



Report to: Development Services Committee

Date Report : Sept. 27, 2011

SUBJECT: Village Parkway Improvements Municipal Class Environmental Assessment - Highway 7 to Landmark Court

PREPARED BY: Simon Hung, Engineering (2136)

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report entitled "Village Parkway Improvements Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA)", be received;
- 2) And that the preferred alternative for the improvement of Village Parkway from Highway 7 to Landmark Court as outlined in this report be endorsed;
- 3) And that staff be authorized to file the Environmental Study Report in accordance with the Class Environmental Assessment Act;
- 4) And that staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Not applicable.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to:

- Seek Council's endorsement of the preferred alternative for the improvement of Village Parkway from Highway 7 to Landmark Court and to file the EA Study;

BACKGROUND:

Village Parkway is an existing north-south mid block collector road linking Highway 7 and 16th Avenue in the Unionville area. While most of Village Parkway comprises an urban cross-section (with curb-and-gutter), the most southerly segment, between Highway 7 and Landmark Court, consists of two 4 m lanes with gravel shoulders running on a rural cross-section (with roadside ditches) without sidewalk and municipal services. The roadway, constructed in the early 1980s, was constructed on a temporary right-of-way with the intention for an urban road to be built in its ultimate location. It is this segment of Village Parkway that is the subject of the environmental assessment (Attachment A).

For years, developments adjacent to the study area have been put on hold pending the availability of storm and sanitary facilities. With the developer's group funding the infrastructure, the construction of the sanitary trunk sewer is currently underway and the storm sewer system is being designed and expected to start construction and be completed next year. With Lee Development (immediately west of Village Parkway) and Times Group (immediately east of Village Parkway) wishing to proceed with approved development, improvement to Village

Parkway from Highway 7 to Landmark Court becomes necessary to facilitate services and urbanize the roadway to support these developments.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION:

The EA study has gone through the required process including two Public Information Centres to present the alternatives and collect comments. The following is a summary of comments from the residents.

- There may be an increase in traffic infiltration on Village Parkway from Highway 7 to 16th Avenue after the road improvement and connection of Birchmount Road from Highway 7 to 14th Avenue
- Concern about speeding on Village parkway
- Impact on the vegetated and low lying areas
- Road improvement and sidewalk installation will provide safer environment for traffic and pedestrian
- Suggest better landscaping and minimum pavement
- Welcome the introduction of the roundabout for traffic calming
- Support of a dedicated bike lane

The major concern from the Unionville residents is the potential increase in traffic infiltration during peak periods once the future Birchmount Road to the south is fully functional from Highway 7 to 14th Avenue. Residents are concerned that Village Parkway could be used as a by-pass from Highway 7 to 16th Avenue when Warden Avenue and Kennedy Road become busy. It is recommended that traffic monitoring be carried out prior to and after the road improvement, and after Birchmount Road is connected from Highway 7 to 14th Avenue, to record any change in traffic flow.

In 2001, a transportation consultant (BA Group) was retained to undertake a study to assess the potential risk of traffic infiltration on Verclaire gate, Village Parkway and Sciberras Road. In the fall of 2001, the Engineering Department in association with the local Councillor and the consultant met with ratepayer representatives to discuss the preliminary findings of the consultant's report. Subsequently, in November 2001 a staff report outlined the findings of the consultant's draft report entitled "Unionville Traffic Management Plan" and the potential measures which could be employed to manage traffic infiltration at Verclaire Gate, Village Parkway and Sciberras Road. The "Unionville Traffic Management Plan" was adopted by Council in May 2002. The Engineering Department was authorized to carry out the required action plan set out in the report in order to mitigate potential traffic impacts including future consultation with the area residents and the local Councillor as outlined in the action plan. The action plan includes the following actions.

- Maintain competitive level of service on arterial network, including support for widening of area roads such as Warden Avenue and Highway 7.
- Facilitate achievement of increased transit usage through supportive land use, road network and funding policies.
- Monitor traffic flow conditions (volume and speed). Monitoring should take place, as a minimum, at identified development thresholds in Markham Downtown and after implementation of any new road linkages.

