

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING – MAY 5, 2008**

### **MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION, HIGHWAY 427 EXTENSION ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT – CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE CORRIDOR ALIGNMENTS**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning and the Commissioner Engineering and Public Works recommend:

1. THAT Council requests the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to clearly indicate, in its presentation of a preferred Highway 427 corridor alternative at the upcoming May 13 and 15, 2008 Public Information Centres, that the specific alignment of the future Highway 427 corridor, north of Rutherford Road, will be determined through further detailed design work and in consultation with all stakeholders;
2. THAT, in consideration of Vaughan Council and stakeholders' preference for the westerly corridor alignment, north of Rutherford Road, that MTO establish the most westerly corridor alignment possible through this detailed design process; and,
3. THAT MTO work closely with the City of Vaughan, the City of Brampton, the Town of Caledon and the Region of York and the Region of Peel as well as all other stakeholders, throughout the remainder of the Environmental Assessment process so as to ensure that the matters identified in the report adopted by Council on May 22, 2007 are addressed.

#### **Economic Impact**

N/A

#### **Communications Plan**

The Provincial Environmental Assessment process is public and provides for wide notification and consultation opportunities for public input.

#### **Purpose**

The Ministry of Transportation is in the process of completing an Environmental Assessment for the extension of Highway 427. In undertaking this Environmental Assessment a series of alternatives have been assessed and are intended to be presented on May 13 and 15, 2008 at a Public Information Centre (PIC) (in both Vaughan and Caledon respectively), including a preferred corridor alignment alternative. MTO has selected a preliminary Preferred Option that does not agree with the position put forward by the City that a preferred alignment of Highway 427 be consistent with the Western Alternative.

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

As part of the ongoing 427 Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment a Terminus and Route Alternatives Preliminary Report has been prepared. This report contains recommendations with respect to a long term terminus and the alignment of the Highway 427 Corridor.

On May 22, 2007, Council passed a resolution (Attachment 1) indicating to the Ministry of Transportation that it prefers a westerly alignment for the extension of Highway 427 that follows the north-south Hydro One Corridor. The City's prefers this option for the following reasons:

1. Reduced impact on proposed residential development;

2. Reduced impact on a heritage settlement area including the Nashville Cemetery;
3. Provides a better alignment and design of the realignments of Major Mackenzie Drive and Huntington Road.

### **Analysis and Options**

The purpose of the Environmental Assessment process is to review various alternatives and compare them against each other so that a satisfactory solution can be determined. In undertaking the development and review of alternatives, many factors are considered. These factors include: Socio-Economic, Cultural and Natural Environments, and Technical considerations.

It appears that MTO intends to proceed with a presentation of a preferred 427 corridor alignment alternative (the "Central" alternative) at a Public Information Centre (PIC) scheduled for May 13 and 15, 2008 (in both Vaughan and Caledon respectively). This rejects the Western Alternative without having consulted the public and other stakeholders. It is noted that the first PIC was held in April, 2007 which preceded the Council request in May 2007 for the addition of the westerly alignment.

### **Terminus Location**

One aspect of the Environmental Assessment is the selection of a terminus location for Highway 427. The location and design of the proposed terminus at Major Mackenzie Drive consumes a significant amount of land and implies that, for the long term, Highway 427 will end at Major Mackenzie Drive.

By selecting the Central Alternative as the preferred alternative, the City's ability to plan for future land uses in the area will be compromised and may have an impact on development north of Major Mackenzie Drive. The Central Alternative is based on the use of criteria that assumes lands within the OPA 601, the "Kleinburg-Nashville Community Plan", will continue to be designated Rural for the long term. This assumption is incorrect because: it is not consistent with the Region of York's designation of the lands as "Towns and Villages"; it ignores Council's Resolution of May 22, 2007; and, it fails to take into account that there are outstanding applications for Official Plan amendments to create a residential community.

The Ministry's current preferred option, Alternative 2 (Central), will create an interchange that is closer than the other alternatives to a settlement area that contains the Nashville Cemetery and other important heritage features. This may potentially result in a future Highway alignment that is adjacent to or through this area. Neither of these conditions is considered desirable by the City. Any preferred alignment and potential future extension of Highway 427 needs to leave these heritage elements intact and buffered from the future highway.

It is imperative that the Province define the corridor requirements north of Major Mackenzie Drive, or expend further effort to justify a "terminus" design which will not have long term adverse implications for Vaughan, York and Peel Regions. The possible future extension of Highway 427 north of Major Mackenzie Drive should be further examined in a subsequent study.

### **Corridor Alignment**

Similar to the criteria and processes used to determine the terminus, there are also issues respecting the selection and analysis of criteria used to identify the Central Corridor as the preferred alternative corridor alignment.

For example, it is CP's preference that Major Mackenzie Drive not cross the Canadian Pacific (CP) rail main line at grade.

