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HIGHWAY 50/HIGHWAY 427 EXTENSION AREA ARTERIAL NETWORK STUDY

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The communication from Chandra Urquhart, Legislative Coordinator, City Clerk's Office, City of Brampton, August 16, 2006, regarding Status Report: Ongoing Transportation Planning Initiatives: Highway 427 Extension Study, Highway 50/427 Arterial Network Study, Vaughan-Brampton Corridor Protection Process, GTA West Transportation Corridor, Halton-Peel Transportation Network Review Study, Highway 410 Extension, Smart Commute Brampton-Caledon, be received; and**
- 2. The recommendations contained in the following report, August 28, 2006, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services and the Commissioner of Transportation and Works, be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council adopt the principles set out in this report as required elements of current transportation planning and environmental assessment studies in the York/Peel boundary area.
2. The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) consider the terminus of proposed Highway 427 extension IEA to at least Major Mackenzie Drive, or beyond in the vicinity of Mayfield Road.
3. The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario and the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) be requested to expedite the environmental assessment process and construction for the northerly extension of Highway 427.
4. Copies of this report be forwarded by the Regional Clerk to the Ontario Minister of Transportation, and the Clerks of the municipalities of the City of Vaughan, Township of King, Peel Region, City of Brampton and Town of Caledon.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to obtain Regional Council endorsement of the recommended principles from the Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Area Arterial Road Network Study.

3. BACKGROUND

Within the York/Peel boundary area, several related transportation planning and environmental assessment studies are currently underway or proposed to be undertaken.

3.1 Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Area Arterial Network Study

The Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Area Arterial Network Study was initiated by the Region of Peel and the City of Brampton in February 2006 with an objective to establish consensus amongst municipal and provincial stakeholders on the principles and requirements of the future road network along the boundary between Brampton and Vaughan up to and including the Highway 427 Extension. The study was undertaken outside the Environmental Assessment (EA) process with no public participation. A technical advisory committee was established with representatives from the Region of Peel, York Region, City of Brampton, City of Vaughan, Town of Caledon and the Ministry of Transportation. York Region and the City of Vaughan made no financial contribution towards this study.

3.2 Western Vaughan IEA (previously called the Pine Valley Drive IEA)

In July 2004, the MOE issued the Part II Order which elevated the Pine Valley EA to an IEA. In response, the City of Vaughan and York Region prepared a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the IEA. On February 13, 2006 the MOE approved the ToR subject to six amendments. The most notably being “any alternative to be located through the Boyd Conservation Area is excluded from consideration of the IEA”.

In response to the MOE’s decision, York Region and City of Vaughan staff worked with MOE to revise the ToR based on the six amendments. Subsequently, the MOE has confirmed that York can proceed as sole proponent, expand the study area to include the areas bounded by Highway 407, Highway 50, Teston Rd and Highway 400 and the study name can be changed without an amendment to the ToR.

At its meeting on June 22, 2006, Regional Council adopted the recommendations contained in Clause 13, Report No.7 of the Transportation and Works Committee report titled “Pine Valley Drive Transportation Corridor IEA Status Update” (Council Attachment 1).

The MOE’s decision that alternatives through the Boyd Conservation Area be excluded from consideration by the proponent creates a situation whereby not only do we have north-south capacity deficiencies, additional east-west road capacity will also be required because traffic must use east-west roadways (e.g. Rutherford Rd and Major Mackenzie Drive) to find available north-south capacity. Given the incomplete north-south arterial road network west of Weston Road, the only roadway that can provide significant additional capacity is the Highway 427 extension. Therefore, the Highway 427 extension implementation to a least Major Mackenzie Drive needs to be expedited as much as possible.

It is anticipated that the Western Vaughan IEA will commence in the Fall of 2006. The study will focus on providing E-W and N-S road network improvements to support future land use developments within Western Vaughan.

3.3 Highway 427 Extension IEA Study

On June 23, 2005, the ToR for this study was submitted to the Ontario Minister of Environment for approval as required under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. The ToR was approved by the Ontario Minister of the Environment on November 1, 2005.

The MTO has recently retained the consulting firm of McCormick Rankin Limited to undertake the above noted IEA study.

At its meeting on June 22, 2006, Regional Council adopted recommendations contained in clause 13, Report No.7 of the Transportation and Works Committee including the following:

“The Minister of Transportation be requested to provide a detailed schedule of the completion of the Highway 427 Extension Individual Environmental Assessment and the implementation of preferred alternative”.

