

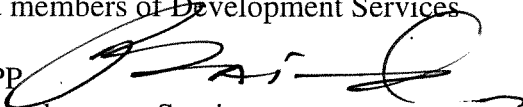


Memorandum to: Development Services Committee

Report Date: June 2, 2015

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**TO:** Mayor Scarpitti and members of Development Services Committee

**FROM:** Jim Baird MCIP RPP   
Commissioner of Development Services

**SUBJECT:** Status Update  
Thornhill Revitalization Area Land Use Intensification Study  
Terms of Reference  
Discussions with Metrolinx, Project PR 14 126187

**PREPARED BY:** Ron Blake, Acting Senior Development Manager, Planning  
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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) That the memorandum titled: "Thornhill Revitalization Area Land Use Intensification Study Terms of Reference Discussions with Metrolinx, Project PR 14 126187" be received;
- 2) That staff continue to monitor the progress of Metrolinx's Regional Express Rail (RER) study and provide Development Services Committee with further updates to the status of a potential John Street GO station on the Richmond Hill line as key RER reports are released.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this memo is to update Development Services Committee on recent discussions between the City and Metrolinx regarding a possible new GO Station on the Richmond Hill line at John Street and Green Lane

**BACKGROUND:**

On November 18, 2014 staff prepared a report and terms of reference for a Land Use Intensification Study for the Thornhill Revitalization Area. The terms of reference proposed a two-phase study consisting of an initial analysis of the feasibility, timing and costs of developing a new GO Station on the Richmond Hill line in the vicinity of John Street and Green Lane, and a second phase, dependent on the outcome of the GO Station analysis, addressing planning and land use matters associated with future intensification and redevelopment of the Thornhill Redevelopment Area. At the November 18, 2014 meeting, Development Services Committee directed that the matter be referred back to Development Services Committee to allow for further discussion with Metrolinx and community consultation.

On March 31, 2015, the Mayor and several members of Development Services Committee, Planning and Engineering Department staff met with Metrolinx Staff to review the current status of Metrolinx's review of the GO Train Rail Corridors. This memorandum provides a brief summary of the key matters discussed at this meeting:

**DISCUSSION**

Metrolinx is currently undertaking a major review of rail and rapid transit in the Greater Toronto Area and provided an update of the current status of the Regional Express Rail (RER) initiative and other ongoing initiatives.

**Regional Express Rail**

The long-term objective of the RER initiative is to develop all-day, two-way GO Train service along all lines in the Greater Toronto Area. This is a major, comprehensive initiative that will be phased in over the next decade or more. Key elements of this initiative include:

- Eventual electrification of GO Lines
- All-day two way service
- Fifteen minute headways between trains

These objectives will be phased in incrementally, over a multi-year period. Metrolinx will be starting high level public consultation on the RER initiative this fall, on a corridor by corridor basis.

The RER work plan is comprised of four key elements:

- 1) **Service Concept**, to determine demand and service levels and develop a phasing plan
- 2) **Infrastructure Needs**, to identify the infrastructure and equipment that will be needed to deliver on the Service Concept
- 3) **Phasing Plan**, to identify the optimal sequencing of infrastructure and service, considering factors like ridership growth, congestion benefits and effective infrastructure delivery
- 4) **Engagement Plan**, to identify the work necessary to engage stakeholders including the public, municipalities, and elected officials.

Metrolinx is currently undertaking the first phase of the RER strategy: the service level analysis.

**Infrastructure Needs of the Richmond Hill line**

In its initial RER analysis, Metrolinx has identified key infrastructure challenges of the Richmond Hill line. These include:

- Flooding issues in the Don Valley will need to be addressed with potentially large capital costs required to mitigate flooding along the line
- Rail/rail grade separation required at Doncaster rail diamond (South of John Street), which would also have significant capital costs attached

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- One new track required along much of the corridor south of John Street
  - Various road/rail grade separations

In addition, Metrolinx does not own the portion of the tracks north of the diamond and therefore has little control in adding a new station near John Street because Metrolinx will need CN's consent to do so. This will affect the provision of the infrastructure requirements discussed below and the timing for electrification.

**Key considerations for a new station**

System-wide, a new station at John St/Green Lane would need to be considered in the context of the Richmond Hill line as well as the whole system.

Metrolinx must first assess anticipated service levels on a line-by-line basis, associated infrastructure needs to accommodate recommended service levels as well as a phasing and implementation plan.

