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YONGE STREET SUBWAY EXTENSION ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT REPORT STATUS AND SUBMISSION

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

- 1. The presentation by Tom Middlebrook, Consultant, McCormick Rankin, be received;**
- 2. The communication from Jeffrey A. Abrams, City Clerk, City of Vaughan, October 31, 2008, regarding the Yonge Subway and Richmond Hill Terminal Alignments, be received;**
- 3. The recommendations contained in the following report, November 6, 2008, from the Vice-President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, be adopted, subject to amending recommendation 1 to read as follows:**
 - 1. Council endorse alignment C for the terminus of the subway into the Richmond Hill Centre, incorporating *where possible and where appropriate* the principles endorsed by the Town of Richmond Hill, the Town of Markham and the City of Vaughan.**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council endorse alignment C for the terminus of the subway into the Richmond Hill Centre, incorporating the principles endorsed by the Town of Richmond Hill and the Town of Markham.
2. Staff report back in December on the settlement of principles with the principle land owner for the Richmond Hill Centre site for their support of alignment C.
3. Council endorse an underground bus terminal, primarily within existing public rights-of-way, at Steeles Avenue and Yonge Street.
4. Council authorize staff to present the preferred Project for the Yonge Street subway extension at the final public meetings and to incorporate any resulting minor changes into the final Project Environmental Assessment Report.
5. Council authorize staff to issue a Notice of Completion of the Environmental Project Report to the Minister of the Environment for consideration.

6. This report be circulated to the City of Toronto and the TTC as project co-proponents, and to the City of Vaughan, the Town of Richmond Hill, and the Town of Markham.

2. PURPOSE

This report updates the Yonge Subway Extension Recommended Transit report from September 2008 by providing the final project description for the Steeles Avenue bus terminal and subway alignment into the Richmond Hill Centre. The report seeks Council authorization for staff to issue the Notice of Completion of the Environmental Assessment Project Environmental Report, developed as a part of the Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP), to the Minister of the Environment for consideration, subject to incorporating any minor changes that might occur as a result of the final public meetings to be held in York Region, the City of Toronto and with other stakeholders.

3. BACKGROUND

Yonge Street Subway extension work programme is nearing completion and the formal Transit Project Assessment Process has commenced

In June 2007 there was a Provincial announcement for \$17.5 billion in funding for transit projects for the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton. This was followed by subsequent funding announcements from the Federal Government, York Region, and the City of Toronto. As a result, Metrolinx recommended 52 priority projects to the Provincial government, including the Yonge Subway Extension.

A work programme for the Yonge Street study was authorized by Council on June 21, 2007 to be undertaken by the Region's Owner's Engineer, McCormick Rankin, and their sub-consultant URS, along with York Consortium 2002. This work programme is nearing completion.

In September 2008, Council endorsed the recommended transit project description of a six (6) station subway with a bridge crossing over the East Don River. At that time, decisions remained to be made on the alignment into the Richmond Hill Centre and the Steeles Avenue bus terminal.

In September 2008, Metrolinx released their draft Regional Transportation Plan which included the Yonge Subway Extension. This project was amongst the top 15 priorities for early implementation within the first 15 years of the plan, thus confirming Metrolinx' commitment to the Project.

On October 3, 2008 the formal Transit Project Assessment Process (the new 6 month environmental assessment process) commenced as a result of the publication of the Notice of Study Commencement.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

A preferred final subway project description has emerged

The project description, as previously approved by Council on September 18, 2008, is a 6.5 km extension to the Yonge subway from the Finch Terminal to the Richmond Hill Centre. The proposed subway project is below grade under Yonge Street for the majority of its length and emerges above grade at a bridge crossing of the East Don River. The extension consists of six new stations at Cummer/Drewry (in Toronto); Steeles Avenue; Clark Avenue; Royal Orchard Boulevard; Longbridge Avenue/Langstaff Road (an integral part of the operating terminal configuration with Richmond Hill Centre); and Richmond Hill Centre, north of Highway 7. Intermodal bus terminals will be located at Steeles Avenue and the Richmond Hill Centre

The York Region Notice of Study Commencement was issued on October 3, 2008 and final public meetings are scheduled in both the City of Toronto and York Region

Following several workshops held with local and municipal stakeholders, and an interactive public meeting on September 25, a Notice of Study Commencement for the Transit Project Assessment Process was mailed to residents along the alignment and advertised on October 3 and October 4, 2008. Under the Transit Regulation, the proponent has 120 days to complete the Environmental Project Report and file the report for public and agency review.

