

Need for Bridge

Issue/Concern:

It is unnecessary to build a bridge in the middle of an established community that is not needed by the local residents. What is the real purpose of this bridge?

Response:

There is an established need for a primary road connection over Highway 400 within Block 33 to improve the efficiency of the transportation network for the Block as well as the surrounding area. Currently, residents in the area must utilize major arterial roads to move from one side of Highway 400 to the other resulting in poor transportation efficiency and connectivity for personal vehicles, public transit, cycling and pedestrian traffic.

The need for a primary crossing of Highway 400 has been established at the planning level through the following policies/ studies. These include:

- ▶ Vaughan Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 400 & 600 and related Transportation Studies
- ▶ Vaughan OPA 650 – Vellore Village District Centre
- ▶ Block 33 (East and West) Planning Basis Reports and Transportation Studies
- ▶ City of Vaughan's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan
- ▶ York Region's Transportation Master Plan
- ▶ Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)
- ▶ York Region Official Plan

Policies and Plans have been established in order to ensure that an optimized transportation network for both the Region of York and the City of Vaughan is implemented. We have highlighted the points below to provide a study background and rationale for this project:

OPA 400

- At the municipal level, Official Plan Amendment 400, the predecessor to OPA 600 was adopted by the City in 1995 and was formally approved by the Ontario Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs in 1996. Within OPA 400 and 600 the majority of the required transportation infrastructure for Block 33 was approved and documented prior to any residential and/or commercial development.
- During the planning process for Block 33 (East) the City identified key infrastructure requirements such as the need to produce an efficient internal road system with linkages to the existing and planned external road systems. Specifically, the Block Plan has designated a northerly east/west primary road across Highway No. 400, connecting Block 33 East with Block 33 West. As stated in the Consolidated Block Plan Report approved by the City of Vaughan in 1996:

"the basis for this approach is that as the designated transit route, its connection to Block 33 (West) will integrate into the overall planned transit system and that this linkage, together with the remainder of the transportation system proposed, can accommodate the development planned for Block 33 (East)." (Section 2.3.3.1 (1))

- The supporting transportation report included as part of the original Block Plan submission states that:
"Street 'B' (Canada Drive) is intended to be the main east-west primary road that will eventually connect to America Drive in Block 33 (East), over Highway 400. Street 'B' also serves as a mid-

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block gateway into Block 33 West and provides access to the Neighbourhood Commercial Centre.”

- In addition, the overall transit program envisaged by OPA No. 400 will be accommodated by this proposed connection.

OPA 600

- OPA 600 was undertaken as way of reviewing the effectiveness of OPA 400. OPA 600 determined that the policies in OPA 400 relating to transportation and the transportation system were in need of some refinement in order to address potential shortcomings due to modifications made through plan approvals since 1995. One of the main objectives was to perform a transportation study to develop a citywide strategy to determine the needs of existing development, which could anticipate future development patterns and encourage transit use:

“The Secondary Plan provides a comprehensive system of primary roads connecting key origins and destinations within the proposed communities, between communities and adjacent municipalities...The continuous street grid minimizes travel distance and time, promotes movement efficiency, provides alternative route options and is very efficient for transit operations.”
(Section 8)

- This system of primary roads is intended to carry a lower volume of traffic than a typical mid-block collector. OPA 600 goes on to state that wherever possible, the primary road network has been extended through more than one block to facilitate local traffic in order to make travel possible over longer distances without adding to traffic on the arterial road network.
- The transportation policies of OPA 600 reflect the City’s intent to provide efficient, functional transportation services and facilities while also encouraging public transit and pedestrian friendly travel:

“Primary roads and collector roads are intended to afford organization for the local street system within residential areas and provide the main connecting points to the arterial system. They are designed to be continuous and are expected to carry moderate traffic volumes.”
(Section 8.2.4, (a))

- The proposed connection will offer an alternative to Teston Rd, Major Mackenzie Drive, Weston Road and Jane St, and will encourage such forms of travel.