Within the context of the Richmond Hill line, key issues regarding a new station at John Street/Green Lane include:

- the need for a future road grade separation at Green Lane and rail-rail separation at the Doncaster Diamond south of John Street;
- both of these projects would involve major capital expenditures requiring significant public and possibly private sources;
- adding a new station would also add to the "dwell time" for each train, which may counteract some of the speed advantages of an electrified system;
- Metrolinx also advised that a new station in the Green Lane/John Street area would be at least partially located on a curved portion of track which is not impossible but is difficult to implement;
- other constraints along the Richmond Hill line include a right of way through the Don Valley with numerous sharp curves, which limits potential speeds even with an electrified system, as well as concerns about electrification of a line subject to periodic flooding and the very high capital costs that may be required to mitigate this concern.
- Overall, staff felt that Metrolinx places higher priorities on other lines in terms of improvements and investments than the Richmond Hill Line.

**Next Steps**

Metrolinx is working on two key initiatives that will have important implications and establish the parameters for any future plans for a station at Green Lane/John Street. These include:

- Completion of the RER Service Concept which, among other matters, will contain recommendations and priorities for additional stations. Metrolinx has targeted fall 2015 to report to the Metrolinx Board on the Service Concept;

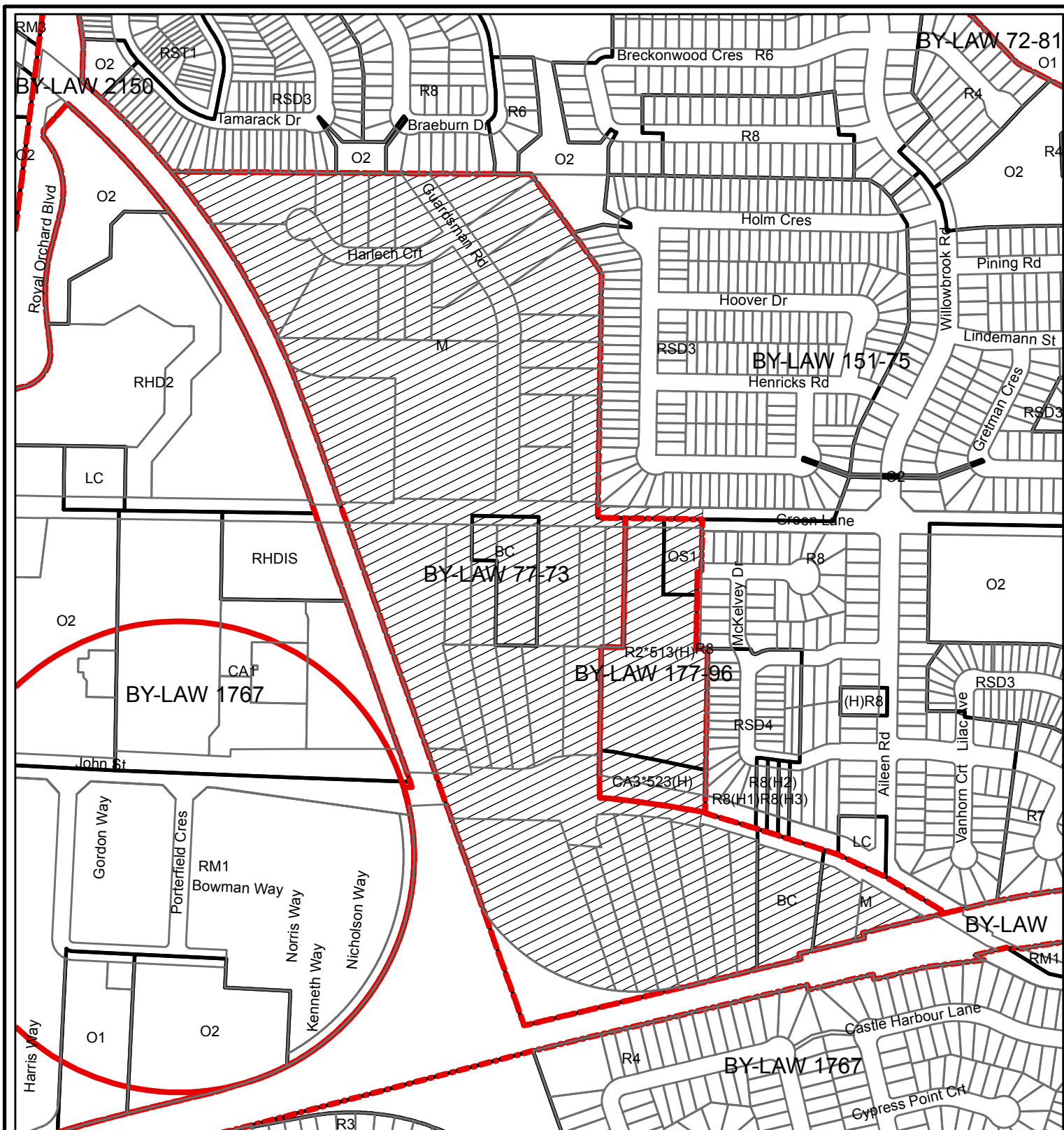
- Initiation of the public consultation process for the RER on a corridor by corridor basis. Metrolinx anticipates that the public consultation sessions will begin after they report to the Metrolinx Board.