Public meetings have been scheduled for November 26, 2008 in York Region and in early December 2008 in the City of Toronto. The preferred project and the recommended mitigation measures will be presented to these meetings. Based on any final feedback during these consultations, staff will finalize the Environmental Project Report and issue the Notice of Completion, as required by the Transit Project Assessment Process, in January 2009. In order to meet the maximum 65 day review and approval period by the Ministry of the Environment by mid-March 2009, in advance of the provincial budget, the Notice of Completion of the Environmental Project Report will need to be filed by mid-January 2009. Staff propose to file an initial Notice of Completion in mid-January 2009 and to file the Final Project Report by February 1, 2009 if amendments are required by the City of Toronto.

The City of Toronto and TTC are now co-proponents of this study

Toronto City Council at its meeting of October 29, 2008, authorized Toronto and the TTC to join the York Region led Transit Project Assessment Process as co-proponents. Toronto/TTC will issue a Notice of Study Commencement noting that they will be co-proponents with York Region.

The proposed timing for the Toronto/TTC resolution for the Notice of Completion of the Environmental Project Report is December 17, 2008 for TTC, and January 27/28, 2009 for the City of Toronto. Staff will work with Toronto/TTC and the Ministry of the Environment to confirm that the critical dates for submissions and final approvals can be met.

An underground bus terminal is recommended, primarily within the existing rights-of-way at the corner of Steeles Avenue and Yonge Street

Staff has completed its technical work, including municipal and technical stakeholder consultations to determine the preferred configuration for a bus terminal at the Steeles station.

Two technical and municipal stakeholder workshops were held in October to analyze the options under consideration and identify a preferred terminal configuration. The technical analysis confirmed that a viable above grade terminal, integrated with the Centre Point Mall, could be developed. On balance, having closely weighed the merits of the underground versus the multi-level bus terminal in the southwest quadrant, the project team recommends the underground terminal option because:

- It maximizes passenger convenience by minimizing passenger walking distance between the subway and the terminal, as well as bus to bus transfers.
- It minimizes bus operating distances and thereby operating costs.
- It reduces bus travel time by eliminating bus movement through the Steeles and Yonge intersection, freeing up capacity for other movements.
- It creates the best possible opportunity to facilitate transit-oriented development on the four corners of Steeles Avenue and Yonge Street.
- The majority of the land is already owned by public entities in the public right-of-way, reducing property acquisition costs. Residential properties will need to be purchased on the east side of Yonge Street (south side).
- Operating costs for long term maintenance of the weather protected underground terminal compare favourably with exposed elevated structural slabs in an above ground terminal.
- It may result in less business impact to existing businesses.
- This option can accommodate the identified Steeles Avenue BRT/LRT identified in the draft Region Transportation Plan more easily than off-street arrangements.



Figure 1

Steeles Station Bus Terminal – 2 Options for Environmental Project Report

Option ‘C’ is the technically and municipally preferred subway alignment

On October 14, 2008, the Town of Markham Council adopted a resolution endorsing Option ‘C’ as the preferred location for the Yonge Subway terminus. Further, on October 16, 2008, the Town of Richmond Hill Council adopted a resolution that Option “C” be considered as the preferred alignment option for the Yonge Subway extension into the Town of Richmond Hill’s Regional Centre. Richmond Hill staff confirmed that alignment C (see Figure 1) provides the closest possible proximity for intermodal connections and the highest degree for integration with transit-oriented development, while minimizing impact on social and natural environment and providing maximum flexibility for a future station location at 16th Avenue and Yonge. Markham supported alignment C and identified the need to maximize opportunities to deal with pedestrian connections with the Langstaff community.

The endorsement of both resolutions (*see Council Attachment 1*) was subject to a number of principles (*see Council Attachment 2*) that were to be addressed. Copies of the Council resolutions and the principles will be addressed and incorporated into the final environmental project report.