The recently approved “Places to Grow” Provincial growth plan shows Highway 427 extended to the Canadian Pacific (CP) Inter-modal facility in the City of Vaughan. The plan has a specific reference to corridors such as Highway 427 and the CP Inter-modal yard in Vaughan. The plan has also identified improved access to intermodal facilities as a first priority in moving goods, along with connecting international gateways. However, the Ministry made no provisions to consider new or realigned arterial connections as part of the Highway 427 Extension IEA Study, except in the context of considering terminus options, which is described as somewhere south of the Oak Ridge Moraine.

3.4 Highway 427 Arterial Road Extension From Highway 7 to Zenway Boulevard

The detailed design and contract preparation for the Highway 427 Arterial Road Extension to Fogal Road / Zenway Blvd. is proceeding and scheduled to be complete by the fall of 2006. The earliest possible tender for this roadwork is early 2007, subject to final stakeholder agreements regarding cost sharing.

The Province will benefit from the project and are being asked to cost share, but have not agreed to do so at this time. A formal legal agreement with MTO will be required for the planned arterial road connection to Highway 427 and is currently in development.

At its meeting on April 27, 2006, Regional Council adopted recommendations contained in Clause 8, Report No.4 of the Transportation and Works Committee including the following:

- “1. Council endorse the principles of the draft implementation strategy and cost sharing formula as described in this report.
2. The Ministry of Transportation be requested to contribute to the cost of this project in accordance with the cost sharing proposal identified in this report and that the Regional Chair facilitate an agreement through direct discussion with the Minister.
3. The Region of Peel and City of Vaughan be requested to confirm their intent to participate and cost share in this project.
- ...
8. Staff be requested to provide a status report in June, 2006 providing details of ongoing negotiations with the Ministry of Transportation and the Region of Peel regarding this report.”

Peel Region staff are planning to report to Peel’s General Committee in September, 2006 with regard to Peel’s contribution for this project. Once Peel’s formal position is known, staff will complete negotiations with all stakeholders and report back in early 2007 on a final cost sharing agreement.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The main outcome of the Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Area Arterial Network study is a set of principles proposed to be adopted by the Councils of York and Peel for studies currently being contemplated. The studies in the vicinity of the Brampton/Vaughan boundary are as follows:

- The Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Area Arterial Network Study to be converted into a Master Plan EA Study
- Western Vaughan Individual Environmental Assessment Study (IEA) (Previously named the Pine Valley Drive IEA)
- MTO’s Highway 427 Extension IEA Study.

The principles set out from the Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Area Arterial Network Study can be found in Section 4.2 of this report.

It is anticipated that Peel Region, City of Brampton and the Town of Caledon will commence the Highway 50/Highway 427 Area Master Plan EA study in early 2007. The focus of the study will be to plan for future E-W and N-S arterial road connections in the vicinity of the Highway 50 corridor to support future land use developments.

Given the number of jurisdictions with interests in developing the future arterial road network in the vicinity of the York/Peel boundary area, it would be beneficial to have a

common understanding of the goals and principles for developing the network of roadways to serve future needs on both sides of Highway 50. Further, the planning of future arterial road connections and the Highway 427 extension will assist municipalities to plan effectively for future land use development in the area.

4.1 Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Area Arterial Road Network Study

One clear issue that was evident from the Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Area Arterial Network Study was the need to protect for a future Highway 427/Major Mackenzie Drive interchange. All members of the technical advisory committee for this study supported this in principle. However, it was evident that a future Highway 427 interchange at Major Mackenzie Drive would require a major realignment of Major Mackenzie Drive northerly of approximately 300 meters. The realignment of Major Mackenzie Drive was due to the overpass requirement of Highway 427 extension at the Canadian Pacific Railway Spur line and the vertical grade differential that would result at the existing Major Mackenzie Drive alignment. Hence in order to provide for an interchange, the existing alignment of Major Mackenzie Drive would have to be shifted northerly.

