

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 29, 2013

Item 18, Report No. 1, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on January 29, 2013.

18

**NORTH MAPLE COMMUNITY BRIDGE
CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY UPDATE
WARDS 1 AND 3
VICINITY - NORTH OF MAJOR MACKENZIE DR. BETWEEN WESTON RD. AND JANE ST.**

The Committee of the Whole recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, dated January 15, 2013, be approved; and**
- 2) That staff not proceed with an RFP for detailed design work under Project #EN-1963-13 until such time as a report comes back to Council detailing the final results after the Class Environmental Assessment clears the regulatory process.**

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works recommends:

1. THAT staff complete the North Maple Community Bridge Class Environmental Assessment Study and report back to a future Committee of the Whole Working Session on the study findings and recommendations.

Contribution to Sustainability

In considering the objectives of the City's Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan (Green Directions Vaughan), constructing the North Maple Community Bridge will assist in:

- Developing a City with sustainable built form
- Establishing a network of sidewalks, paths and trails that support all modes of non-vehicular transportation
- Developing a network of primary roads that support efficient and accessible public and private transit
- Reducing single occupant vehicle trips by supporting active transportation, carpooling and public transit
- Achieving sustainable growth and development

Economic Impact

The North Maple Community Bridge is currently estimated to cost approximately \$8.5 million (inclusive of the Class Environmental Assessment Study, detailed design and construction). It is anticipated that York Region will contribute 33% to the capital costs of the bridge given the associated operational benefits to the adjacent arterial road network. Accordingly, the net cost of the bridge to the City will be approximately \$6.6 million with funding from City-Wide Development Charges.

The Class Environmental Assessment Study, detailed design, and construction costs are included in the current City-Wide Development Charges By-law. It is expected these costs will be carried forward to the City's latest update of the Development Charges By-Law and associated Background Study currently underway.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 29, 2013

Item 18, CW Report No. 1 – Page 2

Additional funding in the amount of \$38,110 is required to complete the North Maple Bridge Class Environmental Assessment Study. An additional funding request to this effect has been included in the draft 2013 Capital Budget submission for Council's consideration.

Once constructed, the North Maple Community Bridge will incur normal expenses associated with annual operating, maintenance and life cycle costs.

Communications Plan

In order to obtain input from all affected stakeholders, an enhanced public consultation program was undertaken as part of the Class Environmental Assessment Study. Given the anticipated high level of stakeholder interest in the Study, a Citizen Liaison Committee (CLC) was formed to provide a comprehensive and inclusive public consultation process throughout the course of the Study. The main components of the consultation program include:

- Notice of Study Commencement
- Two Public Information Forums
- Two Citizen Liaison Committee Meetings
- Final Citizen Liaison Committee Meeting (Pending)
- Notice of Study Completion (Pending)

A project specific website was also established at the outset of the Study, which has been maintained by the Study consulting team.

In addition, all notification related to the Study was directly mailed to affected stakeholders on the project mailing list, advertised in local newspapers and posted on the City's website.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the status of the North Maple Community Bridge Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study, and to seek Council's endorsement to complete the Study.

Background - Analysis and Options

The proposed North Maple Community Bridge is located within Block 33, which is bounded by Major Mackenzie Drive to the south, Weston Road to the west, Teston Road to the north, and Jane Street to the east. Highway 400 divides the Block into an east and west half as shown on Attachment No. 1.

Residential development in Block 33 was originally identified in the City's Official Plan Amendments (OPA) 400 and 600 as a component of Vellore Urban Village 1. Development in the eastern half of the block began in 2001 and is now for the most part complete. Development in the western half commenced around 2008 and is now nearing completion. The development in Block 33 is predominantly residential with a prestige employment corridor adjacent to Highway 400 in Block 33 West. The future Vaughan Healthcare Campus encompasses a large portion of Block 33 East at its south limit.