OPA 650

- OPA 650 was implemented to build on OPA 600 and further define and establish policies relating to the future development of the Vellore Village District Centre. The Vellore Village District Centre is intended to be the focus of the highest intensity land uses within the Vellore Community. These land uses include low-rise residential and a range of retail and office commercial uses. Vellore Village District Centre is centrally located at the intersection of Major Mackenzie Drive and Weston Road – a portion of this is within the study area of the North Maple Community Bridge. This location allows for the District Centre to be accessible to pedestrians, private vehicles and public transit services from the neighbourhoods in the surrounding Vellore community.
- A major element of the Vellore Village District Centre is that it provides support for transit within the Centre, as well as the surrounding areas, including Block 33 East and West. OPA 650 states that:

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“A crucial element in the establishment of the Vellore Village District Centre and its long term success, will be its establishment as a hub for local transit facilities serving the Vellore community and linked to inter-regional and regional transit services”

- The local road network within Block 33 West will eventually feed into the Vellore Village District Centre (i.e. the connection of Vellore Park Blvd and Starling Blvd), allowing for local residents to access a variety of commercial uses and the transportation hub. Further, by providing the connection between America Avenue and Canada Drive, Block 33 East residents would be able to access the Vellore Village District Centre in a more efficient manner, by personal vehicle, bicycle or walking.

- The above point is further supported by OPA 650 as follows:

“The local road network within the Vellore Village District Centre will:

- *Enhance the primary road grid network and provide appropriate connections to the primary and arterial network serving the Vellore Community”*

City of Vaughan’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan

- This plan visually depicts the connection between Canada Drive and America Avenue as a local road designation.
- This connection is a key component of the Block 33 multi-modal transportation system, which includes personal vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and transit. It also provides for community connectivity with other public services and amenities and allows for accessibility for emergency services.

York Region’s Transportation Master Plan

- In the Transportation Master Plan that was recently updated, a survey was given to over 1,000 York Region residents whom identified transportation and traffic congestion to be the most important issues in York Region.
- The Transportation Master Plan has incorporated a road pattern within the Study Area that is based on a grid pattern and the Block Plan protects for a mid-block connector that will connect Block 33 East with Block 33 West, over Highway 400. The Transportation Master Plan has a number of policies to support the establishment and protection of mid-block freeway crossings:

“(Municipalities should) Undertake future studies to....review, designate and protect rights-of-way for potential mid-block collectors across freeways.”

(Section 3.4.7)

Metrolinx’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- Metrolinx’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) named The Big Move: Transforming Transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), identifies congestion to be one of the main problems in the GTHA. The plan highlights the principle economic and social costs of congestion, which include:
 - ▶ costs of reduced economic output and accompanying job loss;
 - ▶ costs of travel delays for auto and transit users and the unreliability of trip times;

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- ▶ vehicle operating costs associated with higher traffic volumes;
 - ▶ environmental costs of vehicle emissions; and
 - ▶ social and economic costs of the higher frequency of accidents.
- According to a study commissioned by Metrolinx on the economic costs of congestion in the GTHA, in 2006 the annual cost of congestion to commuters was \$3.3 billion and the annual cost to the economy was \$2.7 billion.
 - By providing this mid-block connection, individuals within the area will be able to move in a more efficient manner and achieve some of the objectives of the Metrolinx RTP.

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

- Section 1 of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) outlines general goals and objectives for the development of strong communities. The Planning Act requires that municipalities have regard for the PPS which encourages growth in urban areas through “achieving densities that efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure, public transit, and public service facilities.
- As part of conformity to the PPS, the Block 33 Plan encourages and protects for an effective transportation network that will facilitate a connection for Block 33 West and East, promotes public transit and is intended to accommodate future automobile traffic generated by the development of these lands.

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Issue/Concern:

Community members believe that that proposed bridge is unnecessary to bring the community together as school boundaries do not cross Highway 400 and there is a lack of parks and recreational facilities on the west side. The existing facilities are accessible by Teston Road.

Response:

The proposed development for the west side of Block 33 includes several schools, a major shopping centre at the south-west corner of Weston Road/Major Mackenzie Drive (as laid out in the Block 33 West Land Use and Planning Report) and other recreational facilities. Major Mackenzie Drive and Teston Road are Regional roads which are intended to provide a long-distance east-west connection within the City of Vaughan and the Region of York for commuter traffic. The existing roads (America Avenue and Canada Drive) are local roads, which are intended to deal with local traffic. By providing the road connection between Block 33 east and west, via the North Maple Community Bridge, residents can utilize a local road to navigate between the east and west side of Highway No. 400.

