

Ministry of Transportation

Office of the Deputy Minister

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Ministère des Transports

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February 8, 2021

Arvin Prasad, MPA, RRP, MCIP
Commissioner, Development Services
Development Services Commission
City of Markham
Flr 2, 101 Town Centre Blvd.
Markham, ON
L3R 9W3

APrasad@markham.ca

Dear Commissioner Prasad,

Thank you for your letter dated January 26, 2021 requesting support for a right-in/right-out access onto Elgin Mills Road to the employment lands in the northeast corner of Highway 404 and Elgin Mills Road in the City of Markham.

As mentioned in your letter, Eric Doidge, Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations Division sent a letter dated September 11, 2020 regarding the request for a mid-block intersection on Elgin Mills Road. In this letter, it was noted that an access along Elgin Mills Road would impact the safety of travellers and operational efficiency of the provincial highway network, and as such the ministry was not able to support a mid-block access on Elgin Mills Road between Highway 404 and Woodbine Avenue. Ministry staff have recommended that access be provided through adjacent roadways or through the woodlot to the north.

It is my understanding that the key developer of the vacant employment lands has advised ministry staff that they are also opposed to an access onto Elgin Mills Road and support the ministry's position.

I agree with the response previously provided by Assistant Deputy Minister, Eric Doidge. The Ministry of Transportation is not able to support a right-in/right-out access with median island along Elgin Mills Road between Highway 404 and Woodbine Ave. The ministry encourages the City of Markham and the developer to review alternative access options through adjacent roadways or through the woodlot to the north.

The ministry will continue to work with the City of Markham, the developer and the Regional Municipality of York to explore access options that protect the safety and operations of the provincial highway network, while at the same time facilitating regional development in a safe and cost effective way. If you have any additional comments or questions, please contact Tom Hewitt, Head – Highway Corridor Management Section at Tom.Hewitt@ontario.ca.

A. Prasad
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laurie LeBlanc". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Laurie" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "LeBlanc".

Laurie LeBlanc
Deputy Minister of Transportation

Attachment

1. Letter from Eric Doidge, Assistant Deputy Minister Operations Division to City of Markham dated September 11, 2020

Cc: Eric Doidge, Assistant Deputy Minister – Operations
Becca Lane, Director – Central Operations
Jonathan Boone, Manager – Central Highway Operations
Tom Hewitt, Head – Highway Corridor Management Section

Ministry of Transportation

Assistant Deputy Minister's Office
Operations Division

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September 11, 2020

Arvin Prasad, MPA, RPP, MCIP
Commissioner, Development Services
Development Services Commission
Commissioner's Office
Flr 2, 101 Town Centre Blvd
Markham, ON L3R 9W3

APrasad@markham.ca

RE: City of Markham request for mid-block access on Elgin Mills Road

Dear Commissioner Prasad,

As discussed at our meeting on September 2nd, the ministry has prepared the following summary and our recommendations with respect to the various access options for the proposed development in the NE quadrant of Elgin Mills Road/Highway 404:

Option 1 – Existing Municipal Roads (Breyworth Road and Prince of Wales Drive)

The ministry has no concerns with development access being provided by the two existing municipal roads that currently terminate at the property line of the development (Breyworth Road and Prince of Wales Drive).

Option 2 – New Municipal Road in Woodlot

The ministry has no concerns with the development access being provided by a new municipal road through the adjacent woodlot to the north.

Option 3 – Direct Access from MTO Ramp Terminal Intersection

A preliminary review indicates that a direct access from the Highway 404 northbound off-ramp to Elgin Mills Road could be designed and constructed to MTO standards. This option would be restricted to a grade separated in-movement from the MTO off-ramp, a right-out from the development and a right-in from Elgin Mills Road. This option would be considered as a secondary access to the development lands, with primary access through one or more of the municipal roads discussed in Options 1 and 2. All construction and costs would be the responsibility of either the City of Markham or the developer. The developer has stated that the cost of construction for ramp access would be prohibitive for this small parcel of land.

Option 4 – Mid Block Channelized Right-in Only with Right-turn Lane

A preliminary review indicates that this option would be challenging to design and construct to MTO standards for the following reasons:

- The grade difference between Elgin Mills Road and the Storm Water Management Pond will restrict the design options;
- The need to relocate major utilities;
- Restricts York Region's potential to widen Elgin Mills Road in the future;
- There is no direct connection between this potential access and the bulk of the development lands.

The ministry is willing to explore this option further; however, the development community has indicated that this option does not address their access needs.

Option 5 – Right-in/Right-out with Median Island

The ministry has reviewed the location of the proposed mid-block right-in/right-out and has safety and operational concerns for the following reasons:

- A right-in/right-out without a median island would create serious safety and operational concerns because eastbound traffic on Elgin Mills Road will attempt a left turn in;
- The existing two-way left-turn lane on Elgin Mills Road would need to be converted into a median island and property owners on both sides of Elgin Mills Road would need to agree to the conversion and to waive their rights for compensation from the government;
- A right-in/right-out access on the north side of Elgin Mills Road would result in significant weaving concerns with vehicles entering Elgin Mills Road (travelling westbound) and vehicles accessing the on-ramp to Highway 404 northbound;
- The right-in would also create turbulence in the flow of westbound traffic on Elgin Mills Road because it would be difficult for drivers to determine who is using the right-in and who is accessing the freeway.

Option 6 – Mid-Block Signalized Intersection

The ministry has reviewed the location of a proposed mid-block signalized intersection and has safety and operational concerns for the following reasons:

- Ministry policy states that the desirable off-set spacing between the off-ramp intersection and the first municipal road intersection is 800 m, and the minimum off-set spacing is 400 m. A full-moves intersection between the off-ramp intersection and Woodbine Avenue would be located approximately 150 m from the existing ramp terminal intersection, which is significantly substandard;
- A substandard mid-block intersection will result in the left and right lane storage capacity from Elgin Mills Road, for northbound and southbound Woodbine Avenue, being significantly decreased. Woodbine Avenue is an arterial road which serves residential, commercial and industrial traffic; reducing the left and right turn storage capacity would have significant impacts to Elgin Mills Road, the Provincial Highway system and the surrounding community;

- To accommodate the substandard signal spacing, the ministry and York Region will need to provide more green time to signal timing along Elgin Mills Road. This will reduce the available green time for the ministry off-ramps. Also, it will create a safety and operational concern for the ministry, since the traffic queues on the off-ramps will extend into the through-lanes of Highway 404. Collisions at the queue ends on freeways can result in fatalities or life altering injuries.

An access along Elgin Mills Road will impact the safety of travellers and operational efficiency of the Provincial Highway network. As such, the Ministry of Transportation is not able to support mid-block access on Elgin Mills Road between Highway 404 and Woodbine Avenue. The ministry recommends access through the adjacent residential roadways or through the woodlot to the north.

Sincerely,



Eric Doidge
Assistant Deputy Minister

- c. Becca Lane, Director – Central Operations
Tom Hewitt, Head – Highway Corridor Management Section