

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - SEPTEMBER 6, 2005

PUBLIC HIGHWAY STOP-UP AND CLOSE HUNTINGTON ROAD CLOSURE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A TEMPORARY ALTERNATIVE ROAD LINK BETWEEN MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE AND MCGILLIVRAY ROAD

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, in consultation with the Director of Legal Services, recommends:

1. That Council direct the City Clerk to commence Municipal Act procedures to stop-up and close a portion of Huntington Road, between McGillivray and Major Mackenzie Drive.
2. That a By-law be enacted authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to execute a development agreement and any other necessary agreements thereto between the City of Vaughan and Canadian Pacific Railway with respect to the construction and conveyance and reconveyance of an alternate road link east of Huntington Road, in a form satisfactory to the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works and the City Solicitor.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact to the City. The road closure will result in an alternate link being constructed at full costs to Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). The length of roadway that needs to be maintained will be the same as the portion proposed to be stopped up and closed.

Purpose

To seek Council's approval to commence procedures pursuant to the Municipal Act to stop up and close Huntington Road between McGillivray Road and Major Mackenzie Drive, and the subsequent construction of a new temporary alternate road linking McGillivray Road to Huntington Road. This undertaking is proposed to facilitate the planned expansion of the Canadian Pacific Railway – Vaughan Intermodal Terminal.

Background - Analysis and Options

The Canadian Pacific Railway operates the Vaughan Intermodal Terminal that is bounded by Regional Road 50, Huntington Road, Rutherford Road and Major Mackenzie Drive. This CPR Intermodal Terminal facility in Vaughan is CPR's largest in Canada. The Terminal currently has only a single spur line that connects the Terminal to the main railway line. This spur line is located at the north end of the Intermodal site and crosses Huntington Road at-grade just south of Major Mackenzie Drive.

To meet the growing demand for intermodal transportation, CPR has developed plans to expand its operations at the Vaughan Intermodal Terminal including increasing the number and length of the trains. To accommodate these operational changes, it is anticipated that shunting activities at the existing Huntington Road at-grade crossing will increase resulting in longer and more frequent periods of time when Huntington Road is blocked to motorists and emergency vehicles responding to incidents in the area. Currently, approximately 350 vehicles per day cross the railway tracks at Huntington Road, the majority of which are not generated by local residents. There are six local driveways fronting on to Huntington Road between Major Mackenzie Drive and Rutherford Road. The terminal operates 24 hours a day. On average, there are approximately 31 railway movements per day in and out of the terminal. It takes between 5 to 30 minutes for a train to traverse the existing road crossing at Huntington Road.

EA Process and Public Consultation

A Schedule "B" Class Municipal Environmental Assessment study was undertaken by CPR for the closure of Huntington Road between Major Mackenzie Drive and McGillivray Road and the implementation of an alternative temporary road link east of Huntington Road. This study was done to facilitate Canadian Pacific Railway's plans to expand its operation at the Vaughan Intermodal Terminal. The Class EA process examined many potential alternative solutions including the "Do Nothing" and grade separation options. The EA was commenced in October 2003 and completed in May 2004. A Public Information Centre took place in February 2004. The recommended alternative that came out of the Environmental Assessment study was the temporary closure of the above-described portion of Huntington Road and the construction of a north-south link east of Huntington Road between Major Mackenzie Drive and McGillivray Road, as shown on Attachment 1. Most people who attended the Public Information Centre acknowledged the periodic delays for vehicles traveling on Huntington Road caused by trains temporarily blocking the existing at-grade railway crossing. Most of the local residents spoke of the frequency and duration of delays, and the lack of a reasonable alternate route. There was overall acceptance of the need for a solution which would improve traffic operations while maintaining efficiency in train movement at the CPR Intermodal Terminal.

This alternative link connecting Major Mackenzie Drive and McGillivray Road would address the operational requirements of the Vaughan Intermodal Terminal and minimize the potential delays to motorists. The proposed closure of Huntington Road and the new link to be located approximately 660 metres east of Huntington Road is intended to serve as a short-term solution to the needs of the Vaughan Intermodal Terminal. It is anticipated that the new link will be a temporary arrangement for approximately 5 to 8 years. The ultimate solution to this situation is anticipated to be established through the planning of the road network within the adjacent employment lands designated under the Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 19, together with the determination of the ultimate alignment for the extension of Highway 427. Currently the vicinity of the subject area is designated rural.

The recommended alternative that came out of the EA study had support from the Vaughan Fire Department, the York Region Police Department and EMS services during the EA process. Canadian Pacific Railway has committed to pay all costs relating to the construction of the new road link, and its subsequent transfer of ownership to the City. The approximate detour time is 5 to 6 minutes longer than the existing straight through route. The new road will be built on CPR lands to City standards. Once the construction is completed, the ownership of the road will be transferred to the City during the temporary arrangement of 5 to 8 years, and when it is no longer required, the lands will be re-conveyed back to CPR. Canadian Pacific Railway will enter into a development agreement with the City with respect to the construction of the road, the conveyance of lands to the City and re-conveyance of the lands back to CPR, preparation of plans, and the responsibilities and limitations to the City. It is estimated that construction of the new road link will take 4 to 8 months to complete. Once the new road is constructed, Huntington Road will then be closed between Major Mackenzie Drive and McGillivray Road.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This stop-up and closure of a portion of Huntington Road is consistent with Vaughan Vision 2007 as to establish the appropriate infrastructure required to retain and attract business (2.2.3), ensure growth does not outpace the road network infrastructure (3.2.3) and that adequate and effective road networks are provided for and maintained.

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

Conclusion

It is recommended that the proceedings commence to stop-up and close the portion of Huntington Road between Major Mackenzie Drive and McGillivray Road. Once the proceedings are completed and the development agreement is in place, the construction of a new temporary alternate road link east of Huntington Road can begin. Canadian Pacific Railway shall be responsible for all costs associated with the construction of the new roadway and its ownership transfer to the City.

Attachments

1. Location Map

Report prepared by

Milan Jekic, Acting Development Supervisor, Engineering Planning & Studies, ext. 8742

Respectfully submitted,

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

Michael Won, P. Eng.
Director of Development/
Transportation Engineering

MJ/fc

ATTACHMENT NO. 1

