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### **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NORTH YONGE STREET TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS**

**The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, June 7, 2006, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works and the Vice-President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation:**

#### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

1. The scope of work to undertake an Environmental Assessment (EA) for potential road improvements along Yonge Street (Y.R. 1) from Mullock Drive (Y.R. 74) to Green Lane (Y.R. 19) as identified in the Region's 10-Year Capital Roads Program be incorporated with the North Yonge Street Corridor Public Transit Improvements Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA) currently being undertaken by York Consortium 2002 (YC2002).
2. The Region enter into an agreement with YC2002 for the Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for Road Improvements to Yonge Street from Mullock Drive (Y.R. 74) to Green Lane (Y.R. 19) in the amount of \$397,512.34 pursuant to the sole source provisions of the Purchasing By-law and subject to final approval of the work plan for the remainder of the North Yonge Street Corridor Public Transit Improvements Individual Environmental Assessment.
3. The Regional Chair and Regional Clerk be authorized to sign the necessary agreement, subject to review by Legal Services.
4. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Clerks at the Towns of Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Aurora and East Gwillimbury.

#### **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to address the opportunity to incorporate road improvement needs along Yonge Street in Newmarket, as approved in York Region's 10-Year Capital Roads Program, with the study currently being undertaken by YC2002 for the North Yonge Street Corridor Public Transit Improvements Individual Environmental Assessment. The purpose is also to seek authorization to directly award the consultant assignment of the Yonge Street Road Improvements EA to the YC2002.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Planned Road Improvements**

The Region's Transportation Master Plan (TMP) identified the need for road improvements on Yonge Street from Mulock Drive to Green Lane. As a result, road improvements along Yonge Street from Mulock Drive to Green Lane have been included in York Region's approved 10-Year Capital Roads Program as a 2009 project.

With commercial development along this section of Yonge Street over the last several years, traffic congestion has increased and there is a need for these road improvements to be completed in a timely fashion.

#### **3.2 North Yonge Street Corridor Public Transit Improvements EA**

YC2002 has commenced the Individual Environmental Assessment to define public transit improvements in the North Yonge Street Corridor. The study area for this IEA is bounded by 19th Avenue to the south, Green Lane to the north, Bathurst Street to the west and Highway 404 to the east.

The IEA for the North Yonge Street Corridor builds upon the conclusions of the South Yonge Street Transitway EA (from Steeles Avenue to 19th Avenue) which was approved by the Minister of the Environment on April 5, 2006.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the North Yonge Street Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA) was approved by the MOE on August 8, 2005. Funding for the initial phases of the North Yonge Transitway IEA has been included in the current work plan for YC2002. The balance of the work required for the North Yonge Transitway IEA is currently being reviewed as part of the Owner's engineering process for the development of the scope of work for the next segment.

### **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

The need to extend rapid transit north of 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Newmarket and the final alignment for a rapid transit corridor will be determined through the IEA. However, the study area for the rapid transit IEA overlaps the proposed road improvements along Yonge Street from Mulock Drive to Green Lane.

In keeping with the spirit of the EA Act, the MOE requires a consolidated environmental process within a study area to ensure that all impacts, including potential cumulative impacts, are appropriately assessed and addressed. As the transit IEA is already underway, the Roads EA can either be incorporated into the transit IEA or be deferred until the transit IEA is complete, so that the cumulative impacts of both projects could be assessed at that time. However, the road improvements are included in the current 10-Year Capital Roads Program with construction projected in 2009 and therefore an EA has to be commenced in the short term in order to meet the programmed date of construction.

A combined EA, incorporating the road improvement requirements within a consolidated transportation improvements IEA is therefore recommended for the following reasons:

- Averts multiple studies in the same corridor preventing potential confusion for the public and agencies.
- Allows for appropriate assessment of all impacts of both initiatives.
- The approach is similar to that approved by Council to incorporate Highway 7 road improvements between Montgomery Court (east of Woodbine Avenue) and Sciberras Road (west of Kennedy Road) into the IEA for Highway 7 Transit Improvements. The combined IEA was successfully completed in April 2005 and Provincial approval of the Highway 7 Transit IEA Study is expected by the summer of 2006.
- The consolidated IEA will provide certainty for the corridor in defining our ultimate needs (property, utility locations, etc.) that will accommodate both road and transit infrastructure.
- It is more cost effective to combine the two EA's into one consolidated project.

It is acknowledged that the transit improvements are subject to prevailing ridership demand and funding allocation from both the Provincial and Federal governments. Receiving approval for the consolidated IEA will permit both the roadway and transitway improvements on Yonge Street to proceed towards the implementation phase.

See Table 1 for a preliminary project schedule for the roadworks component.

**Table 1**  
Preliminary Project Schedule

| <b>Timing</b>              | <b>Phase</b>                                                                                   |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Summer 2006                | Need and justification, alternatives to the undertaking and Public Consultation Centre 1.      |
| Winter 2006 to Spring 2007 | Alternative methods, and detailing the preferred Undertaking and Public Consultation Centre 2. |
| Spring to Summer 2007      | Draft IEA report.                                                                              |
| Winter 2007                | IEA submission.                                                                                |
| Spring 2008                | IEA Approval.                                                                                  |

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|------|---------------------------------------|
| 2008 | Detailed Design, Property Acquisition |
| 2009 | Construction                          |

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## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The firm of YC2002 that is currently undertaking the Transit IEA was requested to provide a fee quote to incorporate the EA requirements for road improvements identified in the Region's 10-Year Capital Roads Program. YC2002 submitted an incremental cost of \$397,512 to expand the scope of the YC2002 Transit IEA assignment to include the planned road improvements on Yonge Street from Mulock Drive to Green Lane.

Sufficient funds have been included in the 2006 10-Year Capital Roads Budget to cover the expected expenditure for the roads component of the EA. Further, it is cost effective to combine the two EA's in terms of Public Consultation Centres, analysis and evaluation of the alternatives, analysis of environmental effects and mitigation, development and selection of the preferred design and the implementation process. Staff have reviewed and compared the price to similar assignments and found it to be fair and reasonable for an EA of this size and complexity.

The YC2002 work plan for the North Yonge Street Corridor Public Transit Improvement IEA includes analysis of the need and justification and defining alternatives to the undertaking. The completion of the other phases of this IEA and the funding for them will be the subject of a separate report to Transportation and Works Committee and Regional Council. Therefore the road component will also be subject to this process as well.

## **6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT**

The proposed road improvements are located in the Town of Newmarket and the strategy to consolidate the road and transit components in one EA is supported by the Town. The Town of Newmarket Council on June 14, 2004 recommended that York Region be requested to consolidate and expedite the EA process for the Rapid Transit Plan and the Yonge Street widening in Newmarket.

Staff from the Towns of Richmond Hill, Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury will be included on the Technical Advisory Committee for the joint road and transit IEA.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

YC2002 is currently undertaking the IEA for North Yonge Transitway. An EA to define road improvements along Yonge Street from Mulock Drive to Green Lane has been forecast in the 2006 10-Year Capital Roads Budget for construction in 2009. It is recommended that a single EA be undertaken to define planned road and transit improvements in the North Yonge Street Corridor and the additional work required to undertake a joint IEA for both road and transit improvements be awarded to YC2002.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.