Given that MTO has made no provisions to formally consider new or realigned arterial connections as part of the proposed Highway 427 Extension undertaking, except in the context of considering terminus options and without a logical terminus option/location, MTO would most probably consider Rutherford Road as the logical terminus point. Clear direction must be given to MTO to consider a terminus point north of Rutherford Road, whereby Major Mackenzie Drive and/or another arterial road in the vicinity of Mayfield Road could be that logical terminus and should be considered by MTO. Further, it would be the responsibility of the Western Vaughan IEA to address and tie in the realignment of Major Mackenzie to the future Major Mackenzie/ Highway 427 interchange or to a new facility in the vicinity of Mayfield Road.

MOE's decision with respect to the deletion of the Pine Valley link south of Rutherford Avenue will result not only result in north-south traffic capacity deficiencies, but create additional pressure on east-west roadways as alternate routes must be found due to the missing link. Given the significantly incomplete grid of arterial roads in Western Vaughan, every possible N-S and E-W arterial road improvements must be fully examined and pursued. Of the highest potential is an upgraded and widened Major Mackenzie Drive with an interchange at Highway 427 extension.

There are operational and economic benefits to an extension of Highway 427 to north of Rutherford Road (i.e. Major Mackenzie or in the vicinity of Mayfield Road). Multiple interchanges will help disperse traffic to the arterial road network.

Another potential way for the province to accelerate the completion of the Highway 427 extension to at least Langstaff Road, would be for the province to issue a Declaration Order under Section 3.2 of the Environmental Assessment Act by declaring the public

interest is better served by exempting the undertaking from the application of the Act. The rationale for such action could include:

- That approved development plans limit the alignment options for the extension of Highway 427 in this area.
- That immediate construction of this full freeway extension and the full improved Highway 7 interchange will avoid throw away costs, duplicative work and would provide immediate relief to the travelling public now queuing up to 2 kilometres south of Highway 7 on Highway 427 everyday.

4.2 Principles for Transportation Planning In the Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Area

In recognition of the future environmental assessment requirements within Northeast Brampton and Western Vaughan and the inter-relationship of needs/opportunities in this area, it is the recommendation of the Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Arterial Road Network Study technical advisory committee that the following principles be adopted:

1. MTO shall consider the terminus of the proposed Highway 427 extension to at least Major Mackenzie Drive, or beyond in the vicinity of Mayfield Road;
2. A Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Area Arterial Network Master Plan Study be conducted for the area within Peel Region extending from Airport Road up to and including Highway 427 and from Castlemore Road to Healey Road;
3. An Individual Environmental Assessment within York Region in Western Vaughan from east of Highway 50 to Highway 400 and from Highway 407 to Teston Road be conducted; and,
4. Assuming that coordination between the above noted studies and the provision of input into the Highway 427 Study, the network improvements identified through these studies should have regard for the following:
 - a. The arterial network should accommodate travel demand serving commuter traffic and goods movement to 2031;
 - b. The arterial network should limit impacts to the natural, socio-economic, and cultural environment;
 - c. The arterial network should support the intended role and function of the roads and provide logical links to the provincial highway network;
 - d. The arterial network should be efficient and allow for safe operations including the development of desirable intersection spacing and configurations;
 - e. The arterial network should support the future development and expansion of the urban boundary in a logical manner;

- f. The arterial network should be planned on a sufficiently long term basis to avoid encumbering the urban planning that will need to proceed over the next 10 to 15 years;
- g. The arterial network should allow for logical and efficient staging of implementation; and
- h. The arterial network should be cost effective.

Peel Region will also be reporting to Peel's General Committee on September 7, 2006 in support of the above noted principles.

Staff have reviewed the above noted principles and have no objections.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no financial implication resulting from this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The City of Vaughan has been and will be an active participant in Highway 50/Highway 427 Extension Area Arterial Network Study, Highway 427 Extension IEA and proposed Western Vaughan IEA. Coordination between these studies and the provision of input into the Highway 427 IEA Study will assist the City of Vaughan in supporting future development and expansion of the urban boundary in a logical manner.

7. CONCLUSION

Given the number of jurisdictions with interests in developing the future arterial road network, it would be beneficial to have a common understanding of the goals and principles for developing the network of roadways to serve future needs on both sides of Highway 50. The principles outlined in Section 4.2 are supported by staff from the various jurisdictions.

The most important principle is the need to have the future Highway 427 extension terminus at Major Mackenzie Drive or further north. There are operational and economic benefits to an extension of Highway 427 to north of Rutherford Road (i.e. at least to Major Mackenzie or in the vicinity of Mayfield Road) as multiple interchanges will help disperse traffic to and from the arterial road network.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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