

SPADINA SUBWAY EXTENSION ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Rapid Transit Public/Private Partnership Steering Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, September 10, 2003, from the Executive Co-ordinator, York Rapid Transit Plan:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Region of York participate jointly with the City of Toronto, the Toronto Transit Commission and York University in an environmental assessment study for an extension of the Spadina subway line at a cost not to exceed \$100,000.
2. This study cost be included in the Region's rapid transit capital budget for 2004.
3. The Region join with the City of Toronto, Toronto Transit Commission and York University in applying for funding from the Provincial and Federal governments to cover two-thirds of the cost of the environmental assessment study.
4. The Regional Clerk send copies of this report to the City of Toronto, Toronto Transit Commission, City of Vaughan and York University.

2. PURPOSE

This report is in response to a July 16, 2003 resolution from the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and a July 24, 2003 motion from the City of Toronto requesting funding from the Region towards an environmental assessment (EA) study for the extension of the Spadina subway to the Steeles Avenue terminal opposite York University.

3. BACKGROUND

On July 16, 2003 and on July 24, 2003 the Toronto Transit Commission and the City of Toronto respectively passed a resolution (Regional Council Attachment 1) requesting the involvement of the Region in conducting an environmental assessment study for an extension of the Spadina subway from the existing terminus at Downsview station to the Steeles Avenue terminal opposite York University. The resolution included the rationale for the Region's participation in such a study and an approach to seek Provincial and Federal government funding for the Spadina subway extension EA study as well as a Sheppard subway extension EA study.

3.1 Spadina Subway Extension

TTC's Spadina subway line currently ends at Downsview station, near the intersection of Sheppard Avenue and W. R. Allen Road in the City of Toronto. In 1993, TTC completed an EA for a looping along Steeles Avenue of the Spadina and Yonge subway lines that would include an extension of the Spadina line to York University. The Region's Official Plan, since 1994, as well as the City of Toronto's new Official Plan, protect for a rapid transit extension of the subway line north-westerly to York University and to the Vaughan Corporate Centre. In 2001, the City of Vaughan completed a property protection study for a higher order transit extension of the Spadina line to the Vaughan Corporate Centre via York University.

York Region is currently conducting the Highway 7 Corridor Transitway Individual EA. The transitway EA is seeking approval for a bus rapid transit (BRT) or light rail transit (LRT) facility along the Highway 7 corridor and a north-south link from the Vaughan Corporate Centre to York University through the Steeles Avenue terminal. It is also protecting for the ultimate option of a subway extension to the Vaughan Corporate Centre. The transitway EA is expected to be completed by the end of 2003.

At the same time, TTC and the City of Toronto are conducting an EA for a surface transit facility from Downsview station to York University and to the Steeles Avenue terminal to improve the speed and reliability of bus services in that corridor. This project will provide the link for a continuous transitway from the Vaughan Corporate Centre to the Downsview subway station.

The Region had in 2002 acquired a parcel of land across from York University sufficient for an inter-regional bus terminal. It was anticipated at the time that the Spadina subway line would be extended to York University with a terminus station at Steeles Avenue.

The bus terminal would be an integral part of the Steeles Avenue station similar to the York Region Bus Terminal at Finch subway station. Access roads and a commuter parking lot associated with the terminal could be constructed on the hydro lands adjacent to the terminal. Arrangements with the Province would be required for use of the hydro lands.

3.2 Study Cost and Funding

TTC estimated the total cost of the Spadina subway extension to the Steeles Avenue terminal EA to be approximately \$3 million. The resolution proposes that this total cost be divided equally among the three levels of governments, that is, a one-third share each for the municipal, Provincial and Federal levels. It further proposes that the municipal one-third share of \$1 million be shared between the City of Toronto and York Region. The Region is being asked to share equally the cost of the EA for the portion of the extension from the proposed York University station to the Steeles Avenue terminal.

In terms of getting funding from the senior levels of governments, the TTC/Toronto resolution recommends that the City of Toronto, TTC, York Region and York University jointly prepare and submit applications to the Provincial Golden Horseshoe Transit Investment Partnership and to the Federal Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund requesting one-third Provincial and one-third Federal contributions to the cost of the EA study.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Ultimately, an extension of the Spadina subway line from its current terminus at Downsview station to the Vaughan Corporate Centre is envisioned by the Region and City of Vaughan. The section from the Vaughan Corporate Centre to Steeles Avenue is already included in the Highway 7 Corridor Transitway Individual EA. A new EA is required for the section from Steeles Avenue to Downsview station to complete the environmental assessment for the entire extension to the Vaughan Corporate Centre, via York University.

Extending the Spadina subway to Steeles Avenue via York University would be tremendously beneficial to York Region. It would provide a focal point for York Region rapid and local transit routes serving Vaughan and possibly King Township to connect to the TTC's rapid transit system, making those routes more attractive to potential riders. It would also be a catalyst for new and higher density developments around the Steeles Avenue terminal in Vaughan. Finally, it would also create more certainty and possibly advance the timing of the ultimate subway extension to the Vaughan Corporate Centre.

Therefore, it is reasonable to expect the Region to participate financially in an EA for the extension of the Spadina subway from Downsview station to the Steeles Avenue terminal. As requested in the City of Toronto motion, York's contribution should be limited to 50% of the study cost for the section of the extension from the proposed York University station to the Steeles Avenue terminal. However, since this is for an inter-regional transit project and given that both the Provincial and Federal governments are

now funding inter-regional transit projects, an application should be made for two-thirds funding from the senior levels of government. As well, York's financial participation in the EA study should be contingent upon the two-thirds funding from the senior levels of government.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total cost of the EA study is estimated at approximately \$3 million, of which the municipal share would be \$1 million. The municipal cost of the EA study would be apportioned based on the extension alignment identified in the Vaughan property protection study and its length used as the measuring stick. The estimated total length of this extension is 6.5 km with the section from the proposed York University station to the Steeles Avenue terminal estimated at 1.3 km. Under this formula, the Region of York would be responsible for 50% cost sharing with the City of Toronto the portion of the extension from the proposed York University station to the Steeles Avenue terminal, a cost estimated to be approximately \$100,000.00.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The success of the development plans for the Vaughan Corporate Centre and its status as a Regional Centre is affected by the quality of rapid transit service to the Centre. A subway extension to York University with a terminal at Steeles Avenue would be a huge step towards bringing the subway all the way to the Vaughan Corporate Centre.

7. CONCLUSION

On July 16, 2003 and on July 24, 2003 the Toronto Transit Commission and the City of Toronto respectively passed a resolution requesting York Region to participate in an environmental assessment study for the extension of the Spadina subway line and to share in the study cost. Given the tremendous benefits to the Region of the subway extension, staff recommends that the Region participate in the EA study and provide maximum funding of \$100,000.00 to the study.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing is attached to this report and is also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)