

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022

WARD(S): 5

TITLE: YONGE NORTH SUBWAY EXTENSION – ROUTE REFINEMENT
UPDATE

FROM:

Vince Musacchio, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on the Yonge North Subway Extension Project, including the presentation from the Metrolinx Project Team regarding the alignment refinements.

Report Highlights

- Metrolinx has initiated the Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) addendum process to the previously completed Environmental Project Report (EPR)
- On December 8, 2021 Metrolinx announced a refined alignment for the Yonge North Subway Extension
- The EPR Addendum will be released this year and the supporting open house will be held between the end of January and early February 2022

Recommendations

1. That the presentation from Metrolinx staff on the status of the Yonge North Subway Extension be received.

Background

The proposed Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE) is a cross-jurisdictional transit priority project that will support growth in York Region and City of Toronto.

The Initial Business Case for the Yonge North Subway Extension project was publicly released on March 18, 2021

The Initial Business Case (IBC) for the YNSE completed in March 2021 included the review of technical and costing alternatives for three different subway alignments, stations numbers and different tunnel types. At the time, Metrolinx also provided preliminary costing information, which confirmed that the full scope of the original six-station Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP)-approved YNSE project cannot fit within the \$5.6B cost envelope. A new “reference alignment” was identified by Metrolinx for the project to proceed into the next stage of preliminary engineering. This new “reference alignment” has been identified within the IBC Supplementary Analysis. This stage will be followed by a Preliminary Design Business Case and a Full Business Case, currently underway. Changes to the original TPAP included an alignment that has shifted away from Yonge Street within the northern sections of the project. After tunneling under the East Don River and jogging west, the subway tunnel will head east at Royal Orchard Boulevard toward the CN right-of-way. The subway will run at-grade north of Holy Cross Cemetery through the Langstaff Gateway and within Richmond Hill Centre.

The recommended alignment included three stations – Steeles (below grade), Bridge (at grade under Highway 7 and Highway 407) and High Tech (at grade at Richmond Hill Centre). A fourth station or the protection of future stations can be afforded at Cummer, Clark or Royal Orchard.

In response to the YNSE changes to the original TPAP, Council at its meeting of April 20, 2021, adopted the following resolution:

- “1. That the Council of the City of Vaughan state that it is most pleased with the efforts by the Province to move the YNSE project forward with the publication and recommendations of the Initial Business Case;*
- 2. That every effort be made to revise the YNSE Reference Alignment, identified within the supplemental analysis undertaken following the Initial Business Case, to address the problematic issues of the alignment away from Yonge Street, the limitation of “neighbourhood” stations and the lack of a clear plan for commuter parking;*
- 3. That Option 1 as outlined in the Initial Business Case be supported;*

- 4. That the required funds to support Option 1 or a close variation of this option be provided by increasing the funding envelop through the funding support for this project by the Provincial and Federal Governments;*
- 5. That failing to receive further funding that the Clark Ave station be added to the current business plan; and*
- 6. That the appropriate government bodies, including the Offices of the Premier and Prime Minister, be advised of this resolution of Council.”*

In July 2021 Metrolinx announced that Clark Station was confirmed as fourth stop on Yonge North Subway Extension

In July 2021, Metrolinx announced that the project’s design allows for a fourth station to be built. It was identified that Clark station, at the intersection of Clark Avenue and Yonge Street, best compliments the other three confirmed stations at Steeles, Bridge and High Tech at Richmond Hill Centre.

Based on Metrolinx’s analysis, it is expected that 2,500 riders will use the subway at Clark station during the morning rush hour peak, with more than half of riders connecting to the subway from a bus. One of the most important bus connections will be the future Viva Orange service, which will provide convenient access to the Bathurst-Centre corridor and Promenade Centre area.

In September 2021 the Province announced two transit-oriented communities for the YNSE at Bridge and High Tech stations

Transit-oriented communities (TOC) are part of the Province’s plan to build new, sustainable transit. Infrastructure Ontario (IO), on behalf of the Province, is currently working with York Region and local municipalities on the future plans to build transit and a TOC along the YNSE route. It is expected that TOC will boost Ontario’s new subway transit plan for the GTA by placing more housing and jobs near or at transit stations along the new subway routes, including the YNSE.

The High Tech and Bridge stations have been designated for TOC use. These sites will be developed by the Province in line with the objective of the TOC program. Under the Transit Oriented Communities Program, the Province will be partnering with developers to plan and deliver integrated developments with the YNSE project.

Metrolinx has commenced an update to Transit Project Assessment Process Report for the Yonge North Subway Extension

An update to the 2009 Transit Project Assessment Process, the Environmental Assessment process for transit projects, is required to reflect the revised alignment along with other project modifications.