The proposed overpass connects Canada Drive to America Avenue and is a key component of the Block's multi-modal transportation system serving vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, transit, community connectivity, emergency services, and other public services. The proposed road link will complete the east-west primary road system within the Block as shown on Attachment No. 1.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 29, 2013

Item 18, CW Report No. 1 – Page 3

The North Maple Community Bridge is an important component of the City's primary road network

The connection of the City's primary road grid over Highway 400 is necessary to provide east-west connectivity in the road network. These connections are intended to:

- promote a greater sense of community by bridging the neighbourhoods east and west of the highway
- facilitate access to community services
- improve efficiency of primary road transit services through concession blocks
- increase connectivity and efficiency of the pedestrian and cycling network
- decrease overall response times for emergency services within the neighbouring areas

In addition, a continuous grid of primary roads through concession blocks minimizes the need for local traffic to use the arterial network.

Both the City and Regional Official Plans and Transportation Master Plans continue to support the need for Highway 400 mid-block collector road crossings

The need for a primary road crossing of Highway 400 within Block 33 was originally established at the planning level through numerous policies and studies, mainly:

- Official Plan Amendment 400 and supporting Transportation Study
- Block 33 (East) Planning Basis Report and supporting Transportation Study
- Official Plan Amendment 600 and supporting Transportation Study
- Block 33 (West) Planning Basis Report and supporting Transportation Study
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan
- Vaughan OP 2010 and Transportation Master Plan
- York Region Official Plan
- York Region Transportation Master Plan

Background transportation studies completed in support of both OPA 400 and 600 identified the overpass as a critical component of the overall transportation network for the area. The deletion of the proposed overpass within Block 32 further increases the importance of the Block 33 overpass to meet ultimate traffic demands crossing Highway 400 and to alleviate traffic pressures associated with the adjacent Regional arterial roads (Major Mackenzie Drive and Teston Road).

Recently, the City's new Official Plan Amendment (September 2010) and Transportation Master Plan (TMP) reaffirmed the need for the bridge and reinforced the notion that road links across 400 series highways are important in the overall primary road network, especially for the surrounding residential areas on both sides of the highway. Travel demand forecasting models completed as part of the City's Transportation Master Plan indicate a deficiency in east-west capacity and connectivity throughout the City. Accordingly, the City's TMP recommends the North Maple Community Bridge be constructed. This road link is also identified in the City's new Official Plan 2010.

America Avenue and Canada Drive are designated primary roads in the City's Official Plan. According to the City's functional classification of roads, 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. A greater number of primary roads within each concession block would enable each primary road to carry lower volumes of traffic than a traditional mid-block collector.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 29, 2013

Item 18, CW Report No. 1 – Page 4

The North Maple Community Bridge Class EA Study was initiated in 2009 concurrently with the development of Block 33 West

It is current practice to obtain the necessary environmental approvals for new infrastructure that support growth, including road bridges, concurrently with the initial phase of development. A recent example of this approach is the road crossings of the valley system in Blocks 11 and 12. This approach could not be followed in Block 33 due to the time interval between development on the east and west sides of Highway 400. The Class EA study for the bridge could not be initiated when development on the east side commenced primarily because the planning and road layout on the west side of Highway 400 had not yet been established. As such, the Class EA Study was initiated later in 2009 in conjunction with the start of development activity on the west side of Highway 400.

There is both support and opposition to the bridge

During the course of the EA Study, support for the bridge was expressed by various public agencies including York Region Police / EMS, York Region Transit, and the school boards. The representative on the CLC from the Ahmadiyya Community in Block 33 East had also voiced support for the bridge.

However, many existing residents (primarily on the east side along America Avenue) immediately adjacent to the proposed North Maple Community Bridge expressed concerns with respect to the expected increase in traffic volumes on America Drive resulting from the road connection, noise and community impacts, potential depreciation in property values and the esthetics of the structure.

The Class EA Study has identified a preferred design for the North Maple Community Bridge

The work completed to date on the Class EA Study identified a preliminary design for the bridge, which includes two general purpose travel lanes, dedicated on-street bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the structure. A typical cross section of the proposed bridge is included as Attachment No. 2 to this report. A preliminary landscape plan has also been prepared illustrating how the slopped embankments along each approach (east and west side of the bridge) may be aesthetically enhanced and used to create a visual buffer for the neighbouring land-uses as shown on Attachment No. 3.

