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METROLINX DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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

- 1. The presentation by Paul May, Director, Infrastructure Planning, be received; and**
- 2. The recommendations contained in the following report, October 8, 2008, from the Vice-President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services and the Commissioner of Transportation Services, be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council endorse the draft Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan subject to the comments set out in this report and *Council Attachment 1* to the report.
2. Copies of this report be distributed by the Regional Clerk to Metrolinx and the Clerks of the local municipalities in York Region.

2. PURPOSE

This report seeks Regional Council endorsement of the Metrolinx Draft Regional Transportation Plan subject to the comments identified in this report and *Council Attachment 1* to the report.

3. BACKGROUND

Draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) released for stakeholder and public consultation

One of the key mandates of Metrolinx is the development of an integrated Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Building upon the extensive effort in developing a series of seven issue papers titled “Green Papers”, two discussion “White Papers” and the comments received through a comprehensive stakeholder and public consultation program, Metrolinx released its Draft Regional Transportation Plan as well as the Draft Investment Strategy on September 23,

2008. Both of these documents were approved for release for public comment by the Metrolinx Board on September 26, 2008.

Metrolinx's process and schedule for finalisation of RTP is tight

The Metrolinx Board has directed staff to present the final RTP for approval at the November 28, 2008 meeting. To meet this schedule, formal comments on the Draft RTP must be issued by stakeholders in October 2008 so that Metrolinx will have time to incorporate changes into the final RTP report.

This report presents staff comments on the Draft RTP and seeks Regional Council endorsement on them for formal communication to Metrolinx.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Metrolinx has prepared a tremendous plan to address the immediate and future needs of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area

Metrolinx should be congratulated for the tremendous effort that was expended in preparing the various issue and discussion papers culminating in the drafting and release of the Draft RTP.

The Draft RTP presents a visionary plan containing 15 Strategic Directions and close to 100 actions that will meet the immediate and future needs of the GTHA through a “seamless, coordinated, efficient, equitable and user-centred” transportation system.

Starting with a vision based on achieving:

- A high quality of life.
- A thriving, sustainable and protected environment.
- A strong, prosperous and competitive economy.

Fifteen Strategic Directions were developed that speak to the following five themes:

- Reducing demands on the transportation system.
- Increasing the choices for travel.
- Meeting the needs of the traveller first.
- Building communities that make travelling easier.
- Committing to continuous improvement.

The fifteen Strategic Directions are:

1. Build a comprehensive regional rapid transit network.
2. Promote active transportation.
3. Improve the efficiency of the road and highway network.
4. Consider all modes of transportation.

5. Create an ambitious transportation demand management program.
6. Create a customer-first transportation system.
7. Implement an integrated transit fare system.
8. Build communities that are pedestrian, cycling and transit-supportive.
9. Develop a system of mobility hubs.
10. Focus growth and development along transportation corridors.
11. Improve transportation understanding through research and innovation.
12. Plan for universal access.
13. Improve goods movement within the GTHA and with adjacent regions.
14. Develop a national strategy for transportation in urban regions.
15. Develop an investment strategy to ensure sustainable funding for transportation infrastructure and supporting programs.

Eight Big Moves that will transform transportation in the GTHA

Those fifteen Strategic Directions are accompanied by nearly 100 recommended actions. Of those actions, eight were considered transformational or “Big Moves”. Hence, the title of the Draft RTP, “The Big Move: Transforming Transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area”. The eight Big Moves are:

1. A fast, frequent and expanded regional rapid transit network.
2. A complete walking and cycling network with bike-sharing programs.
3. An information system for travellers, where and when they need it.
4. A region-wide integrated transit fare system.
5. A system of connected mobility hubs.
6. High-order transit connectivity to the Pearson Airport district from all directions.
7. A comprehensive strategy for goods movement.
8. An investment strategy to provide stable and predictable funding.

Draft RTP addresses most of York Region's rapid transit needs

In terms of the first Big Move, the Draft RTP recommends a 15-year (*Attachment 2*) and a 25-year (*Attachment 3*) network plan of regional rapid transit and highway improvements.

The 15-year plan includes 14 commuter rail, 2 subway, 22 other rapid transit (BRT/LRT) and 4 highway improvement projects. Of the total 42 recommended projects, 14 are in York Region. The projects in York Region are:

1. Spadina subway – Downsview station to Vaughan Corporate Centre.
2. Yonge subway – Finch station to Langstaff.
3. Viva Highway 7 – Peel boundary to Locust Hill in Markham.
4. Viva Yonge Street – Langstaff to Newmarket Centre.
5. Jane Street rapid transit – Vaughan Corporate Centre to Bloor Street (Toronto).
6. Don Mills rapid transit – Highway 7 to Bloor-Danforth subway.
7. Richmond Hill GO Rail – full-day, 2-way service.
8. Richmond Hill GO Rail – peak period service extension to Bloomington Road.

9. Barrie GO Rail – full-day, 2-way service from Bradford to Union.
10. Stouffville GO Rail – full-day, 2-way service from Mt. Joy to Union.
11. Bolton GO Rail – new peak period service from Bolton to Union.
12. Havelock GO Rail – new peak period service from Locust Hill to Union.
13. Highway 404 extension.
14. Highway 427 extension.