In terms of connectivity for schools, Block 33 East and West schools have an associated catchment area as defined by the School Boards. The intent of the location of a school is to capture a catchment area within a reasonable radius / distance (i.e. walking distances should be reasonable). York Region District School Board has a Policy (Policy #108.0) which states that, "*Parents/guardians may wish to send their children to a school other than their home school.*" Therefore, this does not imply that children from the west side of Highway 400 cannot attend a school on the east side assuming space is available. Further, we expect that school social and extra curricular activities (ie/ sporting events etc.) would take children from the east side to the west side of Highway No. 400 and visa versa. It should be noted that this is not the dominant need for the bridge, but an additional item for consideration.

General Concerns

Issue/Concern:

Why is this already an approved capital expenditure if it is not agreed to at this point?

Response:

Currently the Environmental Assessment study is the only Council approved Capital expenditure as Capital Project No. DT-1583-0-06. The bridge (if approved) will be funded from Development Charges, which are funds collected by the City from developers and imposed on new development, re-development and expansions for residential and non-residential buildings or structures. Subsequent Capital Budget approval by Council will be required in order to proceed with detailed design and construction.

Issue/Concern:

With regard to timing, why did the City of Vaughan defer the decision to build the bridge from seven years ago and now the decision to build has been pushed forward? Why are the engineers pushing this project forward and not the city?

Response:

The actual build-out of the Block Plan for Block 33 (East) and Block 33 (West) was intended to be implemented in phases. This approach included limitations associated with the completion of transportation improvements and linkages. For example, as noted in the Block Plan Report – Transportation and Public Transit for Block 33 (East), 1996, p.11:

“A Primary Road crossing of Highway 400 is protected in the Block Plan for Block 33 (East). However, the implementation of a road connection across Highway 400 is considered to be a long-term initiative and well beyond the timeframe for complete development of Block 33 (East).”

The preparation of planning documentation to facilitate the development of Block 33 (West) was not initiated by the developer until 1999 and at this point the City of Vaughan initiated a five year review process which identified the need for a “High Performance Employment Area” designated for the portion of land running alongside Highway 400. The employment lands are to provide job opportunities within the Vellore-Urban Village 1 Community and bring the unique opportunity to residents to live and work in the same community.

The Region of York approved OPA 600 in 2001 and a phased development of Block 33 (West) was able to commence, similar to Block 33 (East). Consequently, the overpass connecting Block 33 (East) and Block 33 (West) is able to commence as the final phase of the development according to OPA 400 and 600.

This project is being managed by the Development / Transportation Engineering Department on behalf of the City. In 2006, Vaughan Council approved Capital Project DT-1583-0-06 thereby dedicating development charge funds to complete the Class Environmental Assessment Study for the overpass. In February 2008, Council further authorized Staff to retain the Consulting Engineering firm AECOM Canada to initiate the Study.

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Issue/Concern:

Why were the concerns of the community not addressed in the 2002 study?

Response:

There was no evidence of community concerns during the 2002 OPA process. As part of this process, notification and consultation was a mandatory step. The 2002 study (or OPA 600) would have been advertised as required under The Planning Act and the public would have been able to submit comments at that time.

Issue/Concern:

Why isn't the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) more involved with this project?

Response:

The City is the main proponent as they own and maintain the roadways which are directly affected or proposed to be altered by this undertaking. MTO has, and will continue to receive all relevant information as the Class EA progresses. Further, MTO will have the ability to comment on the process and ultimately the proposed design to ensure that their concerns are addressed. The Project Team will be consulting MTO's design guidelines to ensure the proposed concept meets their criteria and requirements. Further, it should be noted that MTO was invited to sit as a member of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) established for this project.

Recently, an engineering submission was made to the MTO. Soils investigation information (ie/ borehole tests) was forwarded to the Ministry along with General Arrangement Drawings (ie/ bridge plan views) for their review. Their formal comments are pending.

Design Construction

Issue/Concern:

There are concerns over the elevation of the bridge as it will be built on an incline. Is it possible to see an actual design/layout of the proposed bridge and when can the community see it?

Response:

This will come in Phase 3 of the EA process, Alternative Design Concepts. The Project Team has a Landscape Architect on hand who will work within the technical requirements that the engineers identify for the preferred solution. Each design will be evaluated (similar to the Alternative Solutions presented in Phase 2 at CLC Meeting #1) in order to determine the potential social, environmental and economic impacts. Mitigation measures will be considered and applied during the evaluation. For example, the proposed design may incorporate a variety of safety measures and features to ensure that speeds are obeyed. A concept plan, at minimum, will be available to view at the 2nd Citizen's Liaison Committee and Public Information Forum meetings.

