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NEWMARKET URBAN GROWTH CENTRE TRANSPORTATION STUDY PROGRESS

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated September 16, 2012 from the Commissioner of Transportation and Community Planning.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate a copy of this report to the Town of Newmarket.

2. PURPOSE

This report informs Council on the progress of the Transportation Study in support of the Secondary Plan being undertaken for the Newmarket Urban Growth Centre.

3. BACKGROUND

The Newmarket Urban Growth Centre is an important Regional Centre

The Newmarket Urban Growth Centre, focused around Yonge Street and Davis Drive, is one of the four Urban Growth Centres in York Region and is identified in “Places to Grow” and in the Regional Official Plan (2010). Centres are planned to be vibrant and compact communities that provide a diversity of opportunities for living, working, and enjoying cultural events. They are to be the focal area for investment in region-wide public services such as transit, as well a focus for commercial, recreational, cultural and entertainment uses.

Newmarket’s Regional Centre will be planned to meet and exceed Provincial and Regional density requirements

‘Places to Grow’ identifies that the Yonge-Davis Urban Growth Centre must be planned to achieve, by 2031 or earlier, a minimum gross density of 200 residents and jobs per hectare. The Urban Growth Centre is expected to accommodate this planned growth through redevelopment, intensification and revitalization efforts.

Planning for a new downtown will need to address transportation network deficiencies

The Newmarket Urban Growth Centre is the hub of northern York Region with commercial and retail destinations and services. Currently however, the Newmarket Centre is still suburban in nature and is surrounded by residential communities in greater proximity when compared with other Urban Growth Centres such as those in Vaughan, Richmond Hill, or Markham. With future growth and intensification, Newmarket Centre will become an urban downtown environment.

Given the evolving nature of the Newmarket Centre, the reliance on Yonge Street and Davis Drive as key transportation corridors will increase because of discontinuities in the local road network, particularly in the north/south directions. The Town and Region will need to work together to address the network discontinuities and neighbourhood traffic infiltration issues, and develop a plan to address growth.

A Secondary Plan to address the Newmarket Urban Growth Centre is a requirement for the Town of Newmarket's Official Plan

On May 28, 2008, the Town of Newmarket's Official Plan (2006) came into force and contains policies, which reflect "Places to Grow" and the Regional Official Plan (2010), that require the preparation of a Secondary Plan for the Newmarket Centre.

The Secondary Plan will address requirements of the Town's Official Plan including:

- Identifying the role and function of the new Centre
- Achieving a mix of commercial, housing, employment and institutional uses
- Ensuring new development and the public realm is designed to be serviced by rapid transit
- Attaining a high standard of urban design

The Secondary Plan study area is shown in *Council Attachment 1*.

Town of Newmarket's Secondary Plan was initiated to achieve the vision for growth to year 2031 and beyond

The Secondary Plan will address:

- Density/height for residential and commercial buildings that consider high growth scenarios
- Land use designations that would support a variety and mix of uses
- Transportation and traffic management
- Streetscape/Public realm improvements
- Open space and trails connectivity

The secondary planning process commenced in 2010 with the Town of Newmarket “Visualization, Massing and Height Study” prepared by Sweeny, Sterling Findlayson & Co. Architects. In March 2010, the Town adopted this Study as a guiding document for the development of the Town’s Secondary Plan. Planning Alliance was retained by the Town to prepare the Secondary Plan. The Secondary Plan study was initiated in mid-2010 with public engagement through stakeholders’ consultations in Spring 2012 and the first Public Information sessions held in May 2012.

Further public engagement of the Draft Development Concept is planned for October 2012. The Draft Secondary Plan is expected to be released in late Fall 2012 for a Newmarket Council workshop and further public engagement. Finalization of the Secondary Plan and statutory public meeting is expected in Spring 2013.

A comprehensive transportation study is necessary in understanding the transportation and traffic management requirements of growth and it informs the ongoing Secondary Plan preparation.

A transportation study is required to find a package of solutions to help manage future traffic and assist growth in the Yonge and Davis corridors

Over the next 30 years, the Yonge Street and Davis Drive corridors will evolve from a suburban setting defined by scattered retail commercial strip plazas, big box stores, and parking lots to become an integrated urban centre that connects a series of urban places and creates compact, diverse, people-oriented places that foster social cohesion.

The comprehensive transportation study is required as part of the Secondary Plan to identify transportation improvements needed to support the land use and growth objectives of the Town.

Yonge Street and Davis Drive are the two main commercial/retail and rapid transit corridors in the Town of Newmarket, and it is critical for the Region to be fully engaged in finding solutions to manage growth and the associated transportation challenges.

The transportation study in support of the Secondary Plan is being conducted as a partnership between the Town and the Region

The Transportation Study was initiated in September 2011 with a 50/50 cost share between the Town of Newmarket and York Region. The Town staff are managing the project with Regional staff represented on the Steering Committee. The consultant firm of GHD/Sernas is assisting the Town and Region on this transportation assignment.

The transportation study is divided into two phases with:

- First phase (8 months) - consisting of road/transit network assessment and macroscopic modelling, and

- Second phase (8 months) - develop an implementation strategy, provide designs/costing and an operational assessment.