The 15 to 25-year plan recommends a further 13 projects of which 8 are in York Region. The projects in York Region are:

1. Richmond Hill GO Rail – conversion to Express Rail from Richmond Hill Station to Union.
2. Richmond Hill GO Rail – extension from Bloomington to Aurora Rd.
3. 407/427 rapid transit – from Pearson Airport to Hwy 400.
4. Highway 407 Transitway - from Vaughan Corporate Centre to Markham Centre.
5. Markham – Pickering rapid transit – from Markham Centre to downtown Pickering via Scarborough City Centre and Highway 401.
6. Steeles rapid transit – York University to Milliken GO station.
7. Steeles/Taunton rapid transit – Milliken GO station to Downtown Oshawa.
8. GTA West travel corridor.

York Region is well-positioned to complete its priority projects

The RTP further prioritizes the 42 projects identified in the 15-year plan by identifying the top 15 priorities. The top 15 priorities include both the Yonge and Spadina Subway extensions as well as the proposed Viva BRT projects on Yonge and Highway 7. The planning and approval for the York Region projects in the top 15 priorities are well underway with most projects either already EA approved or close to filing for EA approval. The top 15 priorities are those projects that can be funded out of the original \$11.5 billion Provincial commitment in the MoveOntario 2020 announcement. However, each project will have to satisfy a benefits case and an alternative financing and procurement analysis before it is funded. A separate report on this agenda will address this process.

The top 15 priorities also include improvements to existing GO Rail services but does not specify which improvements are included.

Some areas of the Draft RTP will need to be strengthened such as goods movement corridors to support economic growth and prosperity

While the public transit side of the network system is well covered in the Draft RTP, the same cannot be said for the highway side. For instance, not identified as a component of the highway improvement program is the Bradford Bypass, which is critical to economic development in northern York Region.

As well, the 400-series highway HOV network plan previously announced by the Province is not identified in the Draft RTP network plans.

Detailed comments are provided in *Council Attachment 1*

Generally, staff is in agreement and supportive of the Draft RTP and looks forward to working with Metrolinx to detail out the specifics of implementing the recommended actions.

Regional staff have worked together with area municipal staff and identified a number of detailed comments on the draft RTP (*Council Attachment 1*). Staff recommend that these comments be endorsed and Regional Council requests that Metrolinx address them as part of their process to finalize the RTP.

Next steps for York Region and the Draft RTP

Based on the June 2008 Metrolinx schedule, staff anticipates a series of stakeholder and public consultation meetings across the GTHA with one stakeholder meeting and one public consultation centre scheduled in York Region. Staff will attend both meetings in York Region and provide input as appropriate.

This report along with *Council Attachment 1* will form the basis of the main York Region comments to Metrolinx on the Draft RTP. Metrolinx staff will then present the final RTP to their Board on November 28, 2008.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct budget is required as a result of this report but a well coordinated staff team will be organised to work closely with Metrolinx to ensure that York Region projects are prioritised for construction in an efficient manner.

The Draft RTP estimates capital investments of \$30 billion and \$20 billion for the 15-year and 25-year plans. The top 15 priorities identified in the RTP are to be funded from the \$11.5 billion Provincial commitment in the MoveOntario 2020 announcement. Additional revenue sources will be needed to fund the balance of the capital program and will be identified at a later date by Metrolinx.

Although the capital cost of the rapid transit projects will be paid by other sources, York Region will still be responsible for the subsequent operating costs of these projects. Regional staff will ensure that the operating costs are adequately considered as part of the benefits case and alternative financing and procurement analysis to be completed.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Regional staff have worked together with area municipal staff to identify the comments on the Metrolinx RTP.

The comments identified in this report have been jointly developed together with local municipal staff. Meetings were held with a working group of local municipal staff as well as with the Planning Directors and Commissioners and the Engineering/Public Works Directors and Commissioners.

The completion of the rapid transit network in York Region will create the urban structure to which major economic growth will be attracted. It will strengthen the attractiveness of investing in York Region and lead to the development of the four Regional Centres and Corridors.

7. CONCLUSION

Metrolinx has released its much anticipated Draft Regional Transportation Plan. It represents a transformational plan of the transportation system in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

A 15-year and 25-year network plan of regional rapid transit and highway improvements are recommended. York Region's needs are mostly met in the 15-year network plan. York Region's projects are also included in the top 15 priorities identified in the Draft RTP.

As the Metrolinx RTP is consistent with York Region's plans, it is recommended that that the RTP be endorsed. Regional and local municipal staff have completed a review of the RTP and have identified a number of detailed comments (*Council Attachment 1*). It is recommended that these comments be endorsed by Regional Council for submission to Metrolinx.

For more information on this report, please contact Loy Cheah, Manager, Transportation Planning, Infrastructure Planning Branch at 905-830-4444, Ext. 5024 or Paul May, Director, Infrastructure Planning at Ext. 5029.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The three attachments referred to in this clause are included with this report.)