

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - AUGUST 19, 2002

LANGSTAFF ROAD CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ISLINGTON AVENUE TO WESTON ROAD WITHDRAW OF "BUMP-UP" REQUEST

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works recommends:

1. That the City of Vaughan withdraw its "Bump-up" request pertaining to the Region of York Class Environmental Assessment for Langstaff Road between Islington Avenue and Weston Road and that the Ministry of Environment and Energy and the Region of York be so advised; and,
2. That during the detail design stage, the Region of York be requested to work with the City of Vaughan on the provision of sidewalks and illumination along the roadway and to minimize the impact on existing roadside vegetation and to provide enhanced planting wherever practicable.

Purpose

This report provides an update on the status of the Region of York's Class Environmental Assessment for Langstaff Road between Islington Avenue and Weston Road, and recommends that the City withdraw its "Bump-up" request.

Background - Analysis and Options

In 1998, the Region of York initiated the Class Environmental Assessment study for the 3.5 kilometre section of Langstaff Road between Islington Avenue and Weston Road as shown on Attachment 1. This section of Langstaff Road is classified as an urban arterial roadway. The primary purpose of undertaking the study was to identify the optimum roadway improvements for Langstaff Road to accommodate the increasing east-west traffic volumes in the study area resulting from growth, and to enhance pedestrian and vehicular safety in the corridor. The Region retained the firm of Marshall Macklin Monaghan Consulting Engineers to undertake this Class EA study.

The Class EA concluded that Langstaff Road should be widened to four lanes (two lanes per direction) with turning and storage lanes at all intersections, curb and gutter, center medians at intersections, storm sewers and the provisions for sidewalk and illumination. The horizontal alignment of Langstaff will vary within the study corridor. The section of Langstaff between Islington Avenue and Pine Valley Drive will be widened asymmetrically to the north throughout most of the area including the existing Humber River Bridge. The existing centerline alignment at the intersections of Islington Avenue and at Pine Valley Drive will be maintained. The section of Langstaff Road between Pine Valley Drive and Weston Road will be widened symmetrically around the existing centerline of the road. A retaining wall is proposed through a section approximately 65 metres in length on the north side of Langstaff Road, just east of Pine Valley Drive to avoid an encroachment onto private property. According to the conclusions of the Class EA, the preferred road design alternative can be accommodated within the existing right-of-way negating the need for additional property.

The Region of York completed the Environmental Assessment and issued the Notice of Completion on January 13, 2000. On February 14, 2000, Vaughan Council adopted the following to permit City Staff more time to review the Environmental Study Report :

“By requesting that the Minister of the Environment “Bump up” the environmental assessment on Langstaff Road from Weston Road to Islington Avenue.”

In addition to the City, the Region also received “Bump –up” requests from the Weston Downs Ratepayers Association, the National Estates Ratepayers Group, and an area resident. As a result of the “Bump-up” requests, the Region undertook supplemental public consultation to address the concerns raised by the area residents.

Many important issues were raised, but the key ones of primary concern to the City included construction phasing, provisions for sidewalks and illumination, increased traffic noise, impacts to existing landscaping and private property. The following is a brief explanation of these issues and how the Region subsequently addressed them.

Construction Phasing

A concern was raised that both Rutherford Road and Langstaff Road could be under construction at the same time, which would cause traffic congestion. To address this concern, the Region adopted the following construction staging plan:

Stage One would see the widening and reconstruction of Langstaff Road from Islington Avenue to Pine Valley Drive to proceed first and begin construction in 2003.

Stage Two would involve the widening and reconstruction of Langstaff Road from Pine Valley Drive to Weston Road after Stage One and after substantial completion of the widening and reconstruction of Rutherford Road between Highway 27 and Weston Road.

Provision for Sidewalk and Illumination

With the proposed widening of Langstaff Road and increasing traffic volumes, pedestrian safety is a concern. In response to this issue, the Region has included provisions in the preliminary road design for sidewalk and illumination on both sides of Langstaff Road within the study area. When the detailed design proceeds, City staff will ensure that sidewalk and streetlighting are included in the road works at City cost (subject to funding approval).

Traffic Noise

Concerns regarding the differing levels of noise attenuation features along Langstaff Road and the impact that noise from increasing traffic volumes may have on the living environments of the abutting residential properties were noted. The existing noise attenuation features vary from none to board fences to some landscaping to noise fences. Subdivisions of various ages required differing noise attenuation measures as the land was developed. The main issue, as staff understands it, was for fair treatment of all residents abutting Langstaff Road with respect to noise attenuation.

Through the Class EA process, the Region reviewed and analyzed the noise levels. Noise attenuation measures are considered by comparing the difference between the existing and future-do-nothing versus the difference between the existing and future widening projected noise levels. Current MOEE noise protocol provides that where a project would result in a noise level increase of less than 5 dBA, noise mitigation measures would not be required. As demonstrated in the Region’s Class EA study, the greatest noise level increase was 2.05 dBA. This is well below the requirement to consider noise mitigation measures. The Region is, therefore, not required to install noise attenuation features as part of the road works. If residents and Council wish to pursue the installation of noise attenuation features, this would have to be done as a separate initiative. Although of no benefit to mitigating noise, the Region has indicated that enhanced landscaping could be provided as part of the widening project to improve conditions west of Ansley Grove Road where residents do not already have a noise wall.

Impact to Existing Landscaping

It is recognized that the widening of Langstaff Road will impact some of the landscaping within the existing right-of-way. The Region has indicated that wherever possible, the design of Langstaff Road will incorporate the existing landscaping in the corridor. If sufficient space is available, enhanced planting can be considered. This issue can be addressed at the detailed design stage of the project in consultation with the City.

Impact to Private Property

According to the conclusions of the Class EA, the preferred road design alternative can be accommodated within the existing Langstaff Road right-of-way negating the need for additional property. Therefore, the Region does not anticipate encroachment into the adjacent properties including the National Golf Course.

Co-ordination of Projects

The region plans to construct a 300mm diameter watermain from the elevated storage tank on Ansley Grove Road along Langstaff Road to Islington Avenue as part of the West Woodbridge supply plan. A schedule B class EA for the watermain project was started by the Region last month and is expected to be completed in the fall of this year. The construction of the watermain will be co-ordinated with the proposed roadworks.

The City has just completed a class EA for the Pine Valley Pumping Station and forcemain on Langstaff Road from Pine Valley Drive to Islington Avenue. A separate item on this committee agenda is recommending that the region assume the responsibility for this project. The forcemain project will be co-ordinated with the proposed roadworks.

Conclusion

Accordingly, based on the foregoing, and given that the City will be involved further in the detailed design stage of this road project, it is recommended that the City withdraw its "Bump-up" request on the Class Environmental Assessment for Langstaff Road between Islington Avenue and Weston Road.

Attachments

1. Location Map

Report prepared by

Andrew Pearce, Development Supervisor, Engineering Planning & Studies, ext 8235
Brendan Holly, Senior Manager Development/Transportation Engineering, ext 8250

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Robinson, P. Eng.
Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works

ATTACHMENT No. 1

