, the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) approved the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Study. The corridor study area, illustrated in *Attachment 1*, extends from Bathurst Street in the west and Highway 404 in the east, and from 19th Avenue in Richmond Hill in the south to East Gwillimbury's Green Lane corridor in the north.

The Study's analysis of Alternative Transportation Solutions, presented to the public in September 2006, recommended implementation of the Region's planned rapid transit

system as the preferred response to the need for a balanced transportation system to support the Region's Centres and Corridors policy. Also, the need for associated road capacity improvements on Yonge Street between Mullock Drive and Green Lane in Newmarket was confirmed by the analysis.

Subsequently, the Study continued the EA process by analyzing alternative designs comprising routes and technologies for the rapid transit system and widening, intersection improvements or operational enhancements for the Yonge Street capacity deficiency. Earlier in the year, the Town of Newmarket completed an Official Plan update and the land use policy and planning recommendations of these studies were considered in evaluating rapid transit routes.

The findings of the analysis of transit route and road capacity enhancement alternatives were presented to Rapid Transit Committee in May 2007 and at Public Information Centres (PIC's) in mid-June 2007.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The analysis of route options was done on a segmental basis using segments generally corresponding to the municipal boundaries (*Attachment 1*). The segments were as follows"

- Richmond Hill (RH) from 19th Avenue to Bloomington Road.
- Aurora (A) from Bloomington Road to the south municipal boundary of Newmarket, just north of St. John's Sideroad.
- Newmarket/East Gwillimbury (NE) from the south municipal boundary of Newmarket to Green Lane.

The study analyzed and evaluated a broad range of route alternatives, following either existing arterial or collector road rights-of-way (ROW) or the GO Bradford Line rail ROW. All routes commenced at the northern limit of the approved South Yonge Corridor transitway alignment, the intersection of Yonge Street and 19th Avenue in Richmond Hill. The northern limit of routes was generally considered to be the East Gwillimbury GO Station in the Green Lane corridor.

Public comment on route evaluation findings have been obtained

Attachment 2 shows the complete recommended routing for rapid transit service. The alignment for dedicated transitway, station locations and extent of mixed traffic operation are being optimized during the on-going analysis of design alternatives along the preferred route. Public comment on the evaluation findings was obtained at consultation opportunities in June 2007.

Davis Drive Class EA study to be merged into the remaining phase of the Rapid Transit EA

The selection of Davis Drive between Yonge and Leslie Streets as one of the preferred routes in Newmarket has resulted in an overlap of the Rapid Transit Individual EA and a Class EA for road operational improvements along Davis Drive. The latter study for the Transportation and Works Department started in 2006, consulted with the public during the year and was put on hold last December, pending the outcome of the Rapid Transit EA's route analysis and evaluation.

Given that both studies require development and assessment of infrastructure design solutions along the same portion of Davis Drive, Regional staff, in close consultation with the Town of Newmarket, has recommended that the Class EA study be merged into the remaining phase of the Rapid Transit EA to avoid confusion and streamline and integrate the findings. The implications of this approach have been discussed and a revised work plan and schedule has been developed for integration of the remaining road improvement study tasks into the final phase of the Rapid Transit EA. The budgetary impacts of this combined EA process have been described in the finance section in this report.

Revised integrated work plan and schedule has been developed

Following a July "design opportunities" workshop involving Region, Town of Newmarket and consulting team staff, a work plan for the integrated completion was developed. Key tasks in this plan include:

- Identification of Davis Drive infrastructure design alternatives to address both rapid transit and road capacity needs during August and September.
- Evaluation of the operational merits and effects of alternatives on adjacent property, heritage features and the natural environment during September.
- An evaluation review meeting with Newmarket Council representatives and staff in early October to obtain consensus on the preferred integrated design alternative.
- A presentation of recommendations to the public in early December.
- Completion of the EA Report incorporating public and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) input for review by Region staff by mid-January 2008.
- Submission of draft, integrated EA Report to Government review team early February 2008.
- Submission of final, integrated EA Report to MOE by end April 2008.

The proposed completion schedule of the Consolidated North Yonge Transit and Road Improvements EA is illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1
Consolidated North Yonge Transit and Road Improvements EA:
Proposed Completion Schedule

Activity	Date(s)
Davis Dr. Design Review Meeting with Newmarket Council and Staff	Fall 2007
Convene TAC Meeting #5	Fall 2007
Committee Approvals: • Richmond Hill Gridlock Taskforce • Aurora General Committee Meeting • Newmarket Committee Approval • East Gwillimbury Committee of the Whole Meeting	Fall 2007
Convene Public Consultation Centre #4 – Oak Ridges Convene Public Consultation Centre #4 – Newmarket	Late Fall 2007
York Region review of Draft EA Report	Winter 08
Official MOE Submission Date/Notice of Submission printed in newspapers	Spring 08

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The budget for the consulting services to complete the North Yonge Street Corridor Rapid Transit EA is included as part of the Y1 O&M agreement between York Consortium 2002 (YC2002) and York Region. Additional costs, if any, that may be incurred as a result of completion of this work as an integrated rapid transit and road EA will be determined following the review of the design recommendations by Newmarket and will be addressed in a future report to Committee.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Representatives from the Towns of Richmond Hill, Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury are participating on the TAC and will be requested to continue their involvement during the remainder of the study and assembly of the Draft EA Report. This report is to be circulated to Richmond Hill, Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury for review and comment and anticipates that the on-going Town of Newmarket peer review of the study findings will generally support the recommendations.

7. CONCLUSION

The North Yonge EA Study has completed a detailed evaluation of route alternatives for a rapid transit facility within the study area. The evaluation has identified a branch along Davis Drive to serve the South Lake Hospital district and potentially the Leslie/404 node as a recommended segment of rapid transit service in Newmarket. The overlap of this branch with the zone of proposed road operational improvements on Davis Drive has resulted in the need to integrate the Region's Class EA for the roadworks into the North Yonge Rapid Transit EA. A revised work plan and schedule for completion of both EA's as an integrated single EA has been developed for endorsement by Committee and Council.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachments referred to in this clause were included in the agenda for the September 20, 2007 Committee meeting.)