At this time, Staff propose to continue monitoring the progress of these initiatives and the RER Study generally and to provide updates to Development Services Committee regarding a potential GO station at John Street, as specific reports relating to the RER Study are made available.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1 – Area Context Map

Attachment 2 – Arial Photo



# AREA CONTEXT

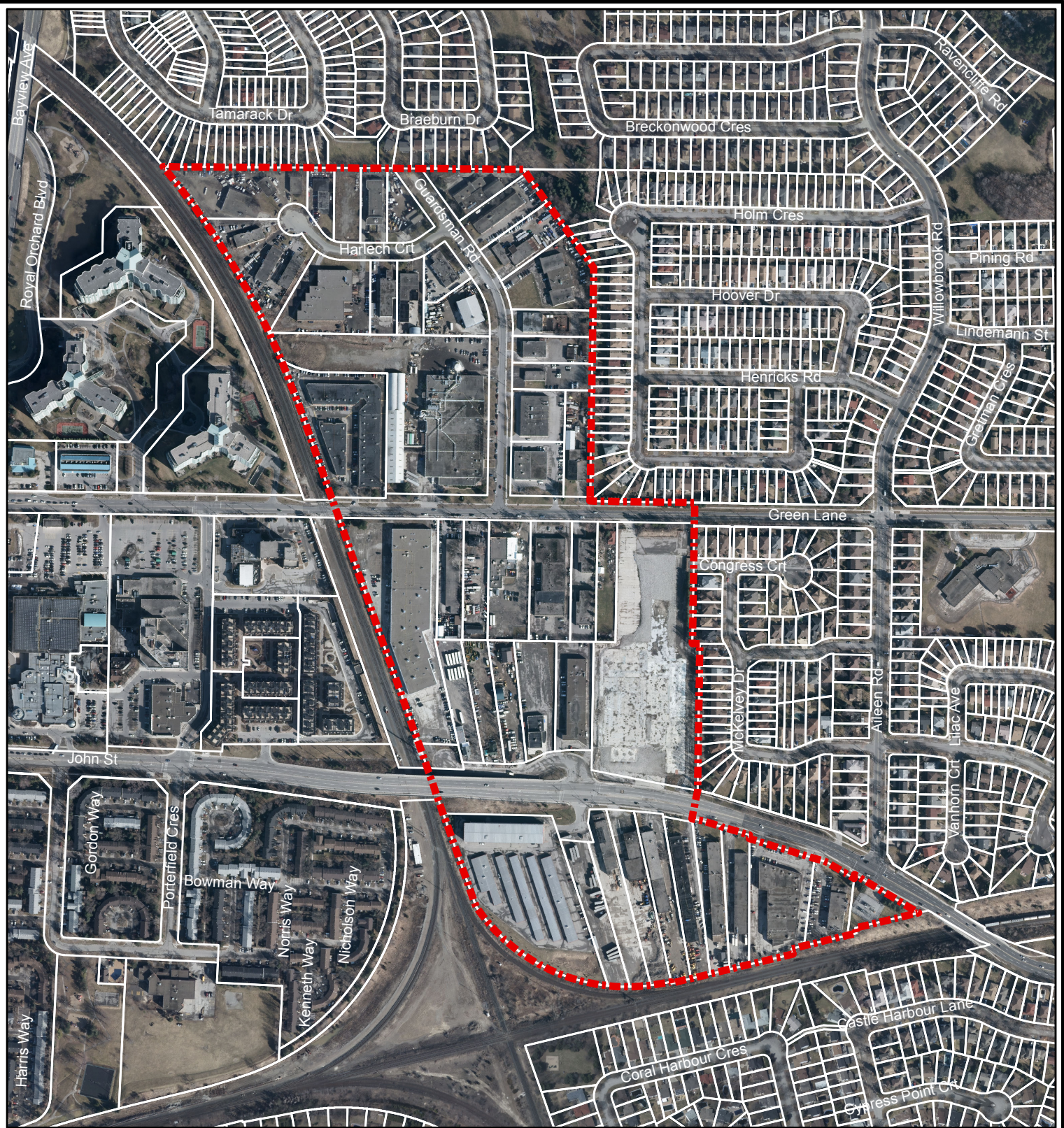
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DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMISSION

Drawn By: DD

Checked By: RB

FIGURE No. 2