

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JANUARY 7, 2002**

### **VELLORE VILLAGE DISTRICT CENTRE AND CIVIC CENTRE FEASIBILITY STUDY**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. That the City's consultant, Sorensen, Gravely, Lowes Planning Associates, be directed to complete the remaining tasks in the Vellore Village District Centre Study;
2. That a budget of \$40,000 be approved as a supplement to the proposed Planning Department 2002 operating budget, in order to complete this Study.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide the basis for completion of the Vellore Village District Centre Study, including Council direction to address the remaining components of the approved Terms of Reference and approval of the associated budget.

#### **Location**

The Vellore Village District Centre is generally located at the intersection of Major Mackenzie Drive and Weston Road in the community of Vellore - Urban Village 1. The community of Vellore is generally bounded by Pine Valley Drive on the west, Teston Road on the north, Highway #400 on the east, and Rutherford Road on the south (see Location Map - Vellore Urban Village 1, from Schedule B, OPA #600). The ultimate population of Vellore Urban Village 1 will be approximately 50,000 people.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

On February 26, 2001, Council approved a Terms of Reference for the District Centres Study.

On May 17, 2001, the Province initiated a review of the Oak Ridges Moraine, effectively suspending further planning approvals for a 6-month period for its subject lands, including lands within the Carrville District Centre.

On May 30, 2001, Council directed an expansion of the Terms of Reference for the Vellore Village District Centre Study, "to include the lands on the north side of Major Mackenzie Drive extending to Highway #400 for the purpose of establishing a new City Centre..." Council also created a Task Force to undertake a feasibility study of a new civic center, and provided for it to report to Council on a regular basis.

Subsequently, the City retained the services of a consulting team led by Sorensen, Gravely, Lowes Planning Associates, and including sub-consultants PricewaterhouseCoopers (market and economic analysis), Markson, Borooah Hodgson Architects Inc. (Urban Design), and Totten, Sims, Hubicki Associates Ltd. (transportation).

On December 18, 2001, Committee of the Whole considered the following recommendations from the Vellore Village District Centre Task Force:

- "1. That the Civic Centre Feasibility Study be received;
2. That the City's consulting team proceed with the evaluation of conceptual development scenarios for the Vellore Village District Centre; and
3. That the Vellore Village District Centre Task Force report to Committee of the Whole (working session) in January, 2002 with a further report on the Vellore Village District Centre and Civic Centre."

Committee of the Whole approved a resolution to receive the Civic Centre Feasibility Study (completed by PricewaterhouseCoopers and Sorensen, Gravely, Lowes Planning Associates) from the Vellore Task Force.

Owing to insufficient time, Committee of the Whole deferred a decision on the Task Force recommendations #2 and #3. These items are included in this Jan. 7, 2002 Committee of the Whole agenda in a separate item.

### **Current Status of the Vellore Village District Centre and Civic Centre Feasibility Study**

The Civic Centre Feasibility Study is complete. It concluded that a Civic Centre in Vellore Village would have a "Moderate Mixed-Use Focus". The Civic Centre precinct would likely include a City Hall, performing arts/cultural centre, library, and additional institutional space totaling about 372,000 square feet, and would require a site of about 14 – 20 acres.

To date, the consulting work on the Vellore Village District Centre Study has concentrated on reviewing relevant background material, studying the site and surrounding lands, updating the District Centre 'vision', and consulting with affected landowners and the public. The consulting team has also generated seven potential development scenarios for these lands (each of which conceptually identify a 'potential Civic Centre precinct' west of the Highway 400 interchange on the north side of Major Mackenzie Drive), and a set of evaluation criteria to assist in identifying a preferred scenario.

Subsequently the City's consultants undertook a preliminary evaluation of the seven development scenarios, using the evaluation criteria. The preliminary short list consists of:

- Option A: Intersection Focus at Weston/Major Mackenzie Drive
- Option B1: Linear Focus on Weston Road
- Option B2: Linear Focus on Major Mackenzie Drive, and
- Option C2: Two Quadrant Scenario - main street north of Major Mackenzie Drive

### **Next Steps**

Direction is now required to complete the Vellore Village District Centre Study. It is important that this process be completed expeditiously, in order to clearly define the City's planning policy position. An OMB prehearing is scheduled January 23, 2002, respecting a development application at the southeast corner of Weston Road and Major Mackenzie Drive, and a date for an OMB hearing may be set at that time.

The consulting contract provides for City Staff and consultants to evaluate the development scenarios, and identify the preferred scenario for the Vellore Village District Study. The preferred scenario may be one of the existing options, or another 'hybrid' option combining the best attributes of one or more of the existing options. Until Council makes a decision to locate a new Civic Centre in Vellore Village, it cannot be included in the preferred scenario. Should Council wish to have a second scenario prepared, including a Civic Centre, additional budget will be required - see Financial Requirements below.

Following endorsement of a preferred scenario by the Task Force, a public Open House will be scheduled, when the City's consultants will present the preferred plan and proposed staging process for public information and input. A landowner meeting will also be scheduled to discuss the preferred scenario.

The preferred scenario will then proceed to Council Committee. If Council Committee is supportive of the preferred scenario in principle, City Staff and consultants will prepare a draft Official Plan Amendment reflecting the scenario and supporting policy framework.

### **Financial Requirements**

In order to complete the Vellore Village District Centre Study, a commitment of funds is needed to pay for work which has not yet been completed, but was approved by Council in the Study Terms of Reference. The work completed to the end of 2001 is consistent with the Study's work program and approved budget. The original consulting contract provided for a budget of \$99,878, of which approximately \$60,000 has been spent to date. As this Study was funded from the 2001 operating budget, the remainder of the work costing approximately \$40,000, requires an additional financial commitment from the City. This amount should be provided as a supplement to the Planning Department's proposed 2002 operating budget. Additional work to develop a second option would be beyond the terms of the consulting contract, and therefore would require a further budget commitment to cover the attendant costs. An additional \$9000 - \$11000 would be required.

### **Conclusion**

Planning Staff and the City's consultants now require Council's direction to complete the Vellore Village District Centre Study, and the necessary financial resources to cover the associated costs. Should Council wish to expand the Study Terms of Reference to encompass additional work on a second option including a new Civic Centre, direction and the necessary financial resources will also be needed.

### **Report prepared by:**

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Respectfully submitted,

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