

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – MARCH 26, 2007

WALKWAY LIGHTING POLICY

Recommendations

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works in consultation with the Manager of Insurance/Risk Management, recommends:

1. That this report BE RECEIVED for information purposes; and
2. That the 'Walkway Lighting Policy' included as Attachment No. 3 be adopted by Council.

Economic Impact

Walkways and all associated lighting infrastructure requirements are constructed at the developer's expense as a typical requirement of development and administered through the subdivision agreement with the City. Once constructed and assumed, hydro operating costs and all maintenance requirements are considered as part of the City's yearly operating budget.

Retrofitting existing walkways with warning signs where required, can be considered within the City's yearly operating budget based on funding availability. It is estimated that approximately 50 existing walkways throughout the City currently lead to areas where full illumination is not provided beyond the limits of the walkway. The estimated cost to purchase and install each of these signs would be approximately \$100.

As a result, there are no immediate budgetary impacts resulting from the adoption of this report.

Communications Plan

N/A

Purpose

This report has been prepared in response to Council's direction regarding pathway lighting leading into the Woodbridge Expansion Area open space.

Background – Analysis and Options

Item 41, 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, 2007, recommended:

That the deputation of Ms. Deborah Schulte with respect to pathway lighting leading into the Woodbridge Expansion Area (Block 53) be received, and referred to staff to review the concerns identified by the deputant, including related issues and report back to the Committee of the Whole meeting of March 26, 2007.

Current City Standards

Walkways are required to provide connectivity for pedestrians allowing convenient access to community amenity areas such as schools, parks, community centres, open space or park trail systems, transit routes or simply from one residential street to an adjacent one. Current City standards require a 9.0 metre wide walkway block with a 2.5 metre wide concrete platform when providing pedestrian connectivity to a park. All other standard walkway applications are typically 6.0 metre wide blocks with a 1.5 metre wide concrete platform. In both cases, wood privacy and chain link fencing is provided on either side of the walkway block at a height of 1.8 metres and 1.2

metres, respectively. Walkways are dedicated as public walkways and are deemed to be on City-owned lands.

Walkways may also be strategically placed within subdivisions leading to stormwater management facilities. In these cases, walkway blocks are typically used to channel overland stormwater flows. The walkways will provide a safe outlet for the overland flow route to a storm pond during high intensity storm events. This allows for maximum flooding protection to private property. The subject walkway functions both as access to the open space area and as conveyance for overland flows to the stormwater management pond.

All walkways and roadways within the limits of a subdivision development area are designed with full illumination in accordance with current City standards and specifications. The walkway lighting practice has been in place since Council approved the Walkway Lighting Priority Study Report in 1995 and initiated a walkway lighting upgrading program. Light standards are provided at regular intervals along the length of the walkway in order to achieve minimum acceptable illumination levels. It is the responsibility of the lighting design consultant to complete a photometric analysis to determine the required spacing to meet these requirements. Where walkways intersect with a municipal right-of-way, the design consultant must ensure there is a light standard located within 2.0 metres of the walkway entrance to ensure pedestrian safety.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a pro-active crime prevention strategy. It surmises that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime and improve the quality of life. Emphasis is placed on the physical environment, productive use of space, and behavior of people to create environments that are absent of environmental cues that cause opportunities for crime to occur.

Staff have consulted with York Regional Crime Prevention Officer, regarding the application of CPTED principles relating to walkway lighting standards throughout the City. Based on these principles, lighting walkways leading to areas where full illumination is not continuous should be avoided. However, staff was provided with information from other crime prevention specialists contradicting this principle stating that the addition of lighting improves natural surveillance and makes users feel safer.

Although competing philosophies on the implementation of lighting and its effectiveness to improve pedestrian safety may exist, it was acknowledged that one of the key over-riding factors in considering if a walkway should be lit, is to review the matter based on the Municipality, risk management principles.

As part of the City's due diligence, all factors including the CPTED principles discussed above should be reviewed in consideration of a proposed walkway lighting policy. From a risk management perspective, every reasonable effort should be made to minimize hidden risks to the public.

