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PLANNING FOR NORTH-SOUTH ROAD IMPROVEMENTS VICINITY OF SHARON AND QUEENSVILLE COMMUNITIES TOWN OF EAST GWILLIMBURY, PROJECT 9832

(Regional Council at its meeting on September 18, 2003 amended the foregoing Clause to revise recommendation 2 as follows:

- 2. Staff continue to work with the Town of East Gwillimbury and the Town of Newmarket with respect to the north-south Regional transportation routes through the Town of East Gwillimbury and the Town of Newmarket.)***

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends:

- 1. The presentation by Kees Schipper, Commissioner of Transportation and Works, be received; and**
- 2. The recommendations contained in the following report, June 10, 2003, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works, be adopted, subject to amending Recommendation 2 as follows:**

"2. Staff continue to work with the Town of East Gwillimbury and the Town of Newmarket through the Sharon Community plan."

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) work of the North-South Road Improvements in the Sharon and Queensville Communities be suspended.
2. Staff continue to work with the Town of East Gwillimbury through the Sharon Community plan.
3. The following report be received for information by Committee and Regional Council.
4. A copy of this report be forwarded by the Regional Clerk to the Clerk of the Town of East Gwillimbury.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Committee and Regional Council on the progress of the planning for the north-south road improvements in the vicinity of Sharon and Queensville communities.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

Background transportation studies conducted in the early and mid-1990's by the Town of East Gwillimbury identified that new transportation infrastructure would be required in Sharon to accommodate population and employment growth in the Town of East Gwillimbury and the Town of Georgina. Specifically, future roadway capacity deficiencies were identified for north-south travel in the Leslie Street corridor and east-west travel through the southwest quadrant of Sharon.

The Town of East Gwillimbury initiated a review of the Sharon Community Plan in January 2000. Background reports identified that the principal elements of the transportation network serving the Sharon Community are the planned Highway 404 extension corridor, the arterial road network and local roads. Since initiating the review, the Town of East Gwillimbury has been working with the Region to find a solution that will meet the transportation needs, identified in earlier studies, without compromising the character of the community.

In 2000, the Town of East Gwillimbury requested York Region undertake a Municipal Class EA to address the need for the north-south road improvements in the vicinity of the Sharon and Queensville communities based on the current and future levels of development. The objective of the Municipal Class EA was to identify and incorporate the Regional road requirements in the proposed Sharon Community Plan. Both the Regional and the Town Official Plans currently identify a by-pass corridor, west of Leslie Street, in the vicinity of the Sharon Community (*see Attachment 1*).

In response to the Town of East Gwillimbury request, York Region initiated the Class EA Study. The Region commissioned an engineering consulting firm to undertake the Class EA Study. The project team included York Region staff and Town of East Gwillimbury staff.

The first public consultation was held in August 2000, and a stakeholder workshop held in September 2000. In both public meetings, it was confirmed and agreed that the need existed for additional road infrastructure to accommodate future development in the study area. At the consultation meeting, the public also indicated that natural environment, social environment and cultural environment criteria were the most important factors for evaluating the alternative transportation solutions.

3.2 Class EA Planning Alternatives

Several planning alternatives showing various road configurations were developed and assessed. Initial assessment identified the following two alternatives for further detailed evaluation:

- Alternative 1 – Sharon By-pass (*see Attachment 2*).
- Alternative 2 – combination of improvements to Second Concession Road, a continuous north-south mid-block collector road from Doane Road to Green Lane, located between Leslie Street and Second Concession, and a third lane on Leslie Street within Sharon (*see Attachment 3*).

In December 2001, East Gwillimbury Town Council passed a resolution endorsing Alternative 2. This resolution was based on the Town's assessment that Alternative 2 would have less impact on the proposed community plan and less impact on the existing businesses on Leslie Street than Alternative 1.

A number of meetings between Town of East Gwillimbury and York Region staff were held in an attempt to discuss the relative importance of the evaluation criteria used to select the preferred planning alternative. Considerations to move forward on the transportation issues are outlined in the next section.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Class EA for the north-south road improvements in the vicinity of Sharon and Queensville communities was initiated at the request of the Town of East Gwillimbury to address future transportation needs. The involvement of the Town, as a key stakeholder in the Class EA process, was paramount to the completion of the EA process. With the Town's position vis-a-vis the transportation issues now having been established, Regional staff feel it is appropriate to suspend the Class EA work of the North-South Road Improvements in the Sharon and Queensville communities. The transportation issues that precipitated the start of the Class EA would however be addressed through the Sharon Community Plan planning process. Communication has occurred between York Region and East Gwillimbury Staff and all appear to be in agreement with this position.

4.1 Sharon Community Plan

The adoption of the Sharon Community Plan by the Town of East Gwillimbury has been delayed pending agreement on a satisfactory transportation solution for the needs in the west Sharon area.

Town and Regional staff will continue their efforts to identify and implement the provisions to be included in the Sharon Community Plan that will address north-south transportation requirements. These provisions will address the:

- Need, timing and implementation of road improvements including the staging of improvements.
- Impact on other Regional roads (i.e. Green Lane and Doane Road).
- Acquisition of lands needed to implement the continuous mid-block collector.
- Design criteria to meet the objectives of the community plan.
- Co-ordination of Regional road and local road improvements.

From a technical standpoint, further development in the Sharon community area would require additional road system capacity either through a widening or realignment and widening of Leslie Street or modest improvements to Leslie Street combined with completion of a continuous collector road system and certain improvements to the Second Concession Road. With these improvements there would be sufficient road system capacity to allow full development of the Sharon Community Plan as proposed.

Through the resolution of these issues in the Sharon Community Plan, the intent of Policies 6.1.10 and 6.1.15 of the Regional Official Plan will be met ensuring an effective and co-ordinated transportation system that addresses future demands.

Regional staff have thus moved in accordance with the suspension of the Class EA, with the transportation issues to be addressed through the Sharon Community Plan planning process.

4.2 Relationship to Vision 2026

The future vision for urban settlements, even in the rural municipalities, is for a comprehensive hierarchy of local and Regional roads to provide effective car and transit service to the communities involved. The evolution of continuous collector roads in the Sharon-Queensville corridor is consistent with that vision.

A continuous collector road running between Green Lane and Doane Road is considered a requirement for further development in the corridor of both the Sharon and Queensville communities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the proposed recommendations. The funds for this assignment were previously approved.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Region and Town of East Gwillimbury will work together to address north-south transportation needs required as a result of growth proposed by the Sharon Community Plan, as well as pending growth in Queensville and Holland Landing. The Secondary Plan process will also address the need, timing and implementation of transportation requirements.

7. CONCLUSION

In order to move the Sharon Community Plan forward and ensure a common and consistent approach to addressing the transportation needs of the communities of Sharon and Queensville, Regional staff have suspended the work on the "Class EA for the North-South Road Improvements in the Vicinity of Sharon and Queensville Communities in the Town of East Gwillimbury". The Regional project team will work through the Sharon Community Plan to address the deficiencies of the transportation network and address the objectives of the Regional Official Plan.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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