It is understood that the Region is planning for this crossing to be grade-separated. CP supports this since both parties expect that the levels of vehicular and rail traffic will justify the required flyover. The height of this flyover (a minimum of 6.7m / 22ft) above the tracks, results in a vertical alignment of Major Mackenzie Drive that cannot match the vertical alignment of the Central Alternative for Highway 427 extension. Furthermore, access to Huntington Road from Major Mackenzie Drive, west of the rail line, will not be possible with grade elevations associated with the required flyover. In order to properly assess the suitability of the Central Corridor Alternative, profiles and elevations must be provided to harmonize the Region's initiatives with respect to Major Mackenzie Drive, the City's responsibilities for Huntington Road and the extension of Highway 427.

MTO's evaluation of the various alternatives place a significant weight on a criterion related to access to the CP Intermodal lands by westbound traffic from Major Mackenzie Drive. MTO's concern over left turn access to the CP Intermodal lands represents a small, but necessary component of the expected vehicle traffic at the terminal. The CP Corporate Business Development Department notes that, once Highway 427 is built, the majority of truck traffic egressing from the Intermodal Yard will want to take Highway 427 south-bound. Therefore most of the operations associated with their lands would not be dependent on access via left turns from Major Mackenzie Drive. However, there will be a need for service vehicles and some trucks to turn both left out of the yard and left into the yard at Major Mackenzie Drive. While the necessary analysis has not yet been done, it appears that such an access to Major Mackenzie Drive will need to be signalized.

CP will be fully evaluating the materials to be presented at MTO's Public Information Centres on May 13 and 15, 2008.

The MTO's assessment of "Property and Access" recognizes that a westerly alignment is preferable to the central option since it is "more compatible with future land uses". The Westerly Alignment Alternative would be more compatible with future land uses by being located on lands that are expected to be developed for commercial and employment uses which will provide a buffer to proposed residential development. The Westerly Alignment Alternative will also minimize the creation of parcels that will be difficult to access and service by following the Hydro Corridor and minimizing the need for local roads to cross the Hydro Corridor.

Similarly, the assessment of "Government Land Use Strategies" provides an assessment that all three alternatives "result in similar impacts to land use strategies". This conclusion can be questioned since it appears not to have adequately considered Point 7 of Council's May 22, 2007 resolution,

"7. Add to the criteria being used to evaluate the route options, consideration of the impact on the proposed residential use of lands east of Huntington for which there are Official Plan Amendment applications."

Vaughan Council and area stakeholders feel that MTO's identification of the Central Corridor Alternative as being equally positive to the Westerly Corridor Alternative does not adequately consider the impact it will have on previously filed applications. A number of landowners have expressed concern regarding the Central alignment. As such, the criteria used to assess Government Land Use Strategies that concludes that all three alternatives "result in similar impacts to land use strategies" is, at the least, misleading. MTO acknowledges that virtually all Vaughan stakeholders, including City Council, and affected landowners and members of the Highway 427 Extension Committee, prefer the westerly alternative corridor alignment, north of Rutherford Road, as presented in the alternatives contained within MTO's March 2008 427 Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment Terminus and Route Alternatives Preliminary Report.

Furthermore, three other Environmental Assessments are being conducted on higher order municipal, regional, and provincial roads in the area: the Peel/Brampton/Caledon EA; the West Vaughan IEA; and the GTA West Corridor EA. Consideration should be given to these facilities and the connectivity between them.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020**

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

### **Regional Implications**

The selection of a corridor and terminus will have an undetermined impact on the Region's planning and provision of transportation and other services. This may include the operation of the Region's transportation network north of the Major Mackenzie Drive/Highway 427 terminus.

### **Conclusion**

The City of Vaughan, York Region, the Town of Caledon and Peel Region have expressed their opinion that the evaluation of a preferred Highway 427 corridor alignment alternative, north of Rutherford Road, does not adequately address stakeholder concerns. As such the City of Vaughan feels that a presentation of a Preferred Alternative should clearly indicate that the specific alignment of the future Highway 427 corridor, north of Rutherford Road, will be determined through further detailed design work. MTO should ensure that the most westerly possible alternative corridor alignment and Major Mackenzie terminus interchange be determined through the detailed design process.

### **Attachments**

1. Extract from Council Meeting of May 22, 2007, Item 21, Report No. 26. Resolution Respecting the Route for the Extension of Highway 427.

### **Report prepared by:**

John Zipay (8445)  
Bill Robinson (8247)

Respectfully submitted,

John Zipay  
Commissioner of Planning

Bill Robinson  
Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works

## CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 22, 2007

Item 21, Report No. 26, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on May 22, 2007.

