

1

STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING AND INFORMATION REPORT FOR A PUBLIC MEETING ON A PROPOSED AMENDMENT (ROPA 56) TO THE YORK REGION OFFICIAL PLAN TO UPDATE TRANSIT POLICIES

Pursuant to Section 17(15) of the *Planning Act*, as amended, the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee held a public meeting to inform the public and receive comments regarding:

Proposed Amendment to the York Region Official Plan to Update Transit Policies

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The presentation by Sean Hertel, Senior Planner, Community Planning, be received; and**
- 2. The recommendation contained in the following report dated October 3, 2007, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that comments made at the October 31, 2007 public meeting regarding this matter, together with responses made to the public circulation of the proposed amendment, be reviewed by staff and that staff report their recommendations to a future meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide background information for the required public meeting to be held in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*.

2.1 Purpose and Scope of Proposed Amendment

This proposed Amendment, Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) No. 56, has been initiated by York Region to ensure that the transit-related policies of the Regional Official Plan (ROP) remain current and are effective in the implementation of planned transit services and infrastructure. To that end, ROPA 56 is largely technical in nature and contains policies that:

- Clarify existing policies and schedules.
- Reflect existing and approved transit services and infrastructure.

- Comply with new Provincial legislation.

The proposed ROPA will not change the strategic focus of the Regional Official Plan (ROP) with respect to transit and transit-oriented development. Rather, it will clarify existing policies, bring the ROP into conformity with recent changes to Provincial legislation, and provide a higher level of detail with respect to the approved plans for conventional and rapid transit improvements, including the Viva Rapid Transit System.

2.2 Public Notice Provided

The *Planning Act* requires that a minimum of 20-days notice is provided to the general public in advance of a statutory public meeting. Consistent with that requirement, a public meeting notice was published in the weekend editions of all York Region Newspaper Group Newspapers (e.g. Era-Banner) on October 6-7, and in the Georgina Advocate on October 11. In addition, a copy of the notice was published in the October 9 edition of the Toronto Star. Further, a copy of the notice was sent by post to the Province, commenting agencies (e.g. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority) and the municipalities within and adjacent to York Region.

3. BACKGROUND

A basis and framework for this proposed Amendment was outlined in Clause 9 of Report 6 of the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee, and subsequently adopted by Regional Council on June 21, 2007. That report recommended that staff be directed to draft the Amendment, in consultation with the local municipalities, and schedule a statutory public meeting following that process.

3.1 Supporting Transit Services and Infrastructure

A greater emphasis on transit and transit-oriented development was incorporated into the ROP through the Regional Council approval of ROPA 43 in December 2004. This amendment reinforced the Region's centres and corridors structure, and introduced policies to assist in the implementation of the Regional Rapid Transit Plan. The first phase of that plan – Viva Phase 1 – was launched in September 2005.

The transit-related Amendment being proposed at this time is intended to make the ROP more responsive to the changes that have occurred since ROPA 43 was approved over two years ago. These changes include the initiation of Viva Phase 2, the adoption of Regional transit-oriented development guidelines, the Provincial funding announcement for the subway extension to York Region, the enactment of the Provincial *Growth Plan* and changes to the *Planning Act*.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

This proposed Amendment is technical in nature and it is intended to maintain the intent of the existing Plan. It updates the transit-related policies of Chapter 6 – Regional Infrastructure to:

- Clarify existing policies and schedules.
- Reflect existing and approved transit services and infrastructure.
- Comply with new Provincial legislation.

These changes, which are detailed in the attached draft Amendment (see *Attachment 1*), are summarized below.

4.1 Technical changes to policies and schedules

A number of minor, technical changes are included in the Amendment to update and clarify transit terms and references. These proposed changes include:

- Adding new terms to the definitions section, including “Transit Operation and Maintenance Facility” and “Travel Demand Management”.
- Referencing the Regional Council-adopted Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines in Policy 6.2.6.
- Renaming Map 10 from “Conceptual Transit Network” to “Transit Network”.

4.2 Updates to reflect existing and approved transit infrastructure

The Amendment adds further detail to the operational requirements of conventional and rapid transit services and infrastructure. Such changes include:

- A new policy clarifying that, although rapid transit vehicles will operate in dedicated rights-of-way, they may be required to operate in mixed-traffic (i.e. share the road with automobiles and trucks) where there are physical constraints.
- Adding detail to Policy 6.2.9, which outlines the elements of the Regional rapid transit network, to reflect, among other things, the extension of the Spadina Subway north into Vaughan, and the announcement to extend the Yonge Subway north into Vaughan/Markham/Richmond Hill.
- Replacing Policy 6.2.10 to more clearly outline the transit system requirements related to transit stations and other facilities, including provisions for transit operation and maintenance facilities.
- Adding a new policy, Policy 6.2.16, to limit vehicular access between properties along the Regional Rapid Transit Corridors for the purpose of avoiding conflicts between automobile/truck traffic and rapid transit vehicles.

4.3 Recognizing new Provincial legislation

New Provincial legislation under the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* and changes to the *Planning Act* as they impact transit services and infrastructure are addressed in the Amendment in the following manner:

- Adding a new paragraph to the preamble of Section 6.2 – The Transit Network to acknowledge the approval of the *Growth Plan* and how Regional Official Plan policies are consistent with its transit-focus.
- Replacing Policy 6.2.14 to reflect the ability, under *Section 51(25)(b.1)* of the *Planning Act*, of municipalities to require land dedications for “transit stations and related infrastructure” as a condition of draft plan of subdivision approval.

4.4 Next Steps

Regional staff will take into consideration the comments received from the public meeting, in addition to any other comments received from circulated agencies and the local municipalities, and incorporate those comments, where appropriate and possible, into the draft Amendment. The Amendment will then be brought back to Committee and Regional Council for adoption at a later date.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The local municipalities play an important role in supporting the implementation of transit services and infrastructure through local planning instruments such as secondary plans, zoning by-laws and site plan approvals. As such, the local municipalities have been consulted in the drafting of the Amendment and will continue to be engaged throughout the remainder of the planning process.

7. CONCLUSION

The Region has initiated ROPA 56 to ensure that transit policies remain current, and reflect changes that have occurred since the last substantive update of those policies was made in 2004. The proposed Amendment is largely technical in nature and maintains the intent of the existing Plan. The updates being made through this Amendment clarify existing transit policies and schedules, reflect existing and approved transit services and infrastructure, and comply with new Provincial legislation.

Comments received from this public meeting, in addition to others received from circulated agencies and the local municipalities, will be incorporated by staff into a further draft of the Amendment where appropriate and possible. The Amendment will then be brought back to Committee and Regional Council for adoption at a later date.

For further information about this report, please contact Sean Hertel, Senior Planner, Community Planning Branch at (905) 830-4444, Ext. 1556 or sean.hertel@york.ca.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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