

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, February 13, 2024

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: METROLINX INITIATIVES UPDATE – Q1 2024

FROM:

Vince Musacchio, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide a status update of recent Metrolinx activities in Vaughan including Metrolinx's GO Expansion initiatives and the Yonge North Subway Extension Project.

Report Highlights

- The YNSE Metrolinx project is moving forward and has been separated into three contracts to meet the objectives of the project. The first contract for upgrades required at Finch Station have been substantially completed in December 2023. The second contract for the Advance Tunnels "Request for Proposal" (RFP) was released on December 1, 2023, and the successful bidder is anticipated to be announced in late 2024.
- YNSE Utility relocation works along with design investigation works and construction notifications are ongoing within the Transit Corridor Lands.
- Construction at Rutherford GO station and the Rutherford Road grade separation are complete.
- Maple GO station improvements are anticipated to be completed by Q4 2025.
- The 2041 Regional Transportation Plan, completed in 2018, is being updated to 2051 Regional Transportation Plan to reflect major provincial changes.
- Staff are working with Metrolinx and York Region to include improvements to Highway 7 as part of the study for the future Queen Street – Highway 7 BRT.

Report Highlights continued

- Staff are protecting for potential GO Station sites on the proposed Caledon-Vaughan GO line.
- The Block 27 Block Plan and Collector Roads Environmental Assessment (EA) are underway, which support the proposed Kirby GO Station.

Recommendations

1. THAT Council receive this report for information.

Background

Significant progress continues to be made on Metrolinx initiatives within Vaughan.

Metrolinx is currently engaged in numerous planning, design, and construction projects in the City. This report will provide updates on the Metrolinx projects noted below:

- Yonge North Subway Extension (Planning/Design/Construction)
- Station Upgrades at Rutherford GO Station (Construction)
- Maple GO Station Master Plan (Planning)
- Queen Street – Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit (Planning)

In addition, there are several ongoing City studies and/or submitted development applications closely linked with Metrolinx projects, including the Block 60E Block Plan and the Block 27 Block Plan and Collector Road Environmental Assessment, which will also be discussed in this report.

Previous Reports/Authority

May 9, 2023, Committee of the Whole (2) (Item 6, Report No. 8) [Metrolinx Initiatives Update Spring 2023](#)

December 12, 2022, Committee of the Whole (2) (Item 6, Report No. 3): [Metrolinx Initiatives Update – Fall 2022](#)

April 5, 2022, Committee of the Whole (1) (Item 6, Report No. 16): [Metrolinx Initiatives Update – Spring 2022](#)

February 8, 2022, Committee of the Whole (2) (Item 7): [Yonge North Subway Extension – Route Refinement Update](#)

November 9, 2021, Committee of the Whole (2) (Item 7):

[Metrolinx Initiatives Update Fall 2021](#)

April 7, 2021, Committee of the Whole (1) (Item 12, Report No. 14):

[Metrolinx Initiatives Update Spring 2021](#)

November 3, 2020, Committee of the Whole (1) (Item 4, Report No. 51):

[Metrolinx Initiatives Update Fall 2020](#)

May 20, 2020, Committee of the Whole (2) (Item 14, Report No. 20)

[Metrolinx Activities Update – Spring 2020](#)

November 5, 2019, Committee of the Whole (1) (Item 7, Report No. 34)

[Metrolinx Activities Update – Fall 2019](#)

May 7, 2019, Committee of the Whole (Item 12, Report No. 17)

[Metrolinx Activities Update](#)

April 11, 2018, Committee of the Whole (Item 9, Report No. 14)

[Metrolinx Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Express Rail Initiatives Update](#)

November 13, 2017, Committee of the Whole (Working Session) (Item 2, Report No. 41)

[Metrolinx Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan City-Wide](#)

May 16, 2017, Committee of the Whole (Working Session) (Item 1, Report No. 19)

[Metrolinx Regional Express Rail Update City Wide](#)

Analysis and Options

Metrolinx is advancing work on the Yonge North Subway Extension in collaboration with staff.