Issue/Concern:

Who are the major stakeholders in building this bridge and why? How long will the proposed bridge take to build and how much will it cost?

Response:

It will be a City responsibility to design, build, operate and maintain the bridge and the approaching roads. However, since the actual bridge is in the Hwy 400 right-of-way, it will be owned by MTO. The bridge, (if approved) will be funded through the Development Charges By-Law, which are funds allocated to the City from developers imposed on new development, re-development and expansions for residential and non-residential buildings or structures. If the Class EA goes through to Phase 5, the City may proceed to implementation and construction, which may take anywhere from 1-2 years from approval at an approximate cost of \$7,500,000.

Issue/Concern:

Who and how many people attended the first public meeting in 1995 for the initial OPA400? Where were they located and what were their addresses? What other proposed future development is on the table within Block 33 that could have an effect on the community?

Response:

Given that the Public Meetings for OPA 400 took place in the early to mid 1990's, it is safe to say that there would not have been any existing residents of Block 53 and Urban Village 1 or 2 in attendance. Urban Village 1 (Vellore) refers to the new urban areas in Blocks 32 West, 33 East and West, 39 and 40, while Urban Village 2 (Patterson) refers to Blocks 10, 11, 12, 17 and 18 East. We can assume that most attendants of the Public Meetings would have been existing landowners or residents outside of the proposed expansion area under OPA 400 (ie/ Block 53 or UV1 and UV2). Block 33 East proceeded via the Block Plan and the Subdivision process and adhered to the requirements of the Planning Act for notification (ie/ Public Hearing Meeting). OPA 400 was approved by the province of Ontario on June 28, 1995. Subsequent to this, the OPA was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board several times and was formally approved in the late

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1990's. As detailed on the "Existing Conditions" Plan, Block 33 East is, for the most part, built-out other than the proposed hospital site, formerly Canada's Wonderland, a portion of the Ahmaddiya Site and two future schools. Block 33 West contains vacant parcels in the Prestige Employment swath of land along Highway 400, three future school sites and vacant commercial parcels as detailed.

Issue/Concern:

As noted by Michael Frieri, if houses are too close to the bridge there is possibility of having to buy the homes in order to meet zoning.

Response:

The City has confirmed through its Building Standards / Zoning Department that the appropriate zoning requirements have been achieved. For a 23 m right-of-way (existing America Avenue right-of-way width) the minimum offset from a structure (i.e. an existing home) to the right-of-way is 3m. Based on our review of the zoning files for the lots adjacent to the proposed overpass, they are all in conformance to the zoning by-law and therefore meet the minimum required 3m offset from the right-of-way. Any impacts to the existing homes immediately adjacent to the proposed bridge will be analyzed and mitigated through the Class Environmental Assessment process and in determining a final preferred alternative for the Study.

Issue/Concern:

Will the proposed bridge decrease property value of my home?

Response:

There are a number of various factors that determine property values including location, proximity to public transportation, schools, shopping centres, community facilities, condition of property, market demands, etc. While some argue that property values may go down as a result of providing a connection through Block 33, other determining factors including increased opportunity for transit and connectivity to key areas throughout the City may be factored in as well.

For example, location-specific factors that may affect an investor's risk perceptions have to do with the stage of development of an area. An investor may consider the purchase of a property in an area with little development, infrastructure, and supporting services as more risky, compared to a property located in a fully developed neighbourhood.

Some developers believe that those suburban downtowns, such as those found at the heart of Vaughan, have further growth potential with the addition of uses that will make them more *comprehensive and/or specialized*. This will encourage and enhance cultural, social and recreational facility development completing the full spectrum of land uses found in mature urban areas. This type of development is said to have a significant value-increase potential which essentially will boost property values.

As there are many elements as listed above that determine property value, it cannot be stated with certainty that this proposed connection would be attributable to influencing property values, one way or the other.

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Issue/Concern:

Have studies been done of existing overpasses in the GTA that are the same as or similar to the one proposed?

Response:

One example of an overpass over a major 400 series highway connecting two residential areas is Morning Star Drive, which crosses Highway 427 between Finch Avenue and Derry Road East. This example was presented at the Public Information Forum on April 16, 2009. Other examples include road connections in the Town of Markham crossing Highway No. 404, and road connections in the City of Toronto crossing the Don Valley Parkway.

