

## REPORT

### PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2020

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**FROM:** Planning Services Department and Engineering and Construction Department

**DATE:** October 21, 2020

**SUBJECT:** 407 Transitway – Project Update

**LOCATION:** North Oakville

**WARD:** Ward 6 and 7

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#### RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report dated October 21, 2020 from the Planning Department and Engineering & Construction Department, entitled “407 Transitway – Project Update”, be received.
2. That the Ministry of Transportation be requested to preserve the Neyagawa Station as part of the 407 Transitway alignment; and that the Ministry of Transportation ensure that the 407 alignment avoid any adverse effects to Oakville properties identified as being a significant cultural heritage resource, in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement.
3. That a copy of this resolution be provided to the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Halton Members of Provincial Parliament, and the Clerks for Halton Region, and the Town of Milton.

#### KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The 407 Transitway is a planned 150 km high-speed public transit facility on a separate right-of-way that will parallel the existing 407 ETR from Halton Region to Durham Region.
- The 43 km segment of the 407 Transitway from west of Brant Street in Burlington to west of Hurontario Street in Brampton was the subject of a Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) which was completed earlier this year.

- The town submitted comments on the Environmental Project Report (EPR) to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) on September 11, 2020.
- The main concerns raised by Town staff relate to cultural heritage impacts, as well as the removal of the Neyagawa station from the proposed plan.
- Town staff will continue to work with MTO staff throughout the detailed design process in order to ensure that our concerns are addressed.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The complete planned 407 Transitway is a 150 km high-speed public transit facility on a separate right-of-way. It will parallel the existing 407 ETR from Burlington (Halton) to the Highway 35/115 interchange (Durham). The right-of-way is being designed to accommodate Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), however, it will allow the opportunity to convert to light rail transit (LRT) in the future, if needed. To meet rapidly growing transportation demands across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), this transit facility is intended to form a northern spine parallel to the Lakeshore GO corridor that will connect the municipalities in this corridor.

The 43 km segment of the 407 Transitway from west of Brant Street in Burlington to west of Hurontario Street in Brampton was the subject of a Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP), which is prescribed in *Ontario Regulation 231/08, Transit Projects and Metrolinx Undertakings* under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. TPAP is a focused impact assessment process that includes consultation and evaluation/mitigation of impacts. This segment forms part of the overall 150 km long high-speed interregional facility, as described above, and includes eight stations, parking and access connections.

The town submitted comments on the Environmental Project Report (EPR) to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) on September 11, 2020.

## **COMMENT/OPTIONS:**

The main concerns raised by staff in our September 11, 2020 comments relate to cultural heritage impacts, as well as the removal of the Neyagawa station from the proposed plan.

### **Neyagawa Station**

As part of MTO's 1998 and 2005 Corridor Protection Studies (CPS), all existing and future arterial crossings of 407 ETR were considered potential station locations. Within Oakville, this included stations at Bronte, Neyagawa and Trafalgar.

The preferred alternative documented in the recent EPR now indicates the removal of the proposed station at Neyagawa Boulevard notwithstanding that it is located

adjacent to what is planned to be one of the most densely developed communities in this area of Oakville. Staff believe this area has been misrepresented in the EPR by suggesting that it will retain its “rural” character and future population densities will be too low to support a transitway station. The Town’s Official Plan designates the general area around the future Neyagawa Station for a mix of higher density residential, employment and retail land uses which are anticipated to be in accordance with the Ministry of Transportation’s own Transit-Supportive Guidelines (2012). Furthermore, lands around the proposed station currently form part of the Town’s employment lands inventory.

All previously completed corridor and rights-of-way protection studies by MTO identified a future station at Neyagawa Boulevard. In addition, MTO’s position to not support a previous development proposal on the southern portion of lands located in the north-west corner of Burnhamthorpe Road and Neyagawa Boulevard in order to keep the runningway alignment, and future station options open, contradicts the overall preferred plan. Despite the conclusions of the EPR to remove the Neyagawa Station, the screening methodology for determining where stations are recommended, as documented in the EPR, suggests that a station in this location is indeed appropriate. Removal of the Neyagawa Station would create an 8 km gap along the transitway which will affect the viability of connecting transit services offered by Metrolinx, the Town of Oakville and the Town of Milton.

### **Cultural Heritage Impacts**

The preferred route identified in “Appendix G – Cultural Heritage Assessment” of the EPR, affects 15 Oakville properties within the corridor, including five properties that are on the Oakville Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. These five properties include:

- 4119 Fourth Line
- 263 Burnhamthorpe Road West
- 4243 Sixth Line
- 4233 Trafalgar Road
- 3269 Dundas Street West

All 5 properties are currently listed, not designated, under Section 27, Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. One property (4243 Sixth Line) was also included in the Town’s Cultural Heritage Landscape Strategy as a ‘high priority’ property and has since been recognized as a significant cultural heritage landscape and was actively in Phase Three of the implementation of the Cultural Heritage Landscape Strategy. Another property, 3269 Dundas Street West has also been identified as a significant cultural heritage landscape, with a Council-approved Conservation Plan and designation pending.

The EPR suggests that direct impacts to all of these properties are anticipated, which is of great concern to the Town. Any proposed works which may affect the integrity of these properties and cultural heritage resources, including the significant cultural heritage landscapes, will be subject to Town of Oakville Council review.

## **Next Steps**

On 20 October, 2020, and during the preparation of this report, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks issued its letter to the Ministry of Transportation to proceed with a Notice of Completion of the EPR, effectively completing the study. As such, the EPR was approved as submitted, and contrary to the concerns and comments provided by Town and Halton Region staff.

Town staff offered to meet with MTO staff during the study process to further discuss town concerns covered in this report. Although there are no further opportunities to address the cultural heritage impacts and the mobility impacts of the missing Neyagawa station through the EPR process, staff will continue to attempt to engage MTO staff during the detailed design process in order to ensure that Town concerns are resolved.

## **CONSIDERATIONS:**

### **(A) PUBLIC**

The Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) undertaken by MTO for the 407 Transitway project, is a public process which allows for public input.

### **(B) FINANCIAL**

There are no financial implications for the Town resulting from this report.

### **(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS**

This report was prepared jointly by staff from the Planning Department and the Engineering and Construction Department, and included input from staff of Oakville Transit.

### **(D) CORPORATE AND/OR DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC GOALS**

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal to:

- Improve the town's multi-modal transportation network to support effective movement of people and goods

**(E) COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY**

Support for sustainable transportation projects such as a transitway helps to promote environmentally sustainable practices

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