Metrolinx has initiated the TPAP addendum process to the previously completed environmental project report (EPR) – which includes studying existing environmental conditions and completing an environmental impact assessment.

The results of these studies will be presented as part of the public meetings and will be available for public review within the EPR Addendum.

Public consultation, as required by the process, commenced with a Virtual Open House held on October 20, 2021. The YNSE Team provided a project update, discussed the upcoming addendum to the Environmental Assessment and how residents can participate, and shared details on Metrolinx's upcoming Community Office and Experiential SoundLab.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Metrolinx Initiatives Update Spring 2021, Committee of the Whole \(1\), Item 12, Report No. 14, April 20, 2021](#)

[Metrolinx Initiatives Update Fall 2021, Committee of the Whole \(2\), Item 7, Report No. 52, November 16, 2021](#)

Analysis and Options

On December 8, 2021, in response to stakeholder feedback, Metrolinx announced the new refined “Green Alignment” for the Yonge North Subway Extension project

Since March 2021, Metrolinx has engaged with municipalities and consulted with communities; this has included the Royal Orchard neighbourhood regarding concerns about updated alignment that shifts the route of the subway extension off of Yonge Street, in the northern segment of the line.

In response to stakeholder feedback, Metrolinx have adjusted the route of the Yonge North Subway Extension project. An improved route will go deeper and under fewer homes in the Royal Orchard Community. Travelling under Bay Thorn Drive rather than

under homes wherever possible, tunnels will be at a minimum depth of 21 metres and as deep as 50 metres below the surface, averaging a more significant depth through much of the community compared to previous plans. Project benefits will be maintained within the \$5.6B cost envelope.

The latest YNSE plans propose four stations along an extension of roughly 8 kilometres. Transit hubs would be located at Steeles Avenue and within the Highway 7/Highway 407 corridor (“Bridge Station”). A station at High Tech Road would serve future communities envisioned within the Richmond Hill Centre area. Clark Station will offer riders seamless connections to the planned extension of the Viva Orange bus rapid transit line, which serves communities along Highway 7.

The Metrolinx Project Team hosted two virtual open houses on December 16, 2021 and January 5, 2022 to present information and answer questions on the new alignment, project timelines and other project updates. To date, Metrolinx held seven virtual open houses on the YNSE project for Toronto and York Region communities.

The EPR Addendum will be released this year and the supporting open house will be held at the end of January/early February 2022

The EPR Addendum will study and assesses the proposed changes to the project outlined in the Initial Business Case, including proposed changes to the route, tunneling, track work, stations, train storage facility, traction power substations and emergency exit buildings.

Recently, the province of Ontario advised of the inclusion of a Royal Orchard station along the YNSE. This will bring the total number of stations to five.

Financial Impact

There are no immediate financial impacts associated with this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

On December 16, 2021, Regional Council approved their 2022 budget, which included the funding for the Yonge Subway

The 2022 budget takes the first steps towards funding the Region’s share of the top transit priority: the Yonge North Subway Extension project.

On January 13, 2022, Regional Council at its Special Council Meeting received the presentation entitled “Supporting and Advancing Rapid Transit in York Region” by Bruce Macgregor, Chief Executive Officer and the correspondence from Paul Freeman,

Chief Planner, regarding the Bridge and High Tech Transit Oriented Communities Proposals, to Laurie LeBlanc, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Transportation and Chris Giannikos, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Infrastructure dated November 23, 2021.

On January 13, 2022, Regional Council also adopted the following staff report and amendments: [Yonge North Subway Extension Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals Markham and Richmond Hill.](#)

A Special Council meeting of Regional Council is scheduled for February 3, 2022 regarding the Yonge North Subway Extension alignment.

Conclusion

Metrolinx is investing a significant amount of transit infrastructure within the City. It is important that the City's interests are effectively presented to Metrolinx so that they can be incorporated into the ongoing planning and delivery processes.

The Yonge North Subway Extension will give more people faster, easier travel options as the region grows, reducing commute times to downtown Toronto by as much as 22 minutes and saving more than 4,800 tons of greenhouse gas emissions each year.

Staff will continue to work with Metrolinx, York Region, and transit agencies to protect and advocate for sustainable and safe transportation in the City. Staff will keep Council apprised of updates as they become available.

For more information, please contact Selma Hubjer, Acting Director of Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management, extension 8674.

Attachments

N/A

Prepared by

Selma Hubjer, Acting Director of Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management, x8674

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Musacchio".

Vince Musacchio,
Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure
Development

Reviewed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Spensieri".

Nick Spensieri, City Manager