The [Yonge North Subway Extension \(YNSE\)](#) project extends approximately 8 kilometers (6 km underground and 2 km at-grade) north from Finch Station to the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Urban Growth Centre at Highway 7, with 5 confirmed stations at Steeles Avenue, Clark Avenue, Royal Orchard Boulevard, Bridge (between Highway 7 & Highway 407) and High Tech Road. One additional station at Cummer Avenue may be designed and constructed if funding becomes available. The project also includes a train storage facility currently proposed to be located north of High Tech station.

Metrolinx has completed analysis on how to organize the design and construction contracts to best deliver YNSE project. Based on this analysis, the YNSE project has been split into three (3) separate contracts, each with different timelines and procurement strategies. Varying levels of input and engagement are required from staff during the procurement processes, with most of the engagement required during the design of the stations which is expected to occur over the next few years.

Contract 1 – Finch Station Early Works

The upgrade works were substantially completed at Finch Station in December 2023. This is the connection point for the Yonge North Subway to connect to the existing TTC Line 1 service in the City of Toronto.

Contract 2 - Advance Tunnels (AT)

This contract is being delivered using a design-build approach, which means that the specifications for the project are set by Metrolinx, but the designs to meet these specifications can differ between bidders. The Project Specific Output Specifications (PSOS) and Reference Concept Designs (RCD) have been finalized with the input from staff to protect the City's interests and requirements.

Metrolinx continues to meet with all stakeholders to address AT issues. The YNSE Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was issued in April, 2023 and was shortlisted to three bidders who have been invited to respond to the [December 2023 YNSE Request For Proposal \(RFP\)](#) on how they will deliver the tunnelling project. Staff will participate in the RFP process to ensure the City's requirements are met by the bidders. Construction for the subway tunnels is anticipated to start in 2025.

Contract 3 - Stations, Rails and Systems (SRS)

The last contract is to build the subway stations themselves, as well as install the subway rails and systems required to support operations. The contract is being delivered through a Progressive Design-Build (PDB) approach, in which Metrolinx works closely with a proponent through the actual detailed design of the stations, rails and systems to ensure objectives are reached, rather than relying on detailed specifications as in a Design-Build approach. This approach will require staff to review proposed stations through a proposed Modified Site Plan Review process at key design milestones. The Modified Site Plan Review process is continuing to be negotiated between Metrolinx and the affected municipalities.

In addition, Metrolinx continues to engage with various stakeholders to finalize the elements for each station such as location and number of entrances, bus terminal location and size, streetscaping, etc. Each station location is unique and will require different strategies to implement required elements within the design.

Utilities

Utility relocations, field investigations, construction notifications, property requirements are continuing in advance of the tunneling over the next year within the Transit Corridor Lands. The City's utilities relocations/replacements discussions are ongoing, with the goal to include these works as part of the scope of works in order to minimize future impacts to residents, business and new development.

Agreements and updates to Council

The City has entered into a Resource Agreement for the YNSE project which will provide reimbursement for staff resources working with Metrolinx to deliver the subway. In addition, staff anticipate entering into a Municipal Infrastructure Agreement for utility replacement work that is outside of the YNSE scope of work but beneficial to the municipalities. Delegated authority to enter into these two types of agreements was received from Council on [September 26, 2023](#).

In addition, staff have begun to develop a Main Agreement at Metrolinx's request which will further define the roles and responsibilities of the City and Metrolinx for the YNSE project. Council authority to enter into this agreement may be required at a later date.

Staff are working with Metrolinx, in coordination with the other stakeholder municipalities, to present a Metrolinx YNSE project status update to Council on an annual basis.

Construction at Rutherford GO station and the Rutherford Road grade separation are complete.

Major upgrades at Rutherford GO station are complete, with new connections for pedestrians and cyclists, improved train platforms, modern customer amenities, and more parking spaces. Additional secured bike storage will be opening later.

Maple GO station improvements are anticipated to be completed by Q4 – 2025.

