

Committee of the Whole (1) Report

DATE: Monday, October 07, 2019

WARD(S): 1 3

TITLE: CANADA DRIVE – AMERICA AVENUE BRIDGE UPDATE

FROM:

Nick Spensieri, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update for the proposed Canada Drive-America Avenue Bridge (Bridge) connecting Canada Drive and America Avenue across Highway 400 (as an overpass). The bridge is located within Block 33, which is bounded by Major Mackenzie Drive to the south, Weston Road to the west, Teston Road to the north, and Jane Street to the east. The location of the proposed bridge is shown on Attachment 1.

Report Highlights

- The detailed design for the Canada Drive-America Avenue Bridge will commence in 2020 (subject to approval of the 2020 Budget)
- A communication plan is being developed, in collaboration with Corporate and Strategic Communications, to inform the area residents and citizens of the project and its benefits
- First responders support this midblock connection as it will reduce response time as well as improve the depth of response

Recommendation

1. That this report be received for information.

Background

A mid-block connection across Highway 400 was identified for the communities in Block 33

The transportation objectives of the City of Vaughan's Official Plan Amendment No. 600 identify the need to establish a primary road connection over Highway 400 between Major Mackenzie Drive and Teston Road in Block 33. This road connection is not only a key component of the area multi-modal transportation system (accommodating vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians) but also a means of providing the residents in the communities on either side of Highway 400 with better access to community services, reduced travel times and improved emergency response services.

Subsequently, the location of the mid-block connection between Canada Drive and America Avenue was identified through the development planning process for Block 33.

A Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study was completed in 2013

In 2008 the City of Vaughan commenced a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for North Maple Community Bridge, currently recognized as the Canada Drive-America Avenue Bridge, to develop and evaluate a range of alternative design concepts for the proposed Bridge to address the multi-modal transportation needs within the broader community.

The EA findings identified a preferred design which includes a 2-lane roadway, including sidewalks and bicycle lanes connecting Canada Drive and America Avenue. Two Part II Order requests were received asking the City to prepare individual environmental assessment for the Bridge. The Minister's decision was that an individual environmental assessment is not required as the City had demonstrated that it has planned and developed this project in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment.

The Notice of Study Completion was issued in December 2013.

Previous Reports/Authority

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2013 - Item 2, Report No. 51, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on November 19, 2013.
[http://www.vaughan.ca/council/minutes_agendas/AgendaItems/CW\(WS\)1112_13_2.pdf](http://www.vaughan.ca/council/minutes_agendas/AgendaItems/CW(WS)1112_13_2.pdf)

Analysis and Options

The proposed Bridge will provide an overall positive benefit to the local community

Highway 400 represents a significant impediment to pedestrian and cycling movement between communities east and west of the highway throughout the City. The transportation network within the residential communities both east and west sides of Block 33 were planned and built with consideration for east-west connectivity and porosity. Current network users within Block 33 must rely on Major Mackenzie Drive or Teston Road to travel across Highway 400. The presence of Highway 400 entry and exit ramps along these arterial road corridors create discontinuities in the pedestrian and cycling networks as well as potential safety concerns. Construction of the bridge will provide the only east-west local pedestrian and cycling link crossing Highway 400 in Block 33.

The proposed Bridge will improve the overall transportation efficiency of the road network serving the citizens in the Block 33 community by reducing travel times, improving emergency services response time, providing additional pedestrian facilities and offering access to enhanced transit systems and bicycle networks. This opportunity is consistent with the City's Official Plan, offers better access to community amenities and promotes sustainable multi-modal transportation options.

The midblock connection between Canada Drive and America Avenue can provide a positive effect on community character by providing for pedestrian and cycle friendly streets. Further, by providing a connection between the two communities across Highway 400, a more cohesive community connection can occur. The potential for sharing community resources would also be improved, as they would be more easily accessible for cars, buses, cyclists and pedestrians.

First responders are in support of the Bridge

A modelling analysis was undertaken by Vaughan Fire Rescue Services and York Region Paramedics Services with the assistance of York Region's data scientist (using analytics). The analysis indicated a reduction in response time to a number of addresses in Block 33 East (east side of Highway 400) from Vaughan Fire Station 7-7. It was determined that the proposed midblock connection would improve response times.

York Regional Police also reviewed the proposed midblock connection and determined that it would provide increased and easier access to the community during emergencies.

A comprehensive communication plan is being developed with the Corporate and Strategic Communications Department for the Bridge project

A comprehensive communication plan is being developed with the Corporate and Strategic Communications department to continue to inform the Block 33 residents, citizens and Mayor and Members of Council of the proposed Bridge throughout the various stages of project implementation and to communicate the overall benefits and enhancements the bridge will contribute not only to the immediate neighbourhoods, but also to surrounding communities. The communication tactics include updating the project website, communications to area residents and on the City's corporate channels, and signage.

Internally, meetings with Mayor and Members of Council will take place before the communications plan is launched, and communications packages will be prepared and circulated with key messages and social and eNews content.

As with the EA study process that took place in 2008, community engagement will be an important part of this phase of the project. Focus will be placed on building awareness of the project and outcomes, including the bridge design phase and temporary traffic re-routing and construction impacts.

Financial Impact

CAPITAL BUDGET - ID-2079-19	
Funding Summary	\$
Public Relations – Approved for 2019	391,400
Design (Consultant) – Projected for 2020-2021	1,699,500
Construction (Contractor) – Projected for 2022-2024	10,197,000
Total Project Budget	12,287,900

The construction cost estimate will be further refined through the detailed design process.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Proposed Bridge project aligns with York Region's Transportation Master Plan

According to York Region's Transportation Master Plan (November 2016), the Region supports the proposed Bridge:

Policy Area 1 – Finer Grid Network

Currently, the Regional road network is built on two-kilometre concession blocks, with a limited number of continuous collector roads spanning between Regional roads. This results in limited route options for people to reach destinations throughout the Region and contributes to congestion on the existing Regional road network. Working with the Province and local municipalities to plan for and protect a series of mid-block highway crossings and continuous collector roads in York Region will provide alternate routes for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians to reach destinations more quickly and safely. It will also better manage congestion by spreading traffic throughout the network.

In accordance with Regional policy, it is anticipated the Region will fund 33% of the cost of the construction of the Bridge.

City staff have and will continue to work with the Ministry of Transportation to advance the Bridge project

Highway 400 is under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO). MTO is responsible for all infrastructure within Highway 400. The MTO was involved in the Environmental Assessment for the Bridge with regards to the design and structural requirements. The MTO will continue to be involved during the detailed design and construction phases.

Conclusion

The North Maple Community Bridge project (ID-2079-19) was included in the approved 2019 Capital Budget. External communication strategies to inform the Block 33 residents, citizens and Mayor and Members of Council, is planned to commence this Fall. Subject to budget approval, the detailed design of the bridge will be initiated in 2020 with construction tentatively scheduled to commence in 2022. The construction of the bridge supports the Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Objectives for transportation and mobility, to improve the municipal road network to provide a fully connected and integrated community.

For more information, please contact:

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Attachment

1. Location Map

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