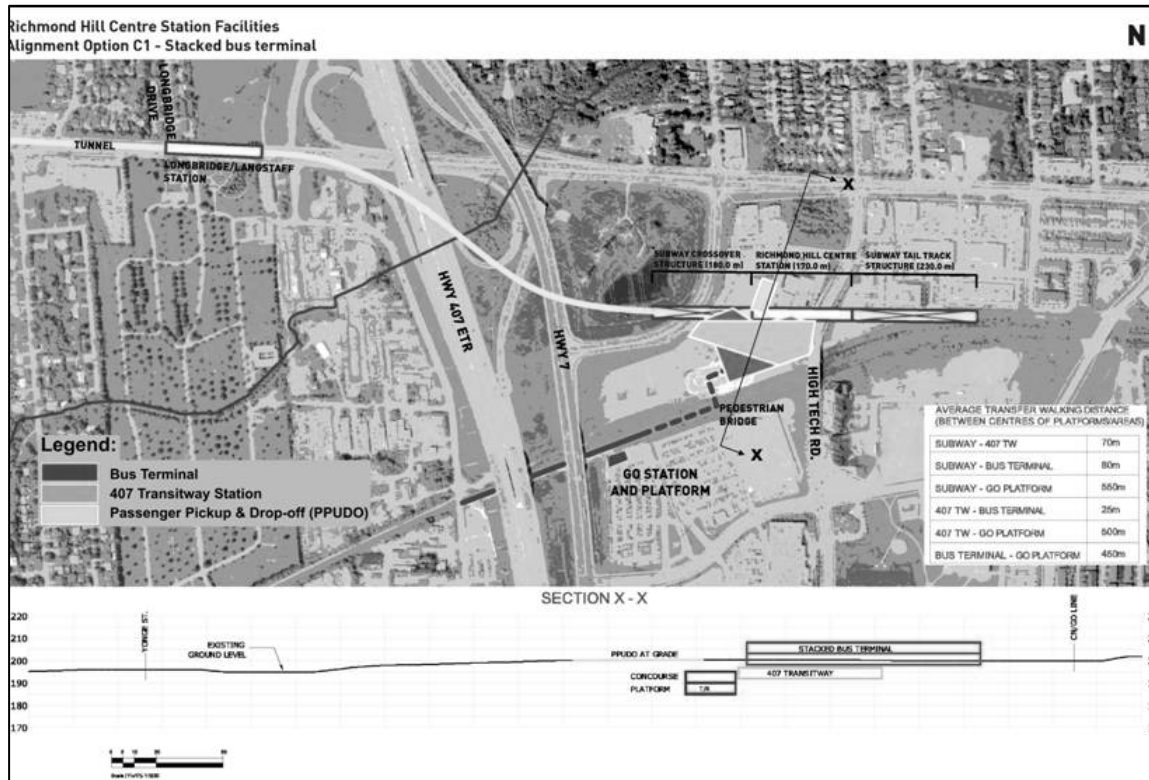


Figure 2
Alignment Option 'C' with a two-level bus terminal

The Town of Markham and Town of Richmond Hill provided principles (see *Council Attachment 2*) that guided the selection of the final alignment

Major considerations for selecting Alignment C into Richmond Hill Centre include:

1. Provides the most compact opportunity for intermodal (bus to subway, bus to GO, bus to bus transit intermodal).
2. Ensures that adequate commuter parking can be supplied (with the construction of the Longbridge/Langstaff Station).
3. Accommodates transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities in the emerging Langstaff community.
4. Accommodates TOD opportunities within the Richmond Hill Centre.
5. Provides for pedestrian access to the intermodal stations.
6. Provides closer proximity for pedestrian and intermodal moves to GO Transit north and south of the 407/Highway 7 corridor.
7. Protection of the woodlot is best achieved as a result of alignment C setback.
8. Minimizes construction impact on Yonge Street.
9. Minimizes impact on the stable residential area west of Yonge Street.
10. Minimizes impact on Pomona Creek.
11. Provides for the best integration with the 407 Transitway.

- 12. Minimizes impact on the hydro corridor.
- 13. Minimizes impact on the storm water pond.
- 14. Avoids impact on the cemetery.

The York Region Rapid Transit Corporation is working with the principle land owner, Metrus Properties, to develop mutually agreed principles for the integration of the intermodal hub with the future development of their lands

In October, the principal property owner of the Richmond Hill Centre site, confirmed that they are prepared to support the continued investigation of the Yonge Subway alignments: A and C. Since that time, staff and the Town of Richmond met with the property owner with the aim of confirming alignment C as the preferred option.

