

Committee of the Whole (1) Report

DATE: Wednesday, April 7, 2021

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: METROLINX INITIATIVES UPDATE SPRING 2021

FROM:

Nick Spensieri, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide a status update of recent Metrolinx initiatives in Vaughan related to Metrolinx's GO Expansion project and the Yonge North Subway Extension.

Report Highlights

- A new pedestrian bridge over the GO railway tracks at Rutherford Station was successfully installed and the GO east platform will be opened later in 2021
- Environmental Project Report Addendum for GO Expansion Program which includes McNaughton Road Grade Separation was issued on February 22, 2021 for a 30-day public review
- Metrolinx released the Initial Business Case for Queen Street-Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit in December 2020
- The Concord GO Centre Mobility Hub Study and Transportation Master Plan are on hold to consider the implications of a recently approved Minister's Zoning Order
- The Yonge North Subway Extension Initial Business Case was publicly released on March 18, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the presentation from Metrolinx staff on the results of the Initial Business Case and the current status of the Yonge North Subway Extension be received.

Background

A new pedestrian bridge over the GO railway was successfully lifted into place as part of the Rutherford Road Grade Separation and Rutherford GO Station Expansion

A new pedestrian bridge was successfully lifted into place in December 2020. This bridge will connect the fourth floor of the new parking structure at the Rutherford GO station to the future east rail platform, which will be opened later this year. Commuters will be able to use this pedestrian bridge to cross over the tracks to access GO trains from the east platform. Customers who wish to access the east platform arriving at ground level – such as transit users, pedestrians, or cyclists – will also be able to access the east platform via a pedestrian tunnel underpass.

The bridge lift is a key achievement, bringing customers closer to a new and improved Rutherford GO Station, with more parking spaces, a new station building, and modern customer amenities.

Another important project milestone is the east diversion track for service. The switchover of track service took place March 26th to 29th, 2021 resulting in a temporary road closure of Rutherford Road during this period. The diversion allows for the construction to continue on the west half of the rail-over-road grade separation. Communication materials for this work will continue to be shared via the Metrolinx Community Office.

Environmental Project Report Addendum for GO Expansion Program - GO Rail Network Electrification Transit Project Assessment Process was issued on February 22, 2021 for a 30-day public review

Notice of Environmental Project Report Addendum for GO Expansion Program - GO Rail Network Electrification Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) was issued on February 22, 2021. The EPR Addendum for the GO Rail Network Electrification Project was available for a 30-day public review period between February 23 and March 24, 2021. Included in this TPAP addendum for the GO expansion program is McNaughton Road grade separation over the Barrie GO railway.

The McNaughton Road Grade Separation project will be separating the tracks from the road to ensure safety when Metrolinx increases GO train service. This grade separation work is deemed to present significant changes to a previously approved Barrie Rail Corridor Expansion Project Transit Project Assessment Process Environmental Project Report (BRCE EPR). This led to a reassessment of the effects associated with the

project, the identification of potentially new mitigation measures, and potentially new monitoring systems. Through the TPAP Addendum process, the public was consulted through an open house held in February 2020 and a virtual open house held from August 18 to September 1, 2020. The City along with York Region and other agencies were consulted via a series of Technical Advisory Committee meetings. Metrolinx has prepared a draft EPR for municipalities' and agencies to review. City staff have reviewed the documents and provided comments back to Metrolinx in October 2020.

York Region Highway 7 BRT Initial Business Case - Queen Street BRT (Hwy 7)

One of the key strategies of the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan is the implementation of the Frequent Rapid Transit Network (FRTN). The bus rapid transit (BRT) projects along Queen Street in the City of Brampton and Highway 7 in Vaughan will connect to the existing Viva Network were included in the FRTN and identified as Priority In-Development projects. The Queen Street – Highway 7 Corridor is a crucial transportation corridor connecting people through the cities of Brampton and Vaughan, to and from key transportation generators such as York University, Downtown Brampton, and Downtown Toronto via TTC subway at Vaughan Metropolitan Centre station.