Woodbridge Expansion Area (Block 53) Pathway Lighting

The subject area in question with respect to Ms. Deborah Schulte's concerns is identified in Attachment No. 1. The open space neighbourhood multi-use recreational pathway currently under construction within the Woodbridge Expansion Area (Block 53) will consist of up to a maximum 2.5 metre wide pathway structure composed of various materials such as asphalt and granular screenings. The pathway will facilitate community recreational uses such as cycling and walking. It is anticipated that this facility will be opened for public use by summer of this year. The proposed location and layout of this pathway system is included as Attachment No. 2. Illumination of such open space natural walkway systems is typically not provided due to the disruptive impacts on vegetation, wildlife and general increase in light pollution to the surrounding natural habitat.

Walkway Lighting Policy

Based on the CPTED principles discussed above and on the City's risk management analysis of walkway lighting, it is most reasonable to provide lighting for all City-owned walkways. In addition, in order to minimize potential hidden risks to the public, warning signs should be posted at entrance points to all walkways leading to any area such as an open space block where full illumination is not provided.

The above noted scenario would typically apply to any City walkway leading from a fully lit municipal right-of-way to an open space trail system where no illumination is provided, as currently is the case in the Woodbridge Expansion Area as identified in Attachments No. 1 and 2. The implementation of lighting for all walkway blocks also serves as a deterrent for individuals from loitering at night and causing disturbance to residential property owners immediately adjacent to walkway blocks. It is noted that, prior to the City implementing walkway lighting, the City did receive complaints from adjacent residents of loitering in unlit walkways. Staff have made inquiries regarding lit walkways leading to unlit areas and have not been advised of any concerns in those areas.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to service delivery excellence as established by Vaughan Vision 2007, the recommendations of this report will assist in;

- improving community safety standards through design, prevention, enforcement and education;
- establishing and communicating service level standards that are affordable and sustainable; and
- reviewing the level of enforcement, compliance and monitoring of regulations related to public safety.

This report is therefore consistent with the priorities previously set by Council.

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

As all walkway blocks are registered as public right-of-way and deemed to be City-owned lands, it is prudent, from a risk management perspective, that every reasonable effort is made to minimize hidden risks to the public. In addition to the City's current walkway design standards and practices, the following key elements will assist in reducing potential hidden risks to the public:

1. Continuing the practice of providing illumination of all walkways throughout the City; and
2. Providing standard warning signs at all entrance points to walkways leading to areas where full illumination is not continuous beyond the walkway, such as stormwater management facilities or open space trail systems, thereby deterring pedestrians from entering a walkway during non-daylight hours.

The implementation of lighting for all walkways dedicated as public walkways also serves as a deterrent for individuals from loitering at night and causing disturbance to residential property owners immediately adjacent to walkway blocks.

It is noted that this proposed policy applies to walkway blocks only and does not mean that all public trails and park walkways are to be illuminated. These would be considered on an individual basis. The City has no plans to illuminate the trail system planned in the West Woodbridge Expansion Area open space.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Walkway Lighting Policy included as Attachment No. 3 be adopted by Council.

Attachments

Attachment No. 1 – West Woodbridge Expansion Area Open Space
Attachment No. 2 – West Woodbridge Expansion Area Open Space Master Plan
Attachment No. 3 – Walkway Lighting Policy