In the City of Vaughan, examples of elevated bridge structures crossing major water courses include the Martin Grove Road and Vaughan Mills Road bridges, and bridges within Block 11.

It should be noted as well that there are other examples of east-west connector roads within Vaughan, which provide a local road connection between two regional arterial roads. For example, within Block 37, Chancellor Drive connects to both Pine Valley Drive and Weston Road and in Block 10; Autumn Hill Boulevard connects to both Dufferin Street and Bathurst Street. These streets are also similar to America Avenue and Canada Drive as they all have detached residential dwellings, which front onto the main road.

Safety of Residents

Issue/Concern:

Will traffic calming measures be implemented to ensure safety of residents due to an increase in traffic?

Response:

Both the City and the Project Team understand and appreciate the importance of safety for residents. The Project Team welcomes all input from residents who reside within the area that can provide important local knowledge on current problems, as well as what types of mitigating factors they would like to see implemented. It is important to note that pedestrian and citizen safety was a criteria used in the evaluation of alternative solutions during Phase 2 of the Class EA process. Moving through the study, this criterion will also be included during Phase 3, which is Alternative Design Concepts. Traffic calming and other measures will be considered to reduce the likelihood of traffic related speeding.

The purpose of the Class EA is to identify mitigation measures necessary to implement the recommended solution. The Project Team has a Landscape Architect on hand to assist the engineers in the design and will provide input in relation to mitigation measures.

Issue/Concern:

Concerns over proximity of residential housing and children to the proposed site; what safety measures will be utilized to protect community? Are sidewalks going to be built on adjacent streets to protect pedestrians that will be affected by the higher volume of vehicles projected?

Response:

The design team would also look at appropriate mitigation measures for homes within close proximity to the bridge to ensure safety is paramount. The existing sidewalk along America Avenue, north and south side, will be extended to the west (ie/ west of John Deisman Boulevard), and across the bridge to Cityview Boulevard.

Issue/Concern:

Community would like Vaughan City Councillors to visit the site and talk to community to see how close residents are to the proposed site.

Response:

Local Councillor Peter Meffe and the Ward Sub-Committee (Regional Councillor's and Mayor) visited the site and met with local residents. Council has been kept apprised of the study's progress to date from a technical perspective. The Class Environmental Assessment process is designed to deal with technical issues relating to engineering / planning, as well as, the natural, social, cultural and economic environments. Upon completion of the Environmental Assessment, local residents may approach their respective Council representative as they see fit.

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Council approval will be required prior to filing the final Class Environmental Assessment Study Report with the Ministry of the Environment. Once the EA is complete, Staff will report to Council on the recommendations of the EA and seek Council authority to proceed with filing the EA.

Environmental and Social Impacts

Issue/Concern:

There are concerns over environmental impacts within the proposed area due to:

- Potential increases in greenhouse gas emissions
- Dust pollution from construction
- Increase in noise pollution from construction as well from an increase in traffic volumes
- Increase of asphalt surfaces to community areas

When will the potential environmental effects from the EA process be discussed? What measures will be taken to mitigate these environmental effects?

Response

The Project Team will ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are in place prior to any construction taking place and will meet all acceptable standards that apply. Some examples of possible mitigation measures for dust, fumes and noise during construction include the following standard measures.

Dust Pollution:

- Dust and debris control measures may include applying water to control dust emissions, and ensuring that soil disturbances during dry periods are kept to a minimum
- Construction techniques may employ low dust generating construction techniques/ equipment and wet type blades and grinders where asphalt sawing or concrete sawing/ grinding is required

Air Quality:

- Equipment should be maintained in an operating condition that maintains low emission rates and operated only as required
- Ministry of Environment (MOE) criteria for noxious gases and particulate matter are not expected to be exceeding as long as the recommended mitigation measures are employed.

Noise Pollution:

- Construction will be limited to day time hours
- In terms of noise levels, these are not expected to change as previous studies have identified that Highway 400 and the surrounding Major Arterials are the dominant noise sources within the area. In fact, Highway 400 was identified as being the most significant noise source for road traffic. Traffic will continue at the same rate and flow on America Ave and Canada Drive as currently exists and thus, the current noise levels will remain. Please keep in mind that this will continue to be analyzed throughout the Class EA process, as there may be potential for mitigation through noise attenuation, should this be warranted.