Phase 1 is nearly complete and the overall transportation study is scheduled for completion in Spring 2013.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The transportation study needs to identify creative solutions to address the transportation needs of growth in Newmarket beyond 2031

Typically, widening Regional roads is the standard approach to addressing traffic congestion and accommodating growth. However, in the case of Newmarket, Yonge Street and Davis Drive are the main north-south and east-west spines of the community. Simply adding traffic lanes to these roads will not improve the urban structure of the community but instead will reduce multi-modal accessibility to these two corridors. For instance, with the many commercial driveways along Yonge Street north of Davis Drive, widening the road does not solve the traffic operational problems but will make it less convenient for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road.

A fine grid road network to enhance accessibility to and from the Yonge and Davis corridors is required

A combination of continuous laneways, service roads, and local streets to facilitate vehicular and active transportation access is required around the Yonge Street and Davis Drive Corridors. North-south roads parallel to Yonge Street are needed to relieve traffic congestion and the Study is exploring opportunities to protect for such roadways in the long term.

To reduce reliance on the private automobile and help manage traffic congestion, integrating walking and cycling options is a priority. The vision for the Newmarket Secondary Plan is about creating a more livable community where walking and cycling is a priority. The transportation study will identify and plan for new connections and opportunities to improve the pedestrian and cycling network. It is also exploring trails and local connections which may form an alternate east-west bike route in lieu of bike lanes on Davis Drive.

A fine grid road network helps to address connectivity and local traffic circulation

By providing a comprehensive road network including more local roads parallel to and connecting with Yonge Street and Davis Drive, the potential for traffic infiltration through local neighbourhoods will be reduced. It would allow better circulation for all modes of transportation including walking and cycling. In addition, a fine grid road

network would support future development that is planned to be focussed along the Yonge Street and Davis Drive corridors.

Introduction of a new fine grid network requires coordination and collaboration between existing and future development proponents

Through the Secondary Plan process, the Region and Town are encouraging development proponents to design sites with a larger block context perspective and consideration for longer term urban design form rather than just a site specific context. For example, Regional and Town staff are working with developers such as Slessor on Yonge Street north of Davis Drive to plan and coordinate access and inter-property road connections for a potential fine grid network.

The transportation study is also reviewing opportunities for new streets and locations for traffic signals to be introduced along Yonge Street and Davis Drive to support intensification and accessibility.

Next steps in the transportation study include identifying street network solutions and transportation related land use policies

The transportation study Phase 1 analysis helps to refine the draft preferred development concept. Phase 2 of the work plan will proceed to identify solutions for the street network, parking management, transportation demand management and infrastructure improvements.

The next Public Information session of the Secondary Plan development process will be held in Fall 2012 where the draft development concept will be presented. A draft of the Secondary Plan is scheduled to be completed before the end of 2012 with finalization of the Plan expected in Spring 2013.

Improvements identified for the long term and beyond 2031 have to be protected through the planning and development approvals process

The Region and Town will continue to coordinate development approvals to ensure that property and infrastructure needed in the long term are protected. Regional and Town staff will continue to work with developers to achieve connectivity and address transportation issues on a site-by-site basis in the interim before the Secondary Plan is adopted.

Link to Key Council-approved Plans

This report supports the 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan in the priority area of:

- Continue to deliver and sustain critical infrastructure.

This report also supports the following relationship to Vision 2051:

- Developing interconnected systems for mobility through supporting a road network that has a hierarchy of road types to increase travel choices.

In addition, it supports the Centres and Corridors policies in the Regional Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report has no financial implications.

Key Regional transportation infrastructure improvements identified in the transportation study will be included and refined in future 10-Year Road Capital Plan and Regional Development Charges Bylaw updates.

Currently, the \$266 million Davis Drive bus rapid transit project from Yonge Street to the Southlake Regional Health Centre is under construction and is scheduled for completion in 2014. Construction of the \$109 million Yonge Street bus rapid transit project from Mulock Drive to Davis Drive is scheduled for completion in 2020.

Other projects in the 10-20 year horizon include Yonge Street from Davis Drive to Green Lane bus rapid transit estimated at \$72 million, and Davis Drive from Southlake Regional Healthcare Centre to Highway 404 for intersection and corridor optimization estimated at \$1.5 million. These future projects are currently included in the Region's DC Bylaw.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

This transportation study is a collaboration of the Town of Newmarket and York Region in defining the transportation needs of growth in the Town of Newmarket and leads to a more effective approval process for the Secondary Plan and future individual developments within the Secondary Plan area. The partnership between the Town and Region in the comprehensive transportation study helps to support the land use and growth objectives of the Town.

7. CONCLUSION

The Newmarket Urban Growth Centre is an important Regional Centre that will be a focus of new growth and investment in the northern part of the Region. The comprehensive transportation study is being undertaken as part of the Town of Newmarket's Secondary Plan process to find solutions and provide recommendations for transportation improvements to facilitate future growth and intensification in the Yonge

and Davis Corridors. Consultation with the public and stakeholders is on-going. Phase 1 of the Study determined a fine grid road network was needed to provide better opportunities for connectivity for all modes of travel. Phase 2 of the Study will include an implementation strategy with the Study scheduled for completion in Spring 2013.

Recommendations of the study will be incorporated, as appropriate, into the ongoing Secondary Plan. The long term improvements will be protected through the planning and development approvals process.

For more information on this report, please contact Richard Hui, Manager of Transportation System Planning at Ext. 1578, or Loy Cheah, Director of Transportation Planning at Ext. 5024.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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

Newmarket Urban Centres Secondary Plan Study Area

