

**CITY OF VAUGHAN**

**EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2013**

Item 2, Report No. 51, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on November 19, 2013.

**2**

**NORTH MAPLE COMMUNITY BRIDGE  
CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY  
NOTICE OF STUDY COMPLETION  
WARDS 1 AND 3**

**VICINITY - NORTH OF MAJOR MACKENZIE DR. BETWEEN WESTON RD. AND JANE ST.**

**The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:**

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works and the Director of Development / Transportation Engineering, dated November 12, 2013, be approved, subject to the following;**

**That Recommendation 1 be amended to read as follows:**

- 1. THAT staff issue a Notice of Study Completion for the North Maple Community Bridge Class Environmental Assessment Study, file the Environmental Study Report with the Ministry of the Environment, and allow for a minimum of one month of public review in 2014, following the upcoming holiday season; and**
- 2) That Communication C2, presentation material entitled, "*North Maple Community Bridge Class Environmental Assessment Study*", be received.**

**Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works and the Director of Development / Transportation Engineering recommend:

- 1. THAT staff issue a Notice of Study Completion for the North Maple Community Bridge Class Environmental Assessment Study and immediately file the Environmental Study Report**

**Contribution to Sustainability**

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

- Providing a porous road network to support all modes of transportation
- Establishing a network of sidewalks, paths and trails to support all non-vehicular modes of 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
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Achieving sustainable growth and development

**Economic Impact**

The Class Environmental Assessment Study has been completed for a total approved Capital Budget cost of \$330,000.

## **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

### **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2013**

Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 51 – Page 2

#### **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 included:

- a Notice of Study Commencement
- two Public Information Forums
- three Citizen Liaison Committee Meetings
- a Notice of Study Completion (pending)

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

In addition, the bridge was identified as a key project in the City's recently completed Transportation Master Plan (TMP). An extensive public consultation program (independent of the consultation program noted above) was completed as part of the TMP study process.

A future public consultation program will be undertaken in conjunction with the detailed design and construction phases of this project allowing local residents further opportunity to provide input on the project.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to highlight the findings and recommendations of the North Maple Community Bridge Class Environmental Assessment Study so the Notice of Study Completion can be issued in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process.

#### **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.

Development in Block 33 has been identified in the City's Official Plan since the early 1990s. Development in the east half of the Block is for the most part complete. Development in the west half is nearing completion.

Block 33 development is predominantly residential with a prestige employment corridor adjacent to Highway 400 on the west side. The future Healthcare Campus (Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital) encompasses a large portion of Block 33 East at its south limit. The proposed bridge will connect Canada Drive to America Avenue thereby completing the approved east-west primary road network for the Block as shown on Attachment No. 1.

The Class EA Study for the bridge was commenced in 2009 concurrently with development of the west side of Block 33 when the final land use and local road layout had been established. The engineering consulting firm of AECOM Canada was retained by the City to complete the Study.

The Study was substantially completed by late 2010 but not finalized pending completion of the City's Official Plan review and related Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The TMP was completed in late 2012 and reaffirmed the need for the bridge.

## CITY OF VAUGHAN

### **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2013**

#### Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 51 – Page 3

Given the time lapse in the Class EA Study process, an update report on the status of the Study was prepared for Council in January of 2013. Based on the information presented in this report, Council adopted the following recommendation:

*“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”*

An extract (containing the above noted recommendation and related background report) from the Council meeting minutes of January 29, 2013 is included as Attachment No. 2.

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

The proposed bridge will connect the planned multi-modal transportation system network across Highway 400. This is necessary in order to:

- provide east-west road connectivity
- promote a greater sense of community by bridging the neighbourhoods
- facilitate access to community services
- improve efficiency of transit services through concession blocks
- increase connectivity and efficiency of the pedestrian and cycling networks
- decrease overall response times for emergency services
- minimize the need for local traffic to use the arterial network

Highway 400 represents a significant impediment to pedestrian and cycling movement between communities east and west of the highway throughout the City. The transportation network within the residential communities both east and west of Block 33 have been planned and constructed with consideration for east-west connectivity and porosity. Current network users must rely on Major Mackenzie Drive or Teston Road to cross Highway 400 as illustrated on Attachment No. 1. The presence of Highway 400 entry and exit ramps along these arterial road corridors creates discontinuities in the pedestrian and cycling networks as well as potential safety concerns. Construction of the bridge will provide the only east-west local pedestrian and cycling link crossing Highway 400 throughout this area.

#### **The Class EA Study has established a preferred preliminary design for the bridge**

The preliminary bridge design will accommodate two general purpose travel lanes, dedicated on-street bicycle lanes and sidewalks on both sides. A typical cross section of the proposed bridge is included as Attachment No. 3.

A preliminary landscape plan has been prepared illustrating how the embankment slopes along each approach (east and west side of the bridge) may be aesthetically enhanced and used to create a visual buffer for neighbouring land uses as shown on Attachment No. 4.

#### **Recently completed traffic counts have validated the Study's original traffic estimates**

Updated traffic counts were recently completed to validate the Study's original traffic estimates prepared in early 2010. This validation exercise was deemed necessary due to the potential changes in traffic volumes and patterns resulting from the Teston Road / Highway 400 interchange.