The Brampton Queen Street – York Region Highway 7 BRT Planning Study and [Initial Business Case](#) (IBC) defines three (3) transit service concept options and three (3) infrastructure options for the Queen Street – Highway 7 BRT. The transit service concept options were evaluated, and a preferred option was used to inform the evaluation of the infrastructure options according to the framework, including the Strategic, Economic, Financial, and Deliverability and Operations cases. All options that were considered provided different levels of increased transit service and supportive infrastructure. The IBC recommends a preferred service option and dedicated bus infrastructure to support a BRT corridor moving into the Preliminary Design Business Case phase. The three transit service options considered were:

- Option 1: Single main BRT trunk route
- Option 2: Two main BRT trunk routes
- Option 3: Two main BRT trunk routes and Priority Bus routes

The recommended service option is a single main BRT trunk route plus the addition of the feeder priority routes, a combination of service options 1 and 3.

The IBC identifies several optimization strategies to be considered during the Preliminary Design Business Case for the Queen Street – Highway 7 BRT. The final solution will be defined through further analysis of the impacts, costs, and benefits.

Participating Landowners within Block 27 have initiated the Block Plan Application process

Participating Landowners within Block 27 (collectively known as the Block 27 Landowners Group Inc.) have initiated the Block Plan Application process with the submission of a draft Block Plan/Master Environment and Servicing Plan (MESP) Terms of Reference for the Block 27 New Community Area. The current version of the draft Block Plan and MESP Terms of Reference is under review with the City and external agencies. A draft Terms of Reference establishing the scope of work to be undertaken as part of the Environmental Assessment(s) (EAs) for the collector street network within Block 27 has also been submitted and is currently under review with the City and external agencies.

The Concord GO Centre Mobility Hub Study and Transportation Master Plan are on hold to consider the implications of a recently approved Minister's Zoning Order that prescribes land uses, heights and densities in the Study area and adjacent lands

The purpose of the Concord GO Centre Mobility Hub Study (MHS) and Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is to establish the policy framework to build a complete community around a potential GO Station in the area of Highway 7 and Bowes Road. In October 2020, Vaughan Council supported a proposed Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) for lands generally located on the north side of Highway 7 from Keele Street to the Barrie GO Rail Line. In March 2021, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing approved the MZO which generally permits high-rise mixed land uses, with heights ranging from 16 to 40 storeys. A block of land located west of the Barrie GO Rail Line, on the north side of Highway 7, with a 30 metre setback from the rail corridor, permits a transit station and transit elements. Staff are currently reviewing the MZO to understand the implications to the scope, schedule and budget for both the MHS and TMP.

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

Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE) Project is a cross-jurisdictional transit priority project included in the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that will support growth in York Region and City of Toronto.

Metrolinx is advancing the preliminary design and engineering for the YNSE project to inform an “Initial Business Case” which was released on March 18, 2021. As part of this process, Metrolinx has examined a number of project features to test against the original Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) – approved alignment. The [Initial Business Case](#) (IBC) includes the review of technical and costing alternatives for three different subway alignments, stations numbers and different tunnel types (referred to as light blue, dark blue and magenta alignments) as shown in **Attachment 1**. Metrolinx has provided preliminary costing information which confirms that the full scope of the original six-station TPAP-approved YNSE project cannot fit within the \$5.6B cost envelope.

A new “reference alignment” has been 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. Changes to the original TPAP includes an alignment that has shifted away from Yonge Street within the northern sections of the project as shown in **Attachment 2**. 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 reference alignment is recommended based on the following projections:

- Key transit benefits
- A greater number of stations
- Design innovations
- Fits within the \$5.6 billion funding envelope

In addition, The recommended alignment includes 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.

Maple GO station improvements are now scheduled to begin in early 2022

Construction of improvements at Maple GO station are scheduled to begin in early 2022, following a detailed design and tender process which will conclude late 2021. As noted in previous reports, the improvements include a new station platform and second track, increased capacity and improved circulation for pick-up/drop-off activities, and better integration with surrounding development including a weather-protected tunnel from Eagle Rock Way to the station platforms.