Construction work to improve Maple GO station is underway. Major elements include:

- Expansion of Eagle Rock Way to accommodate buses and a new stair and elevator tower building;

- A new west side platform and rehabilitation of the existing east platform; along with commissioning of the pedestrian tunnels connecting both platforms;
- Double tracking from Rutherford GO to McNaughton;
- Watermain replacement/relocation on Simcoe Street & Major Mackenzie Drive and associated surface restoration;
- Acoustical wall replacement with new landscape restoration; and
- A new pedestrian and cycling bridge over Major Mackenzie Drive and new multi-use paths connecting to the existing sidewalk.

The 2041 Regional Transportation Plan, completed in 2018, is being updated to 2051 Regional Transportation Plan to reflect major provincial changes.

Since the release of the 2041 Regional Transportation in 2018, there has been many changes including:

- Changes to Metrolinx's mandate and geographical jurisdiction which have resulted in a greater focus on transit infrastructure and service, while expanding the reach of Metrolinx to new areas of the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- New policy direction and housing legislation including consideration for the COVID-19 pandemic and social equity.
- Major provincial policy changes such as:
 - More Homes Built Faster Act (2022)
 - 2051 Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) Transportation Plan
 - Proposed fare integration changes to be launched in Q1 2024
 - A revised Provincial Policy Statement (2023)

To address these significant policy changes, Metrolinx has initiated an update to the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to 2051. The 2051 RTP will focus on the following themes:

- Regional Destinations: Access by transit to major regional destinations such as Pearson Airport;
- Equity and affordability: addressing transit system inequities and affordability for people in the GGH communities;
- Resiliency to disruptions: Climate change, evolving technologies, post-pandemic increases in remote work, etc.;
- Reconciliation: transit needs of indigenous Nations and people; and
- Progress and priorities: leveraging investments and identifying planning and implementation priorities for the next 5-10 years.

The 2051 RTP update will be informed through technical analysis and stakeholder engagement. Staff are part of Metrolinx's Municipal Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) and have met in August and November 2023 to receive updates from Metrolinx and provide input on this topic.

Staff are continuing to protect the City's interests for the Queen Street and Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit planning process.

The Queen Street-Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit (QS7 BRT) project is a proposed rapid transit line in the cities of Brampton and Vaughan. The project's study area covers a 24-kilometre corridor along Queen Street and Highway 7, which would create a crucial east-to-west transit spine connecting the northwest and northcentral sections of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

As a review agency and directly affected municipality with vested interest in shaping its future mobility and managing its growth, the City continues to work with Metrolinx to confirm the short list of planning and design concepts for Highway 7 between Wigwoss Drive to Kipling Avenue.

Staff have been participating in workshops held by Metrolinx to confirm the shortlist of planning/design concepts to be taken forward for each segment of the corridor and the addition of general purpose traffic lanes has been requested by the City to be incorporated into the corridor design. Project working group meetings were held in March and November 2023.

The future Highway 7 corridor must balance the needs of moving goods and all road users through road improvements, future transit facilities, and walking and cycling facilities. Following this principle, staff communicated the following considerations to Metrolinx:

- Preference for a cross section of six general purpose lanes and two BRT lanes (the "6+2 Option") for the QS7 BRT sections of Highway 7 through Vaughan, with appropriate active transportation facilities. This preference was previously noted in staff letter dated February 3, 2023 (Attachment 2).
- Recommendation that the QS7 BRT corridor provides separate, in-boulevard pedestrian facilities and separate, in-boulevard, unidirectional cycling facilities on both sides of Highway 7 through Vaughan.
- Recommendation that the QS7 BRT corridor protects space to accommodate existing and future sustainable first-last mile services such as bicycle parking, bike/e-bike share, micromobility and on-demand microtransit.
- Recommendation that the QS7 BRT project plan to design for future climate change resilience, including designing crossings to accommodate changes in flooding, ice jam flooding and precipitation intensities.

In April 2023, Vaughan Council requested that York Region proceed with a technical feasibility assessment of widening Highway 7 from 4 to 6 lanes general purpose lanes, plus 2 BRT lanes, for the segment between Kipling Avenue to Wigwoss Drive in partnership with Metrolinx. The technical feasibility assessment is expected to commence in 2024. Please find the associated council report [here](#).

Potential GO Train Stations along the future Caledon-Vaughan GO Line continue to be investigated.