21 RESOLUTION RESPECTING THE ROUTE FOR THE EXTENSION OF HIGHWAY 427

The Committee of the Whole recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of Councillor Carella, dated May 14, 2007, be approved; and
- 2) That the appropriate bodies including MTO be requested to:
  1. Correct the "Analysis Area" map to indicate that the entire area within the Community Plan Boundary for the Kleinburg Nashville Secondary Plan is within the Province's Settlement Area Boundary as defined by the Provincial Greenbelt Plan;
  2. Correct the terminology and lines for the "Urban Area" to be consistent with the Province's Settlement Area Boundary;
  3. Change the "Existing/Future Conditions – Social Environment/Land Use" drawing to show the lands within the Settlement Area "(Kleinburg Nashville Community Plan)" to be considered as future residential growth area and not vacant;
  4. Change the "Proposed Area Growth and Development" population and employment forecasts to correspond with the York Region 2031 forecasts that were presented to the Region's Planning Committee on April 19, 2007;
  5. Change the "Population and Employment Within the Highway 427 Extension Corridor" to reflect the City's intent to see primarily residential use of the lands within OPA 601 and not employment uses east of Huntington as shown by the MTO documents;
  6. Add to the "427 Route Alternatives" an option that more closely follows the hydro line and would cross the northeast CPR corner of the intermodal property west of Huntington Road;
  7. Add to the criteria being used to evaluate the route options, consideration of the impact on the proposed residential use of lands east of Huntington for which there are Official Plan Amendment applications;
  8. Redefine the Study Area to more tightly follow the easterly limit of the route options and maintain a minimum buffer for the study area of 200m from the Nashville Cemetery;
  9. Redefine and reduce the area shown for the Major Mackenzie realignment; and
  10. Redefine the study area by moving it westerly adjacent to the Hydro corridor as much as possible for the entire distance from Highway 7 to the north terminus of the study area.

Recommendation

Councillor Tony Carella recommends that Council adopt the following resolution, and that the City Clerk be directed to forward the resolution, once adopted, to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 22, 2007

Item 21, CW Report No. 26 – Page 2

of the Environment, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Gregory Sorbara, MPP, the Regions of York and Peel, the City of Brampton, the Town of Caledon, and all affected landowners within the block bounded by Highways 50, 7, 27, and Langstaff Road:

*WHEREAS the extension of Highway 427 to the vicinity of the CP intermodal yard meets the intent expressed in the provincial planning document, Places to Grow, namely that intermodal yards be accessible by 400-series highways; and*

*WHEREAS the determination of the appropriate route for such an extension is to be made by way of an environmental assessment under the authority of the Minister of the Environment, which study is now under way; and*

*WHEREAS any extension of Highway 427 will be entirely within the Vaughan Enterprise Zone, being generally those employment lands within the City of Vaughan lying north of Highway 7 between Highways 27 and 50, up to and beyond the CP intermodal yard; and*

*WHEREAS the Vaughan Enterprise Zone, being accessible by Highways 427, 407, 50, 27, and 7, and in close proximity to Pearson International Airport is arguably the premier developable employment zone in the Greater Toronto Area; and*

*WHEREAS although preferred alignments within the study area have been identified, a single preferred route for the extension is not expected to be identified before the end of 2007; nor a final route until 2009, at the earliest; and*

*WHEREAS the determination of the route of an extended Highway 427 is critical to the timely availability of employment lands in the City of Vaughan; and*

*WHEREAS certain employment lands located in the block bounded by Highways 50, 7, and 27, and Langstaff Road (that is, the southernmost block within the environmental study area) remain within that portion of the block in which development is currently prohibited, while other lands within the same block not subject to such restrictions are being developed at an increasingly rapid pace; and*

*WHEREAS the environmental assessment process now under way cannot guarantee the availability of any additional employment lands in this area prior to 2009, the expected, though not assured date of the final determination of the entire route of the extension;*

*THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Council of the City of Vaughan requests that:*

*The area currently under environmental study be reduced, so that the southern boundary of the study area shall be Langstaff Road; and*

*The route of that portion of the proposed Highway 427 between Highway 7 and Langstaff Road be an extension of the current alignment of Highway 427 as it is immediately south of its present terminus at Highway 7; and/or, in the alternative,*

*The easterly and westerly boundaries of the study area in the block bounded by Highways 50, 7, 27 and Langstaff Road be reduced to the outer limits of the three identified alignments, with little or no additional buffering; and*

*The lands within the block bounded by Highways 50, 7, 27 and Langstaff Road that are currently subject to restrictions be released for appropriate development as provided under the Planning Act.*

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 22, 2007

Item 21, CW Report No. 26 – Page 3

Economic Impact:

Nil

Purpose:

To ensure the timely availability of employment lands in the City of Vaughan

Communication Plan:

The resolution directs the Clerk to inform all interested parties.

Background - Analysis and Options:

The opportunity represented by the Vaughan Enterprise Zone, for increasing employment within the City of Vaughan, is being jeopardized by a long-delayed and overly-inclusive study of route options.

Regional Implications:

The Region of York has an interest in the development of employment opportunities within its jurisdiction.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007:

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion:

Time is of the essence if employment growth is to keep pace with population growth in Vaughan. Amending the area under environmental study is the most expeditious means of ensuring the availability of developable employment lands in a timely fashion.

Attachments:

None

Report prepared by:

Councillor Tony Carella