The Class EA Study was put on hold pending the completion of the City-Wide Official Plan review and related Transportation Master Plan Study

The Class EA Study was put on hold in 2010 in order to allow for the completion of the City-Wide Official Plan review and related Transportation Master Plan Study. Upon completion of these studies, the need for the bridge was reaffirmed.

An update to the traffic study and another Citizen's Liaison Committee meeting is required to complete the Class EA Study

In order to complete the original work plan for the Class EA Study, an update to the traffic study and another Citizen's Liaison Committee meeting is required. The original Traffic Study was completed by AECOM in early 2010. At that time, estimated traffic volumes from the Teston Road Class EA were used in the traffic analysis. Given that the Teston Road/Highway 400 Interchange is now open, it is appropriate to conduct additional traffic counts to verify the accuracy of the original traffic estimates. Once this additional traffic assessment has been completed, a final CLC meeting can be held to provide an overview of the conclusions of the Class EA Study.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 29, 2013

Item 18, CW Report No. 1 – Page 5

A final Environmental Study Report (ESR) will need to be prepared that reflects the findings of the updated Traffic Study and all final public consultation documentation. Staff will report back to a future Committee of the Whole Working Session to provide a more detailed overview of the Class EA Study findings and conclusions prior to issuing the Notice of Study Completion. Issuance of the Notice of Study Completion is the final point of contact with the public and approval agencies. In accordance with the Municipal Class EA requirements, a minimum 30-day public review period shall be provided for review and comment on the final ESR.

The above noted work could be completed by summer 2013. This would allow for a Notice of Study Completion to be issued in late 2013. Additional funds are required to complete the Class EA Study, which have been requested through the 2013 Capital Budget submission process.

As the minimum Class EA requirements for the North Maple Community Bridge Study have been satisfied, a Notice of Study Completion could be issued after finalizing the Environmental Study Report

The work completed on the North Maple Community Bridge Class EA Study to date is sufficient to satisfy the minimum requirements of a Schedule C project as prescribed by the Municipal Class EA process. Accordingly, the EA Study could be filed with the MOE and for public review at this time without holding another CLC meeting. Any concerns arising from the public review of the ESR could be addressed through the MOE review process.

The North Maple Bridge EA Study could be stopped and re-started at some point in the future when there is more local support for the road connection

Council could consider stopping the North Maple Bridge EA Study now and restarting it in the future when there is more local support for the project as traffic congestion increases on the adjacent arterial roads in the coming years. Much of the information collected through the Class EA work, such as geotechnical and topographical data, design drawings, documentation and engineering plans, would likely still be relevant in the future.

Regional Implications

Regional staff has been involved throughout the duration of the Study and are supportive of the project. Regional comments have been received on the draft ESR document and will be addressed prior to finalizing the Study Report.

In accordance with Regional policy, it is anticipated that the Region will fund 33 percent of the cost of the design and construction of the North Maple Community Bridge.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020 / Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the recommendation of this report will assist in:

- The pursuit of excellence in service delivery
- Enhancing and ensuring community safety, health and wellness
- Leading and promoting environmental and financial sustainability
- Planning and managing growth, and economic vitality

The recommendations of this report will assist in advancing the City's Strategic Plan initiative to integrate sustainable transportation measures with land use planning. This report is therefore consistent with the priorities previously set by Council.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 29, 2013

Item 18, CW Report No. 1 – Page 6

Conclusion

The North Maple Community Bridge Class Environmental Assessment Study can be finalized after additional traffic assessment has been completed and another Citizen Liaison Committee meeting has been convened. Additional funding in the amount of approximately \$38,000 is required to complete the Class Environmental Assessment for the bridge, which is included in the draft 2013 Capital Budget submission for Council's consideration. Staff is recommending that the North Maple Community Bridge Class EA Study be completed as originally planned, subject to Capital Budget approval for the necessary additional funds.

Attachments

1. North Maple Community Bridge – Location Plan
2. North Maple Community Bridge – Preferred Typical Section
3. North Maple Community Bridge – Landscape Base

Report prepared by:

Tony Artuso, Senior Engineering Assistant, Ext. 8396
Michael Frieri, Manager of Engineering Planning & Studies, Ext. 8725

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)