

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) OCTOBER 15, 2002

HIGHWAY 7 POLICY REVIEW

FILE 15.87

YORK REGION POLICY INITIATIVES – CENTRES AND CORRIDORS

YORK REGION RAPID TRANSIT PLAN

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

THAT the following presentations BE RECEIVED:

1. From Mr. Bryan Tuckey, Commissioner of Planning and Development Services- Regional Municipality of York, on the status of Regional initiatives in the Highway 7 corridor;
2. From Ms Mary-Frances Turner, Executive Co-ordinator of the York Region Rapid Transit Plan, et. al., on the implementation of the Region's Rapid Transit Plan, focusing on the Highway 7 corridor; and,
3. From Mr. Scott Burns, et. al. from The Planning Partnership on the status of the City of Vaughan's Regional Road (Highway 7) Policy Review, which is composed of the Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study and the Jane/7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study.

THAT City Staff and the consulting team proceed with a Public Meeting to solicit input from the public, based on the presentations by The Planning Partnership at this Working Session in respect of the Highway 7 Policy Review.

THAT City Staff BE DIRECTED to provide notice of the Public Meeting by newspaper in accordance with City Policy, to all Ratepayer Organizations and the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce and by direct mailing to all property owners within 400 metres of Highway 7.

THAT the Region of York BE REQUESTED to attend the Public Meeting to update the public on the status of its policy and rapid transit initiatives in the Highway 7 corridor as context for the City's presentation on the Highway 7 Policy Review.

Purpose

To provide the Committee of the Whole with an update on the major policy, transit and land use initiatives currently underway in the Highway 7 corridor. From the City's perspective the primary focus will be on the Highway 7 Policy Review, which is composed of two separate but linked studies entitled the "Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study" and the "Jane/7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study".

The Region of York is also involved in some major policy and transit initiatives in the Highway 7 corridor, which will affect the City's work. Therefore, this information is also being brought to the attention of Council. In addition, the members of the Spadina-York Subway Extension Committee have been invited to this meeting in order to update them on Regional and City initiatives that may affect the provision of rapid transit services in the Spadina, York University, Vaughan Corporate Centre corridor.

Background

The Highway 7 Policy Review started in the fall of 2001. A presentation on Phase I of the Review was made to a Working Session of Council on April 30, 2002. On May 13, 2002 Council adopted the following recommendations of Commissioner of Planning:

THAT the presentation by The Planning Partnership on “The Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study” and “The Jane/7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study” and their respective Phase I reports, BE RECEIVED;

THAT the criteria identified by The Planning Partnership for selecting candidate Demonstration Plan sites in the Jane/7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study, BE ENDORSED: and,

THAT the Phase 1 reports BE FORWARDED to the Region of York as input into the related Regional initiatives.

On June 18th, 2002 the City conducted a Public Open House based on the Phase I reports. Since that time the consultants have proceeded with Phase II of the study. The Consultant's presentation will summarize the main elements of each draft report and provide an opportunity for comments and questions from Council. In addition to this work a number of other initiatives have also been taken that will directly influence and support the City's Highway 7 Policy Review. These will be summarized through the presentations from York Region and the York Region Rapid Transit Plan.

The Presentations

The first presentation will be from Bryan Tuckey, Commissioner of Planning and Development for the Region of York. Mr. Tuckey will provide an overview of the Region's initiatives throughout the entire Highway 7 corridor, focusing on the means of transforming Highway 7 into a major Regional corridor and on reinforcing the development of the Regional Centres in Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Markham.

Mary-Frances Turner, Executive Co-ordinator of the York Region Rapid Transit Plan will lead the presentation describing the progress on the implementation of the Region's rapid transit system. The Region, with its private sector partner, York Consortium 2002, has adopted an aggressive timetable for the introduction of rapid transit in south York Region. Details of this program will be provided in the presentation.

Finally, Scott Burns of The Planning Partnership will present the results to-date of the City's Highway 7 Policy Review. The Highway 7 Policy Review will determine a range of land use, urban design, economic, and fiscal policies for the use of the City, with the objective of assisting the transition of Highway 7 from a Provincial Highway to Vaughan's signature street.

The initiatives discussed in the presentations are clearly linked. For Highway 7 to fulfill its potential there must be cooperation between the Region, the City and the Transit Provider, as the objectives of each are best served by a more urbanized Highway 7. This co-operation will also need to extend to senior levels of government, particularly in the area of funding.

When taken together, the presentations identify the three primary ingredients necessary to support the successful development of centres and corridors. These are:

- Supportive land use policy as may be provided by the Region, through its Official Plan and by the City through the Highway 7 Policy Review;
- Pro-active implementation of rapid transit to upgrade accessibility, alter the land use economics, and attract new development. This may be the most critical element; and
- The development of targeted economic or financial incentives that will serve to attract more intensive residential and commercial development to the planned areas.

In combination, these growth management measures have the potential to differentiate the Highway 7 corridor from other areas, both inside and outside of York Region, thereby attracting

the private sector investment that is required to effect the transition. This will serve to further the Region's and City's urban structure objectives.

Next Steps

It is important to solicit public input on this work. Notice of the June 18th Open House was advertised in The Liberal and circulated to ratepayer groups, landowners and consultants who had previously requested notification. To help solicit increased public input on the study, as well as provide increased opportunity to communicate the land use, financial, and transit initiatives, Staff are proposing that in addition to being advertised in The Liberal, that the notice of the next Public Open House be sent to all property owners within 400 metres of the Highway 7 corridor in Vaughan.

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan's Highway 7 Policy Review is now entering its final phase. The City's policy response is an important component of the overall response to the significant changes that are also being undertaken across York Region and the Greater Toronto Area. The City of Vaughan will need to co-ordinate its efforts on the Highway 7 Policy Review with the land use, financial, and transit initiatives being undertaken by the Provincial Government and York Region in order to provide a coordinated approach to this critical corridor in Vaughan.

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

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