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INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS KEELE STREET AND MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE

(Regional Council at its meeting on October 16, 2003, deferred the foregoing Report with staff to report back to the next meeting of the Transportation and Works Committee.)

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, September 18, 2003, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Property acquisition at the south-west corner of Major Mackenzie Drive (Y.R. 25) and Keele Street (Y.R. 6) not be pursued at this time.
2. The intersection improvements at Major Mackenzie Drive (Y.R. 25) and Keele Street (Y.R. 6) be carried out when the required property can be obtained through the development approval process.
3. A copy of this report be forwarded by the Regional Clerk to the Clerk of the City of Vaughan.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to reply to a City of Vaughan resolution requesting the Region to proceed with the expropriation of the property on the south-west corner of Major Mackenzie Drive to accommodate intersection improvements.

3. BACKGROUND

The intersection of Keele Street and Major Mackenzie Drive, in the City of Vaughan, is congested due in part to the lack of separate turning lanes and sharp corner radii. Over the years, staff has attempted to relieve this congestion through signal timing changes and intersection improvements. However, intersection improvements are severely restricted by a building and property in the south-west quadrant of the intersection.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

An assessment of the intersection has been completed, which indicated the capacity of the intersection could be increased by the addition of a separate eastbound to southbound right-turn lane and would make the right turn much safer.

In order to construct the right-turn lane, it would be necessary to obtain a widening from the south side of Major Mackenzie Drive and the west side of Keele Street.

4.1 Property Status South-West Quadrant

Preliminary development proposals have been reviewed for the south-west corner of Major Mackenzie Drive and Keele Street. The proposals have been for an L-shaped development around the corner property. The property on the corner has not been part of the developments to date. The corner property has also been for sale for some time now.

Regional staff made some inquiries on this corner property during last year, but felt the asking price was unreasonable. The corner property has a building on it that is on the City of Vaughan's inventory of older structures. Staff at the City of Vaughan has indicated that it would be reasonable to remove this building because of its poor state of repair.

If the building and property were obtained by The Regional Municipality of York, only the property required for the intersection improvement would be needed. The residual land could be sold either to the adjacent developer for incorporation into the surrounding development, or to any other potential party.

4.2 Design Considerations

The operation of the intersection is of concern to staff and the public. Congestion caused by an increase in daily traffic at the intersection is frustrating to drivers. Improvements, such as adding turning lanes, can add significantly to the capacity of an intersection. It must be recognized as well that other factors such as pedestrian friendliness and streetscaping play an important role in the design of such an intersection.

A preliminary plan has been prepared for the improvements at this intersection. Two of the improvements that would improve the capacity of the intersection are the construction of an eastbound right-turn lane on Major Mackenzie Drive and the south-west radius increased to a Regional standard. In addition, any design process would consider the other three legs of the intersection to determine if any geometric changes are required.

In order to construct a right-turn lane, property in the south-west corner is required, as well as widenings from the adjacent properties on Major Mackenzie Drive and on Keele Street.

4.3 Maple Streetscape Plan

The City of Vaughan has adopted the Maple Streetscape Plan, which provides developers with a guide when developing in the Maple area. The intersection of Major Mackenzie Drive and Keele Street is part of the Maple Streetscape Plan. Staff would work with the City of Vaughan staff during any design process to ensure the policies of the plan are not compromised.

4.4 Major Mackenzie Drive from Keele Street to approximately one kilometre west.

The section of Major Mackenzie Drive from Keele Street to approximately one kilometre west is the subject of several complaints because of the high volume of traffic and the large number of accesses. There is no left-turn lane on this section of road and from staff observations a left-turn lane would be a huge benefit in providing relief to the congestion. A roads capital project is proposed to be initiated to carry out a class environmental assessment on this section of road to determine to deficiencies and recommend corrective action. It is proposed that the right-turn lane at Major Mackenzie Drive and Keele Street could be considered through this process and implemented at the same time should the property be available.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

By waiting to obtain the necessary lands through the development approval process the Region may save in the range of \$300,000 to \$400,000.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The City of Vaughan adopted a resolution requesting the region to expropriate the corner property at Major Mackenzie Drive and Keele Street in order to complete intersection improvements. This report recommends that the region not proceed with the expropriation at this time but rather wait and obtain the necessary lands through the development approval process. A copy of this report should be sent to the Clerk of the City of Vaughan by the Regional Clerk.

7. CONCLUSION

The intersection of Major Mackenzie Drive has been identified as requiring improvements to ease the level of congestion. In particular, there is a need for an eastbound right-turn lane.

In order to construct the lane, property on the south-west corner must be acquired. In addition, road widenings are required on the south side of Major Mackenzie Drive and on the west side of Keele Street.

The City of Vaughan requested the Region to expropriate the corner property at Major Mackenzie Drive and Keele Street in order to complete intersection improvements. This report recommends that the region not proceed with the expropriation at this time but rather wait and obtain the necessary lands through the development approval process. A copy of this report should be sent to the Clerk of the City of Vaughan by the Regional Clerk.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.