The property owner is not yet prepared to support alignment C until further work is undertaken and agreement is achieved on a set of principles to guide the integration of the intermodal activities into the future development of their site. Staff will report back to Council in December with these principles and will seek endorsement of the principles at that time.

COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Yonge Subway Extension Notice of Commencement of the Transit Project Assessment Process was issued on October 3, 2008, thereby starting the six-month process.

The Notice of Commencement of the Transit Project Assessment Process was issued on October 3, 2008, via an advertisement in the Metro newspaper. It was followed by another advertisement in The Toronto Star on October 4, 2008. In addition, the notice was mailed to all registered property owners within 500 metres of the Yonge subway extension corridor, from Finch Avenue to the Richmond Hill Centre.

The Yonge subway extension public meeting held in Toronto was attended by over 150 people. The interactive meeting provided attendees with keypads to immediately project the audience's response to survey questions

Consultations about the Yonge subway extension continued to take place with key property owners, heritage groups and the public. Notification of the Public Consultation Centre in Toronto involved over 4,000 letters, nearly 3,000 e-mails, advertisements in The Toronto Star and North York Mirror and a listing on www.vivayork.ca.

As a result, over 150 people attended the public meeting. During the discussion, the audience used keypads to answer nine questions and the audience's responses were instantly projected for all to see. During the open question and answer session, 11

questions were asked of the technical staff. The interactive night received many compliments from attendees who seemed pleased with the proposed plan and efforts to mitigate their main concerns.

Staff conducted a meeting for condominium owners at 7811 Yonge St., who are predominantly senior citizens. Located at the East Don River, south of the Ladies Golf Club, the proposed bridge crossing was of particular interest to them

Staff engaged condominium owners of 7811 Yonge St. and its Board members to present details of the proposed Yonge subway extension. The meeting was attended by 53 people. Given their close proximity to the East Don River and the proposed construction site for the bridge crossing, they shared concerns related to construction and operation of the subway. The presentation addressed these concerns and residents seemed pleased with the amount of forethought given to their concerns and efforts to mitigate the impacts.

New communications material was produced for public distribution using new templates that convey a joint effort with the City of Toronto and TTC

The communications team developed and produced various information handouts and presentations for public dissemination, and continued to keep www.vivayork.com updated with the latest presented material. New templates were designed and incorporated into the presentation material for the Public Consultation Centre in Toronto to convey the participation of the City of Toronto and the TTC.

Public Engagements:

- October 6 - Subway presentation to Vaughan and Richmond Hill Committees.
- October 16 - Toronto Public Consultation: Yonge Subway.
- October 30 - Steeles Owner Workshop.
- November 6 - Metrus & RH meeting to finalize alignment & principles.
- November 6 - Grandview Residents - Presentation to the Board re: access & circulation during construction.
- November 12 - Steeles owner workshop, Premiere Ballroom - Finalize location.
- November 12 - Line station Open house, North York City Centre, boards for review.
- November 13 - Rapid Transit Committee, Update on outstanding items.
- November 17 - Richmond Hill – Committee of the Whole, presentation.
- November 17 - Vaughan – Committee of the Whole, presentation.
- November 19 - Yonge Street Subway Advisory Task Force, Public Consultation Centre material review.
- November 22 - Ladies Golf Course, 9 am presentation (Saturday).
- November 23 - Markham Development Services Committee, presentation.
- November 19 - Markham Accessibility Committee, presentation.
- November 26 - Public Consultation Centre #3.

November 27 - Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill, presentation.
December 3 - Public Consultation Centre, Toronto.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The subway extensions are being closely coordinated with local planning, economic development and public works activities along their respective corridors.

7. CONCLUSION

This report provides a comprehensive description of the activities of the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation relating to the Yonge Street subway extension. It seeks Council endorsement for the Yonge Street subway extension Project as defined in this report and authorization to submit the Transit Project Environmental Assessment Report to the Minister of the Environment in January 2009 for consideration.

For additional information, please contact Mary-Frances Turner, Vice-President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation at (905) 886-6767 ext. 2226.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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