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FUTURE PROGRAMMING FOR TESTON ROAD FROM KEELE STREET TO DUFFERIN STREET, CITY OF VAUGHAN

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, September 20, 2007, from the General Manager, Roads:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Further consideration of an Individual Environmental Assessment Study for a Teston Road connection between Keele Street and Dufferin Street be postponed pending completion of the Transportation Master Plan Update in the spring 2008.
2. The Regional Clerk forward a copy of this report to the Clerk at the City of Vaughan.

2. PURPOSE

This report responds to Item 84, Report No. 34, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 25, 2007, requesting the Teston Road link between Keele Street and Dufferin Street (*see Attachment 1*) be included as a priority project on the Region's 10-Year Roads Construction Program.

3. BACKGROUND

In the east-west direction, the existing road network of the central part of York Region includes a number of arterial roads that are discontinuous, including Teston Road, King Road, Stouffville Road, Bloomington Road, and Aurora Road. From a transportation perspective, it is generally desirable to complete a grid network of roads by making roads continuous.

It is on this basis the York Region Transportation Master Plan (TMP), completed in 2002, recommended that all discontinuous road links be improved to complete the grid network. These projects were then included in the 10-Year Road Construction Program with the intent of proceeding with the planning through the Environmental Assessment (EA) process.

Improvements to the Teston Road corridor between Pine Valley Drive and Bathurst Street, which includes the section between Keele Street and Dufferin Street, were studied

under a Schedule 'C' Municipal Class Environmental Study (Class EA), which concluded in April 2003.

3.1 2003 Class Environmental Study

In 2003, the Transportation and Works Department completed the Schedule 'C' Municipal Class EA Study for roadway improvements to Teston Road, between Pine Valley Drive and Bathurst Street, in the City of Vaughan (*see Attachment 2*).

Teston Road, from Pine Valley Drive to Bathurst Street, is an open road with the exception of the discontinuous travelled road link between Keele Street and Dufferin Street, although a continuous unopened road right-of-way does exist through this section.

During the Teston Road Class EA, consultation with the public and approval agencies identified several critical issues relative to this project. Amongst the issues was the recommended solution on Teston Road between Keele Street and Dufferin Street.

To provide a transportation corridor between Keele Street and Dufferin Street, the East Don River Valley immediately west of Dufferin Street needs to be spanned by a significant high-level long span bridge structure. Additionally, the corridor needs to avoid impacting the decommissioned Keele Valley Landfill Site and the decommissioned City of Vaughan Waste Disposal Site.

Through meetings with the Ministry of Environment (MOE) during the undertaking of the Class EA, Ministry's staff strongly raised objection to the extension of Teston Road between Keele Street and Dufferin Street, due to environmental concerns and operational effects on the landfill sites. In referring to MOE Guidelines for 'Land Use On or Near Landfills and Dumps', Ministry staff indicated that the MOE may resist any proposal to extend Teston Road along the existing right-of-way, which separates the Keele Valley Landfill site from the Vaughan Waste Disposal site. Under the guideline, no land use may take place within 30 metres of a fill area to protect the integrity of the clay liner of the Keele Valley Landfill site, and the gas and leachate collection and to mitigate calcium effects on groundwater.

The Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) in conjunction with their Don Watershed Regeneration Council had also expressed strong concerns with the proposed crossing and its impact on the headwaters of the East Don River and the McGill Environmentally Significant Area and natural and scientific interest that occur in the area immediately west of Dufferin Street.

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) designates the area of the proposed crossing as a "natural core area" and considers the East Don River a hydrological sensitive feature.

The preferred alternative for this undertaking was identified separately for each road link. The preferred alternative was as follows:

- Pine Valley Drive to Weston Road - reconstruct as a two-lane rural road to current Regional standards.
- Weston Road to Jane Street -reconstruct as a four to five-lane urban road, including a new interchange at Highway 400 (currently under construction).
- Jane Street to Keele Street -reconstruct as a five-lane urban road (construction completed).
- Keele Street to Dufferin Street -“do nothing”.
- Dufferin Street to Bathurst -reconstruct as a three-lane rural road (currently under construction).

The recommendation of the “do nothing” alternative for the Keele Street to Dufferin Street section was based on the significant environmental impacts and high cost implications associated with the establishment of a new roadway within this link. The Class EA documents, in significant detail, the impacts (environmental and cost) of completing the link are greater than the benefits (improved transportation efficiency) of completing the link.

3.2 The 2003 Study Recommended Against Completing This Link

Given the collective concerns of the MOE and the TRCA, and the significant capital cost for the road link estimated at \$45M, the Environmental Study Report (ESR) recommended a “do nothing” alternative for the Teston Road section between Keele Street and Dufferin Street.

Regional Council on February 20, 2003 endorsed the Class EA Study recommendation of “do nothing” for the section between Keele Street and Dufferin Street and further directed staff to remove the section of Teston Road from the 10-Year Roads Capital Program as a continuous link between Keele Street and Dufferin Street.