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- Identify traffic volume and speed criteria for evaluation of prevailing conditions and assessment of need for implementation of mitigation strategies. Traffic criteria should be consistent with other comparable streets within the Town.
 - Implement through traffic prohibitions (as warranted), primarily in response to traffic volume issues. These should be 'targeted' to the issue/problem and may be introduced in a staged manner, for example:
 - Peak period or directional restrictions, using signage/pavement striping
 - All-day restrictions, using signage/pavement striping or selective channelization
 - Full restriction, using channelization or medians

The "Unionville Traffic Management Plan" recommended pavement 'narrowing', 'raised' pavement or roundabout for traffic calming. The preferred option in the EA provides a roundabout at the future intersection of Village Parkway and Buchanan Drive/Fitzgerald Avenue (Attachment B). This is only possible with the wide road allowance and additional daylighting space at the 4 corners of the intersection. 'Raised' pavement is not possible because it is not acceptable to transit and emergency services. The design of the roundabout will ensure all vehicles including fire trucks, transit buses, school buses, garbage trucks and other large vehicles can maneuver around it.

An existing vegetated and low lying area straddles a small portion of the west road allowance. The majority of the vegetated area is situated inside the adjacent Lee property to the west. A permit for its removal was issued by Fisheries and Oceans in 1993. The adjacent development is currently applying for any other required permit(s) for the removal of the vegetated area.

A future school site is located at the north west corner of the roundabout. The York Region District School Board (YRDSB) has the following comments;

- The roundabout shall be designed and located in a manner that does not inhibit vehicular access to the school site for all school related traffic including buses, school staff, emergency vehicles and visitors.
- Additional pedestrian safety measures be implemented at the roundabout including, but not limited to, additional signage, marked crosswalk and crossing guards, if warranted.
- YRDSB be consulted on the detailed design of the roundabout.

The YRDSB will be included in the design process and their concerns will be addressed to their satisfaction.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE:

Taking into consideration of all the comments received, a preferred alternative has been selected (Attachment B) which provides,

- a 2 lane roadway to maintain the characteristic of existing Village Parkway as a minor local collector road.
- dedicated bike lanes
- on street dedicated parking
- amenities for vehicular, (public transit, emergency services, school buses), pedestrian and traffic moving through the community.

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- reduced pavement width to minimize traffic infiltration and speeding (3.5m wide instead of typical 4.25m in other collector roads).
 - Align intersections to provide safe and efficient traffic movements.
 - centre left turn lanes for the future developments.
 - introduction of roundabout for traffic calming.
 - maximize boulevard space for enhanced streetscape treatments.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

After the EA is filed and approved, the document will be forwarded to the Developer's Group for inclusion as part of the overall design.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)

Not applicable.

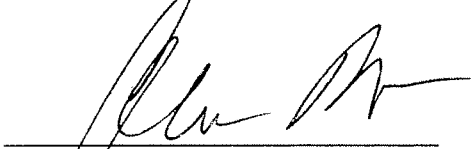
ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The improvement of Village Parkway from Highway 7 to Landmark Court/Amberwood Court will provide the necessary municipal services and support the transportation needs of the existing and future needs of the Unionville area at certain location. At certain locations, more space will be available in the boulevard for enhanced streetscape treatment. It will also provide a safer environment for traffic, cyclist and pedestrian.

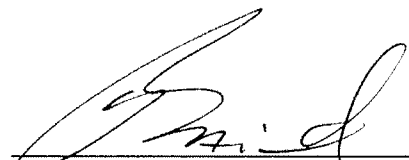
BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Planning Department has received and commented on this report.

RECOMMENDED BY:



Alan Brown, CET
Director of Engineering



Jim Baird, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Key Map
Attachment B – Preferred Alternative
Attachment C – Road Cross Section Detail