Report prepared by

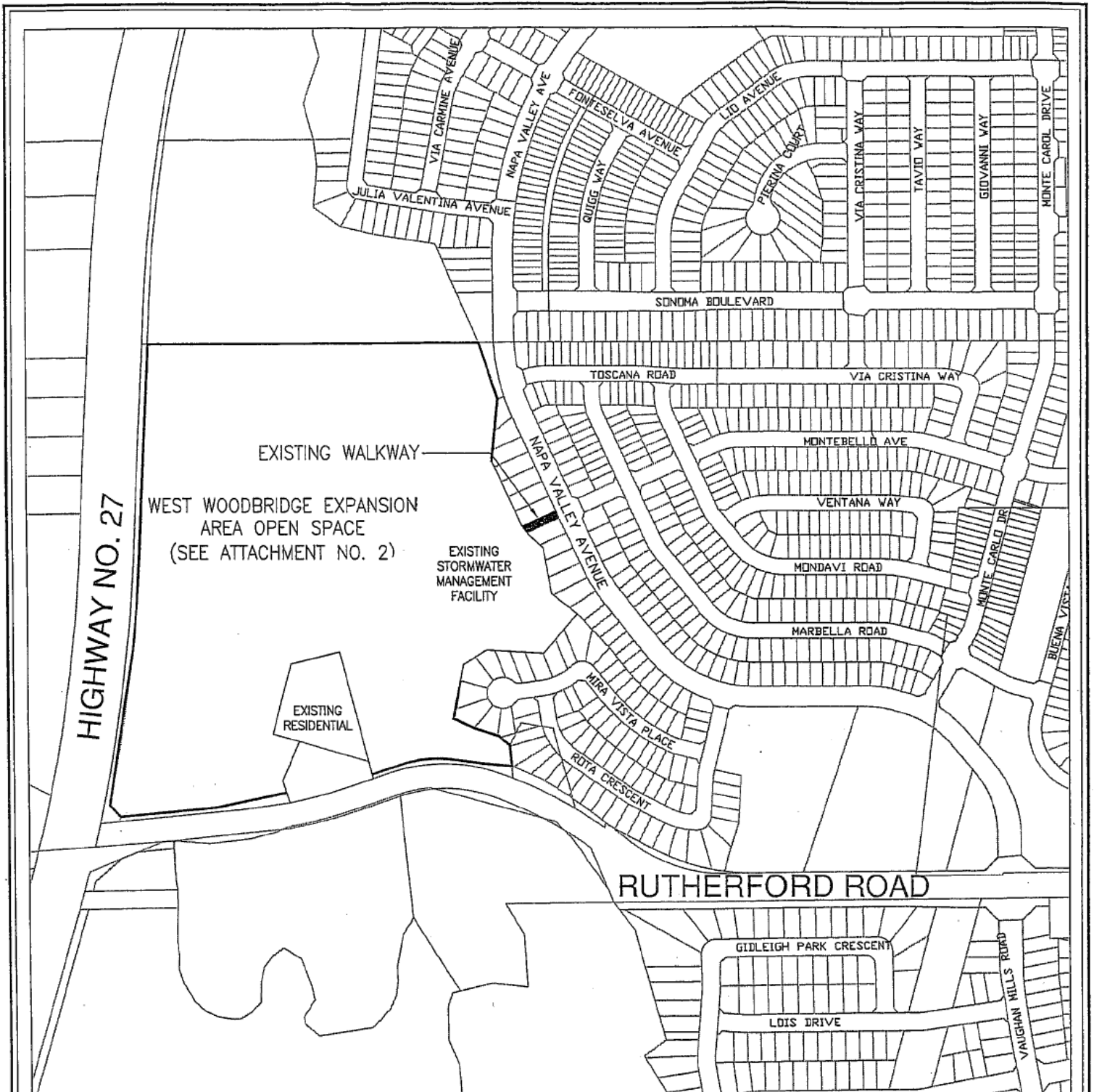
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Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works

Michael Won, P. Eng.
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ATTACHMENT NO. 1



WEST WOODBRIDGE EXPANSION AREA OPEN SPACE



N.T.S.



ATTACHMENT No. 3

WALKWAY LIGHTING POLICY

April 2, 2007

In addition to the City's current walkway design standards and practices as identified in the City's Design Criteria and Standard Drawings, all walkway blocks registered as public right-of-way and deemed to be City-owned lands shall be designed to include:

1. Illumination; and
2. Standard warning signs at all entrance points leading to areas where full illumination is not continuous beyond the walkway limits, such as stormwater management facilities or open space trail systems.

Note: This policy does not apply to open space trail systems or park walkways. These systems would be considered on a case by case basis.