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Environmental pollution:

- In regard to pollution, no significant change is expected to occur as air contaminants emitted from vehicles will drift downwind and disperse as they travel. Contaminant concentrations depend on a variety of factors, including weather conditions and the distance from the infrastructure.

It is important to keep in mind that local connector roads currently exist within the City of Vaughan, which are similar to that which is proposed. For example, within Block 37, Chancellor Drive connects to both Pine Valley Drive and Weston Road and in Block 10; Autumn Hill Boulevard connects to both Dufferin Street and Bathurst Street. The amount of vehicles on America Ave and Canada Drive is expected to be comparable to that of other local roads within the area, and are at acceptable levels of noise, emissions from cars and other forms of transportation, stormwater management, and provisions for pedestrian and vehicular safety.

Increase in Emissions:

As previously mentioned, residents in the area must utilize major arterial roads to move from one side of Highway 400 to the other resulting in poor transportation efficiency and congestion. A car idling produces a greater volume of emissions and will generate greater environmental costs than free flowing traffic.

Also, the proposed bridge will provide a connection for personal vehicles, public transit, cycling and pedestrian traffic. By providing a connection that facilitates not only use of a personal vehicle, but also transit, cycling and pedestrian modes, a more sustainable option for travel would be available.

Issues/Concerns:

What can the community expect in terms of changes to my neighbourhood including winter cleaning and desalting and water run-off?

Response:

Regarding winter cleaning and salting, it is expected to continue to operate as normal along America Avenue and Canada Drive. During the design phase, the project team will look at the most appropriate methods of addressing water runoff; however the existing conveyance methods along America Avenue and Canada Drive are capable of adequately addressing stormwater issues.

Alternatives

Issues/Concerns:

Community members feel that the project team has not seriously considered other alternatives to the proposed overpass. Why haven't such alternatives been presented to the public before the Study Team handed down its recommended solution? Community members have given their input on several alternatives, why have these not been incorporated into the report?

Response:

There were four alternative solutions identified by the Consulting team as reasonable and viable given previous planning work completed and which best addressed the Problem/Opportunity statement. The alternatives are explained in detail in summary documents prepared by the Study Team. They are as follow:

- 1) Do Nothing
- 2) Reduce Auto Demand
- 3) Upgrade / Improve Other Roadways
- 4) Build Highway No. 400 Overpass

The alternative solutions were initially presented at the first CLC meeting, where the team asked this group to provide their input and feedback on all items of the study, including alternative solutions. The Project Team presented these alternative solutions and their details and welcomed any and all comments for discussion. Further, the team also presented these alternatives at the first Public Information Forum (PIF) with Project Team member's on-hand to answer questions. In addition, comment sheets were provided so that individuals could submit their thoughts on the project as well as elements of the Class EA process, which the Project Team would answer in the future. The presentations given at the CLC and the display boards from the PIF are available on the website for all to review and comment on. An important part of the Class EA process is community consultation and the Project Team welcomes comments on all aspects of the Study.

Issue/Concerns:

Why is north end of Wonderland not an option?

Response:

A crossing at the north end of Wonderland is not an option that is being reviewed in the EA as this would not assist in improving the transportation efficiency within the Block 33 lands and would not allow for an east-west mid-block local connector within Block 33.

Issues/Concerns:

Block 33 East – 400 Plan slide is not the original plan. There was a second and third crossing– one off of Tierra Avenue and one through Vellore Woods. These subdivisions have not changed on Block 33 East. All other east/west overpasses through existing subdivisions have been cancelled, i.e. Vellore Woods and Tierra Avenue.

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You are correct. The other overpasses were deleted as part of the Block Plan process as more than one crossing was not technically feasible at the time of development.

Issue/Concern:

In terms of emergency services, why would they use small subdivision roads verses main arterial roads?

Response:

Both major Regional arterial roads and local collector roads would be utilized to respond to the residents within Block 33 in an emergency. The City of Vaughan and the Region of York encourage the policy of mid-block local collector roads which provide connections to major arterials, which allows for increased traffic efficiency, including for emergency services to allow for quicker response times. A mid-block collector would provide the emergency services team multiple route options when responding to an emergency call. As well, the mid-block collector roads provide a porous network of roads thus decreasing emergency services response times.