In addition York Region committed that if a study for the link is reopened in the future, the Region will scope the study as an Individual EA, with study limits that extend beyond the immediate corridor so as not to limit the range of alternatives to be investigated. This commitment was provided so as not to limit the range of alternatives to be investigated, should such a study ever materialize.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Keele Street to Dufferin Street

The 2003 EA for the Teston Road project proceeded in accordance with the approved process outlined in the Class EA for Municipal Road Projects document.

Based on transportation modelling principles, the Teston Road Class EA identified a potential need for future improvement to the Teston Road corridor through a road link between Keele Street and Dufferin Street.

The problem statement for the project indicated that Teston Road is a key east-west arterial road with capacity deficiencies for future traffic and was discontinuous as a direct connection between Keele Street and Dufferin Street. A link between Dufferin and Keele would be 'desirable' from a transportation planning perspective and hence was carried in the study.

The study thoroughly examined alternative solutions along the entire corridor and identified a connection of Teston Road between Keele Street and Dufferin Street from a traffic perspective.

Various alternative solutions were examined for the link, which principally included a direct route and a northerly route between Keele and Dufferin, amongst other alternatives, which were screened out without further assessment.

The study determined that providing a link along Teston Road between Keele Street and Dufferin Street was not justified because the potential benefits were outweighed by the potential environmental and cost implications. As such, the "Do Nothing" alternative was recommended for Teston Road, between Keele Street and Dufferin Street.

Although possibly desirable from a transportation planning perspective, further studies would need to be justified through a Transportation Master Plan Update to establish a road connection between Keele Street and Dufferin Street as a priority.

4.2 Transportation Master Plan

Recent Provincial policies and legislation including the *Greenbelt Act*, *The Oak Ridges Moraine Act*, and *the Places to Grow Act* have provided a new framework for land use and sustainability which need to be updated in the travel demand model for all road corridors. Road network links assumed previously to be continuous (e.g., Teston Road) need to be revised to reflect policy and the transit network needs to be updated. All of these changes to the travel demand model will be considered in the Transportation Master Plan Update.

The Transportation Master Plan Update is being carried out in coordination with the Growth Management Plan and Water & Wastewater Master Plan. The Transportation Master Plan Update will develop long-term road network and transit plans along with supporting policies and programs to continue moving the Region towards sustainable transportation

The 2008 Regional Transportation Master Plan update will be modelled with the "do nothing" solution for this link, in conjunction with land development applications, to determine any need and priority for a connection between Keele Street and Dufferin Street.

The Regional Transportation Master Plan Update is scheduled to be completed by spring 2008. It is important to have the input and recommendations of the Master Plan Update to foresee what infrastructure is required to support growth before proceeding with any IEA study for a Teston Road link

4.3 Other Arterial Road Improvements

The 10-Year Road Construction Program incorporates EAs to address transportation issues and road improvements. The Program continuously includes additional projects through the yearly budget cycle for new projects identified as being required by the Transportation Master Plan.

As part of the 2007, 10-Year Roads Construction Program, improvements to both Rutherford Road and Major Mackenzie Drive in eastern Vaughan have been identified. It is expected these improvements, in combination with the continuing expansion of York Region Transit and VIVA will help relieve the anticipated travel demand pending further decisions regarding Teston Road.

4.4 Recommended Action

It is recommended that the approach to move forward with any IEA for a Teston Road connection between Keele Street and Dufferin Street be deferred until the Transportation Master Plan Update is completed in 2008.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations contained in this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

As the community of Maple continues to expand there is and will continue to be increasing transportation demands on Major Mackenzie Drive in the community of Maple. The City of Vaughan is looking for alternative routes and modes of travel to accommodate this demand and manage congestion.

The TMP report provides the framework for which long-term growth and development across mid-York and affected local municipalities can be supported. It also provides the next step in addressing the City of Vaughan's request to include the Teston Road link between Keele Street and Dufferin Street as a priority project on the Region's 10-Year Roads Construction Program.

7. CONCLUSION

This report has been prepared in response to the City of Vaughan resolution to include completion of the Teston Road link between Keele Street and Dufferin Street as a priority project in the 10-Year Roads Construction Program. This request is as a result of increasing traffic pressures in the community of Maple.

A Class EA study was completed in 2003 determined that providing a link along Teston Road between Keele Street and Dufferin Street was not justified.

Vaughan Council has requested Regional Staff to initiate an IEA for a Teston Road link between Keele Street and Dufferin Street.

Given the pending Transportation Master Plan Update, it is prudent to determine the travel demand modeling results of this study before initiating an IEA for an east-west connection of Teston Road between Keele Street and Dufferin Street.

For more information on this report contact Dino Basso, Director, Capital Delivery, Roads Branch at extension 5902 in the Transportation and Works Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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