Two potential GO Train Stations are identified conceptually on the future Caledon-Vaughan GO Line (formerly Bolton GO Line) in Block 60 East, as shown on Map 10 of the York Region Official Plan (2022). One station is located in the vicinity of Rutherford Road and the Canadian Pacific rail line, and a second station is located at Major Mackenzie Drive and the Canadian Pacific rail line. These stations are also identified in the 2023 Vaughan Transportation Plan, York Region's 2022 Transportation Master Plan (Map 3), Vaughan Official Plan (2010) (Schedule 10) and the Metrolinx Bolton Commuter Rail Service Feasibility Study. The 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), as approved by the Metrolinx Board of Directors on March 8, 2018, identifies the Bolton Commuter Rail Service as a project for consideration beyond the 2041 horizon.

Until such time that these potential GO Stations are confirmed through technical studies and approved by Metrolinx, staff support the protection of surrounding lands for future Station implementation. As a result, staff are actively engaged with the participating landowners group through the Block 60E Block Plan and subsequent development application processes, to protect for potential station areas through the use of planning tools such as Holding Provisions ("H" symbol).

On May 16, 2023, Council approved Interim Control By-law 060-2023 in the vicinity of the Kipling Avenue Corridor Secondary Plan and directed staff to undertake a land use study to assess the potential of a GO station along the Caledon-Vaughan GO Line, on Kipling Avenue in Woodbridge ([Committee of the Whole \(2\) Item 3.](#)).

As per Council direction, Policy Planning and Special Programs staff are currently undertaking the Woodbridge GO Station Land Use Study, which will assess the feasibility and desirability of a GO station within the subject area, potentially identify and protect for a future GO station location and to review and optimize the Official Plan land use designations, as necessary.

The project will include a background review, GO Station technical analysis, public engagement, and if deemed appropriate, a draft and final land use plan and a draft and final Official Plan Amendment. The study commenced in January 2024 and is targeting

June 2024 for completion. A future report will be brought forward to Council with the results of the study upon completion.

The Block Plan application and Collector Street Environmental Assessment (EA) in the Block 27 Secondary Plan area are currently underway.

The EA for the Collector Street Network and Block Plan application in the Block 27 Secondary Plan area will support the proposed future Kirby GO Station. Participating Landowners within Block 27, collectively known as the Block 27 Landowners Group, Inc., have submitted a Block Plan application for the Block 27 Secondary Plan Area. The Block Plan will serve to implement the policies of the Secondary Plan and establish the basis for subsequent development applications, including the area surrounding the proposed Kirby GO Station (Kirby GO - Transit Hub Centre). This area is intended to be developed as a transit-oriented community, featuring a range of land uses and transit-supportive densities. In January 2024, staff circulated a revised Block Plan submission in response to comments received on the initial application.

Concurrent to the Block Plan application process, the City and Participating Landowners are collaborating as co-proponents on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Block 27 Collector Street Network which advances the street network established in the North Vaughan New Communities Transportation Master Plan (NVNCTMP). The EA is targeted for completion in Q1 to Q2 of 2024 and will complete the remaining portions of the (MCEA) process. The EA will establish the recommended alignments and cross-sections of the collector street network. A Public Information Session took place on November 16, 2022 regarding the EA study. It is anticipated a Public Meeting will be held for the Block Plan application at a later time.

Financial Impact

N/A

Operational Impact

Staff from Infrastructure Delivery, Development Engineering, and Policy Planning and Special Programs were consulted and contributed to this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The numerous Metrolinx initiatives currently underway will result in an improved regional transit system, providing new, sustainable, and safe transportation options for residents, visitors and businesses within Vaughan.

Conclusion

Metrolinx is investing significant resources to advance transit infrastructure within the Vaughan. While this work continues, it is important that the City's interests are effectively presented to Metrolinx by staff so that they can be incorporated into the ongoing planning and delivery processes.

When completed, these new transit services will provide convenient and sustainable region-wide transportation options which meet the goals of the City's Transportation Plan. To ensure that the City's ongoing need for sustainable and safe transportation choices are met, staff will continue to work with local and regional partners including neighboring municipalities, York Region and Metrolinx on these important initiatives.

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

Attachments

N/A

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