Transportation

Issues/Concerns:

Teston Road has been closed for almost two years; why is Teston Road not finished yet? How can projections be accurate as Teston Road is not finished?

Response:

The Teston Road interchange has been constructed by the Region of York and is open as of September 2009. With regards to traffic projections for this project, turning movement volumes were revised with the Teston Road ramp open and presented in the first Public Information Forum (PIF). These volumes are posted on the project's website.

Issues/Concerns:

Why are there discrepancies in volumes of 2009 and 2021 traffic models for AM peak hours? Where is PM peak hour's data?

Response:

Initial traffic data analysis provided at the first Community Liaison Committee (CLC) meeting was revised and later presented at the first PIF. The data/analysis not presented during the first CLC meeting was later clarified in the first PIF. The volumes, data and analysis are posted on the City of Vaughan's project website.

Issues/Concerns:

There was a new traffic model introduced, why was this not presented to community?

Response:

The traffic model was only discussed at the first CLC meeting as the project was in the initial stages. The model was formally presented at the first PIF and is posted on the City of Vaughan's project website.

Issues/Concerns:

Why are there no numbers for traffic volumes exiting and entering the new southbound on-off ramp for Teston Road?

Response:

Initial traffic data analysis provided at the first CLC meeting was in the preliminary stages and was revised and presented at the first PIF. The data and analysis that was not presented during the first CLC meeting was clarified at the first PIF. The volumes, data and analysis are posted on the City of Vaughan's project website.

Issues/Concerns:

What is the current volume of traffic on America Avenue?

Response:

The current traffic (2009) and traffic estimates with the Teston Road ramp open is presented in the following figure. These traffic volumes exclude the America Avenue and Canada Drive bridge connection.



It should be noted that the URS (2003) “The Community of Weston Highlands in the Village of Vellore” report and the Giffels Associates Ltd “Teston Road EA (2003)” report were referenced for the existing 2009 traffic condition. This includes existing 2009 weekday AM and PM Peak Hour Traffic Conditions (with Teston Road and Highway 400 Ramp open).

Issues/Concerns:

Will the use of the proposed bridge increase traffic and access to Highway 400 due to a poorly designed Teston Road?

Response:

The impact of the traffic volumes from the Teston Road interchange has been considered in the sub-area model. This model shows that the increase in traffic on the bridge as a result of the interchange is marginal. The model results were presented during the first PIF and are posted on the project’s website.

Issues/Concerns:

With increased traffic in Block 33, how will the City of Vaughan keep their projected numbers?

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Response:

Existing and future (2021) traffic flow without the proposed overpass was referenced in the URS 2003 “The Community of Weston Highlands in the Village of Vellore” report and the Giffels Associates Ltd “Teston Road EA (2003)” report.

Furthermore, 2021 weekday AM peak hour traffic projections for the area road network were made available for analysis in the travel demand forecasting model developed for the Region of York’s Western Vaughan Transportation Improvements Individual Environmental Assessment. The model estimates travel demands for the planning horizon years based on expected population and employment projections by small areas referred to as traffic zones, trip generation rates for various land use types, observed travel patterns and the planned roadway network.

As a result, the future (2021) traffic flows with the proposed overpass was estimated through an established scientific method using industry accepted TransCAD modeling software.

Issues/Concerns:

Will there be new traffic lights at the intersection?

Response:

Based on projected traffic volumes traffic signals are not warranted at the America Avenue / John Deisman Boulevard intersection. The intersection of Canada Drive / Cityview Boulevard will need to be signalized primarily due to the volume of traffic on Cityview Boulevard.

Issues/Concerns:

What is the plan for commercial and heavy traffic vehicles?

Response:

Commercial vehicle restriction enforcement will be assessed based on development within the Study Area and the final conclusions of the Environmental Assessment Study. Mitigation measures which may be considered within the preferred alternative may include traffic calming measures and signage (Commercial vehicle Restriction By-Law). The Municipal Act permits Council the option to establish the prohibition of trucks on local roads.

Issues/Concerns:

Parking is already a major concern due to narrow streets and roads. How will this be dealt with due to increased traffic volumes?

Response:

America Avenue and Canada Drive on east and west of Hwy 400 respectively are defined as primary roads in OPA 600 and posted speeds are 50 km/h. These roads have two lane cross-sections, 23m right-of-way, and on street parking. As designated by OPA 600 all primary roads should be active, pedestrian oriented,

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and provide for on-street parking, and transit routes. It should be noted that on-street parking reduces the width of the roadway and also assists in keeping speeds down by interrupting the flow of traffic, therefore, it can be considered a traffic calming measure.