In addition, key pieces of City-owned infrastructure will be constructed by Metrolinx as part of this project. This includes an extension of Eagle Rock Way with enhanced landscaping and space for additional transit buses, an active transportation bridge over

Major Mackenzie Drive, and assorted utility replacements. The roles and responsibilities for the construction and long-term maintenance of new City-owned infrastructure are detailed in a Memorandum of Understanding which is currently being finalized. Signing authority for the Memorandum of Understanding was obtained from Council in November 2020.

Previous Reports/Authority

November 3, 2020, Committee of the Whole (1), [Metrolinx Initiatives Update Q4 2020](#)

November 10, 2020, Committee of the Whole (2), [Maple GO Station – Memorandum of Understanding](#)

May 20, 2020, Committee of the Whole (2), [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](#)

May 16, 2017, Committee of the Whole (Working Session) (Item 1, Report No. 19), [Metrolinx Regional Express Rail Update](#)

Analysis and Options

City staff continue to engage with the Block 27 Landowner's Group and are providing updates on the delivery of the Kirby GO station as they are made available

As the Block 27 Landowner's Group begins their work with Metrolinx in delivering the Kirby GO station under the Market Driven Approach, the City will continue to plan for infrastructure to support the lands surrounding the Kirby GO station such as the Kirby Road Widening Environmental Assessment Study from Jane Street to Dufferin Street,

which was initiated in September 2019.

Financial Impact

There are no immediate financial impacts associated with this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

In support of the development of the new communities, a future Kirby GO station and the Highway 400 Employment Lands, the deployment of York Region Transit's Frequent Transit Network along Kirby Road, Jane Street and Weston Road should be expedited to continue to provide convenient sustainable transportation options in these areas. Staff will continue to work with York Region and York Region Transit to ensure appropriate sustainable transportation options are reviewed for implementation in these areas.

Queen Street-Highway 7 BRT is an important transportation corridor connecting people through the cities of Brampton and Vaughan, to and from key transportation generators such as York University, Downtown Brampton, and Downtown Toronto via TTC subway at Vaughan Metropolitan Centre station. The completion of this corridor will also unlock development potentials along the corridor. Staff will continue to work with Brampton, Metrolinx and York Region Rapid Transit Corporation to ensure appropriate transportation options are considered in the IBC process.

In York Region's memorandum to Council in September 2020, it expressed staff's support of the Queen Street-Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit project as long as significant capital funding contributions are not expected from York Region at this time. The Yonge Subway Extension remains York Region's top rapid transit priority. York Region staff further clarified that although additional investment in bus rapid transit along Highway 7 connecting to Brampton is considered beneficial, it is not the highest rapid transit priority for York Region.

A "one-window" approach to coordinate municipal input to the YNSE project has been established to streamline regional and local municipal interests as the YNSE project advances. It is expected that a presentation by York Region Rapid Transit Corporation and Metrolinx Staff will be made at the City's Committee of the Whole meeting in the near future.

Conclusion

Metrolinx is currently investing in 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 proposed Kirby and potential Concord GO Stations, the proposed Bus Rapid Transit Corridors within the City and extending into Brampton, and the Yonge North Subway Extension continue to be priorities for the City and form the backbone of a multi-modal transportation system that meets the needs of city residents and businesses.

Staff will continue to work with Metrolinx, York Region, Brampton and transit agencies to protect and advocate for sustainable and safe transportation in the City.

For more information, please contact Vince Musacchio, Director of Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management, ext. 8311

Attachments

1. YNSE Initial Business Case Alignment Options
2. YNSE Reference Alignment

Prepared by

Winnie Lai, Transportation Project Manager, 8192

Christopher Tam, Transportation Project Manager, 8702

Selma Hubjer, Manager, Transportation Planning, 8674

Michelle Moretti, Senior Planner, Policy Planning & Environmental Sustainability, 8214

Armine Hassakourians, Acting Manager Short-Range Planning, 8368

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Spensieri', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Nick Spensieri,
Deputy City Manager,
Infrastructure Development

Reviewed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Harnum', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jim Harnum,
City Manager