The updated Traffic Assessment Study confirms the need for the bridge. The traffic assessment results and the preferred preliminary design of the bridge were presented to the Citizen's Liaison Committee at a final meeting held on October 3, 2013.

**EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2013**

Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 51 – Page 4

**Various public agencies and the Ahmadiyya Community have expressed support for the bridge**

During the course of the Study, support for the bridge was expressed by various public agencies including York Regional Police, Emergency Medical Services, York Region Transit and both York Region school boards. A representative of the Ahmadiyya Community (and CLC member) also voiced support for the bridge on behalf of approximately 1,000 families living within Block 33.

**Concerns expressed by existing residents have been documented in the Study Report and will be further addressed during the detailed design stage of the project**

Existing residents (primarily on the east side along America Avenue) expressed concerns with the estimated increase in traffic volumes thereby compromising pedestrian and neighbourhood safety; and increasing noise and pollution.

Based on the traffic estimates, the bridge is expected to carry moderate traffic volumes. The estimated traffic volumes are well within the limits of a livable residential street / neighbourhood.

Once the bridge is constructed, the connecting primary road network; Canada Drive and America Avenue, will be similar in scale and function to other existing minor collector roads throughout the City such as:

- Chancellor Drive between Pine Valley Drive and Weston Road
- Davos Road between Pine Valley Drive and Weston Road
- Autumn Hill Boulevard between Dufferin Street and Bathurst Street
- Marc Santi Boulevard between Dufferin Street and Bathurst Street

Safety concerns associated with increased traffic through the community can be mitigated with appropriate traffic calming / design elements. These elements can be incorporated into the detailed design of the bridge and be introduced on the connecting roads as necessary in consultation with local residents. Further, a traffic safety audit of the area could be undertaken to assess traffic conditions in conjunction with the bridge design and/or once the bridge has been constructed.

Other concerns raised by members of the CLC and local residents include:

- the potential for increased truck traffic through the community generated from the prestige employment area on the west side
- vehicular and pedestrian safety during adverse weather conditions due to proposed roadway approach slopes
- esthetics of the bridge and potential for depreciating property values in the area

The preliminary engineering design prepared in support of the Class EA Study meets all applicable safety standards for roadways and bridges. Urban design elements and landscaping features that esthetically enhance the overall structure and surrounding area will be further specified during the detailed design stage.

**The Class EA Study Report will be available for public review before the end of November 2013**

The Environmental Study Report (ESR) will be finalized to reflect the results of the updated Traffic Study and to document the outcome of the final CLC meeting held on October 3, 2013.

## **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

### **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2013**

#### **Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 51 – Page 5**

Issuance of a Notice of Study Completion is the final point of contact (for the Class EA process) with the public, stakeholders and approval agencies. In accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment requirements, a minimum 30-day public review period shall be provided for review and comment on the final ESR. Once the 30-day public review period is complete, and no significant issues or concerns are raised, the EA Study would be deemed approved by the Ministry of the Environment.

#### **The construction of the bridge will be programed when there is a local demand**

Staff will continue to monitor the operation of the local transportation system in the usual manner, and would make appropriate recommendations for Council consideration regarding programming the detailed design and construction of the bridge, when there is a transportation and local demand for it.

#### **Regional Implications**

The North Maple Community Bridge is identified in the Region's Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan as a key component of the overall transportation network for the City. York Region's latest Transportation Master Plan update was completed in 2009. It is anticipated the Region will be commencing a TMP update process in 2014.

Regional staff has been involved throughout the duration of the Class EA Study and are supportive of the project.

The North Maple Community Bridge is estimated to cost approximately \$9 million (inclusive of the Class Environmental Assessment Study, detailed design and construction). Implementation of the bridge will complete the planned primary local road network for the area and will provide local traffic with alternate routes to the adjacent arterial road grid. In accordance with Regional policy, it is anticipated the Region will fund 33% of the cost of the 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.

#### **Conclusion**

The proposed North Maple Community Bridge is an important component of the City's multi-modal primary road network. The necessary Class Environmental Assessment Study for the bridge is now complete. The Environmental Study Report (ESR) has established a preferred preliminary design for the bridge and addressed all concerns raised by local residents and members of the Citizen's Liaison Committee.

**CITY OF VAUGHAN**

**EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2013**

Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 51 – Page 6

The final step in the Class EA process requires the issuance of a Notice of Study Completion. Upon issuance of this notice, the ESR will be kept on file for a mandatory 30-day public review period. During this period, the public may further review the ESR and submit comments and/or concerns to the City and the Ministry of the Environment. Comments received during this period will be addressed by staff and/or the Study consulting team. Should any member of the public not be satisfied with the response, a Part II Order request may be submitted directly to the Minister of the Environment thereby initiating an independent Ministry review process.

Accordingly, staff recommends that the Notice of Study Completion be issued immediately for the North Maple Community Bridge Class EA Study to begin the public review period.

**Attachments**

1. Location Plan / Primary Road Network
2. Extract From Council Meeting Minutes of January 29, 2013
3. Preferred Typical Section
4. Landscape Plan

**Report prepared by:**

Michael Frieri, Manager of Engineering Planning & Studies, Ext. 8729  
Selma Hubjer, Manager of Transportation Engineering, Ext. 8674  
Tony Artuso, Senior Engineering Assistant, Ext. 8396

(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.)