Issues Concerns:

Has there been any pedestrian and/or bicycle traffic research completed? Will there be any consideration for the safety of cyclists and pedestrians?

Response:

The scope of this project includes the review and implementation of a multi-modal approach to improve the transportation efficiency in the Study Area. By providing a connection that facilitates not only the use of a personal vehicles, but also transit, cycling and pedestrian modes, a more sustainable option for travel would be available. Currently, the transit route within Block 33 is unable to connect over HWY 400 and cyclists and pedestrians must utilize major arterials to get from one side of HWY 400 to the other, which is inefficient. There are also safety concerns for cyclists who utilize the major arterials, as there aren't any bike lanes on these roads. We know from previous comments made that many individuals within and around the Block 33 area travel on their bicycles to the Ahmaddiya Mosque. These individuals would like to see this local connection made as people would be able to travel along local roads, where traffic is lighter and slower than major arterials that they currently take.

Issues/Concerns:

Currently bus routes are underutilized, why do you want to increase the flow of public transit?

Response:

York Region Transit is planning for the future transit extension/connection across the Highway 400 overpass which will improve the multi-modal connectivity of the two communities on either side of Hwy 400 (Block 33 East and West).

With regard to transit service and operations, the following are some of the key vision and action plans as documented in the City of Vaughan OPA 600:

- public transportation servicing the City's communities will include transit bus service opportunities on all arterial, collector and primary roads
- encourage a comprehensive and attractive transit service, capable of attracting and carrying at least 155 of the peak hour commuters with continued growth in transit use to the eventual long term goal of 30 - 40% of the peak hour commuters
- promote the use of transit for home/work trips within Vaughan by providing transit linkages between residential and employments areas
- facilitate the use of public transit by providing for pedestrian access to planned bus stops and by providing for the construction of bus bays and bus shelters (facilitate transit access by seniors and the disabled)
- location of at least 80% of residences and the majority of jobs and another activities should be within comfortable walking distance of a transit stop (400 m)
- ensure that collector and primary roadway network is sufficiently continuous (both within and between concession blocks) to accommodate efficient and effective routing of transit vehicles

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Issues/Concerns:

The York Regional Transit plan has not provided any information.

Response:

York Region Transit (YRT) and Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) are currently providing transit services in the study area. YRT is operating on four routes (YRT Route #4, 4A, 20, and 87) on the east side of Block 33 in the study area, while TTC operating on one route (TTC Route#165F) on the west side of Block 33 in the study area.

YRT is planning for the future transit extension/connection across the Highway 400 overpass which will improve the multi-modal connectivity of the two communities on either side of Hwy 400 (Block 33 East and West).

A general change in philosophy is occurring in York Region and the Greater Toronto Area with an emphasis on Public Transit as a relied upon mode of transportation. This notion is highlighted by the creation of Metrolinx, a Provincial Government formed organization that will fund major transit system projects within the Province of Ontario. As well, the Region's Transportation Master Plan details transit initiatives Region-wide and within the City of Vaughan.

Further Questions:

Issue:

Request for legal team to look into the original purchase and sale agreement that allows for this overpass?

Response:

The Project Team has reviewed the Subdivision Agreements that were prepared for each subdivision within Block 33 East and 33 West. The Block 33 West subdivision agreement(s) required all Purchase and Sale or Lease agreements to have a provision that states "Purchaser's are advised that an overpass of Highway No. 400 may be constructed in the future by extending Canada Drive eastward over Highway No. 400 to connect Block 33 West to Block 33 East". The original Block 33 East agreements do not contain this warning clause.

Issues/Concerns:

Will there be any liability and compensation provisions from the City of Vaughan?

Response:

The City does not envision any compensation provisions as part of this Environmental Assessment, unless property acquisition is required in order to implement the preferred design concept.

Issues/Concerns:

What is the impact on the majority of the subdivisions not having any sidewalks?

Response:

The City is reviewing the issue of sidewalks within the context of this Class EA and will be looking at providing appropriate pedestrian footpaths as part of the alternative design concepts, in order to ensure the safe passage of pedestrians along the North Maple Community Bridge from America Avenue to Canada Drive.