



Report to: Development Services Committee

Date Report: Sept. 13, 2011

SUBJECT: Highway 7 Streetscape Improvements from Verclaire Gate to Sciberras Road

PREPARED BY: Simon Hung, Senior Capital Engineer ext. 2136
Marina Haufschild, Senior Planner, Urban Design ext. 5790

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the staff report entitled "Highway 7 Streetscape Improvements from Verclaire Gate to Sciberras Road be received;
- 2) That the streetscape concept for Highway 7 widening from Verclaire Gate to Sciberras Road as outlined in this report be endorsed;
- 3) That staff be authorized to submit an application to the Municipal Streetscape Partnership Program offered by the Region of York for the installation of enhanced streetscaping for Highway 7 from Verclaire Gate to Sciberras Road;
- 4) That a 2011 capital budget be created in the amount of \$3,500,000, funded \$1,750,000 (50%) from the Development Charges Town Wide Hard Reserve and \$1,750,000 (50%) from the Region of York Streetscape Partnership Program;
- 5) That staff report back with a revised budget structure should the Region's funding be approved by the Region at a different amount less than \$1,750,000 or 50%;
- 6) That the Director of Engineering and the Director of Planning and Urban Design be authorized to finalize any future revisions to the streetscape plans;
- 7) That staff report back in 2012 on the enhanced streetscaping for Highway 7 from Town Centre Boulevard to Verclaire Gate for the 2013 Municipal Streetscape Partnership Program with the Region of York;
- 8) And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Council on the status of the Highway 7 road widening project and construction schedule.

-
- To seek endorsement for the enhanced streetscape plan and to apply for funding under the Region of York for their 2011 Municipal Streetscape Partnership Program.
 - To seek approval to amend the 2011 Capital Budget for the streetscape enhancements.
 - Advise of future streetscaping and funding partnership for Highway 7.
 - To seek authorization for the Director of Engineering and the Director of Planning and Urban Design to finalize any future revisions to the streetscape plans.

BACKGROUND:

With the commencement of the Times Group development in Markham Centre and proposed developments in OPA 15 (north of Highway 7), the widening and urbanization of Highway 7 from Verclaire Gate to Sciberras Road is necessary. On June 14, 2011, Markham Council requested the Region of York to advance the construction of Highway 7 widening from Town Centre Boulevard to Sciberras Road from 2013/2014 to 2012/2013. The Region is attempting to accelerate their program to meet Markham's request subject to a number of conditions including property acquisition, utility relocation and completion of Highway 7 sanitary and storm sewers. The Region's current schedule to complete the detailed design is early 2012 and start construction in summer/fall 2012 with completion in 2013.

The above section of Highway 7 is classified as "Regional Centre" (ROP) by the Regional Streetscape Policy. In accordance with the requirements of this policy the Region will provide the following improvements in the boulevard:

- street trees on 10 metre spacing;
- concrete splash strip behind curb;
- one tier raised median with splash strip and trees;
- two tier median at gateway with irrigation system.

This section of Highway 7 is also located within the Markham Centre Secondary Plan area where enhanced streetscape is recommended. The Markham Centre Streetscape Standards were endorsed by the Markham Council in 2004 which include:

- 2 metre wide sidewalk;
- upgraded street lights;
- raised tree planters;
- unit pavers between tree planters.

The ongoing VIVA H3 contract includes streetscape improvements along the Highway 7 Transitway corridor between Yonge Street and Town centre Boulevard. The VIVA route streetscape elements include:

- 2 metre wide sidewalk;
- upgraded streetlights;
- raised tree planters;
- unit pavers between tree planters;
- unit pavers in the splash strip;
- unit pavers in the boulevard at the intersections.

The streetscape elements provided by the VIVA H3 contract will result in a higher quality of public realm and are in line with the Town of Markham Centre Streetscape Standards (2004). The entire VIVA H3 project is funded by Metrolinx at no cost to the Town.

The section of Highway 7 between the VIVA and Region's road widening, from Town Centre Boulevard and Verclaire Gate, has not been scheduled for widening yet (Attachment A). VIVA is currently preparing a preliminary design and cost estimate for the Region. The Region will determine how this contract will be undertaken (by VIVA or Region) and scheduling. This section is to provide the same enhanced streetscape treatment as in the Markham Centre standards.. Once the design and schedule for the widening of this section of Highway 7 is provided by the Region, staff will report back to Council and request additional funding for the streetscape enhancements and partnership with the Region in 2012.

The Town has prepared an enhanced streetscape concept (Attachment B) for the section of the Highway 7 from Verclaire Gate to Sciberras Road to include enhanced streetscape elements as required for higher order roads in Markham Centre and to provide continuity of streetscape on Highway 7 from the VIVA project east into Markham Centre. Detailed drawings and cost estimate have been completed by a landscaping consultant and submitted to the Region on September 1, 2011 to meet the Streetscape Partnership Program deadline which has been extended from March 2011 to allow the Town to apply.

The Town has the opportunity to participate in the Region's Municipal Streetscape Partnership Program and obtain funding for streetscape enhancements for the above portion of the road. The following are required by the Region before the mid September 2011 deadline.

- Town to submit an application for the program (application was submitted to the Region on July 22, 2011).
- Town to provide a set of detailed streetscape design with the enhancements and cost estimate to the Region by September 1, 2011 (completed).
- Region requires funding commitment from the Town on their share of the streetscape improvements by mid September 2011 before the application can be processed.

In order to comply with the above conditions, Town staff has prepared this report to seek funding of the streetscape enhancement and provide a Markham resolution to be included in the report to Region Council in October 2011.

The application falls in the type "A" category of the Streetscape Partnership Program which entitles Markham to a maximum of 50% Regional contribution. With approval of \$1,750,000 Town funding, a total funding of \$3,500,000 may be available for the streetscape enhancement. The actual work and expenditure will not be completed until late 2012/2013.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Failing to meet the deadline of the funding program, the Town may either fund the full cost of the streetscape enhancement or reduce the scope of the enhancement. The application for the Region's Streetscape Partnership Program cannot be postponed to next year because funding

must be committed prior to the tender process of the Region's contract which is expected to be as early as spring 2012.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The requested 2011 capital project of \$3,500,000, to be funded \$1,750,000 (50%) from Development Charges Town Wide Hard Reserve and \$1,750,000 (50%) from the Region of York Streetscape Partnership Program, is required in order to meet the September 2011 deadline for approval of funding from the Region's program. Should the approved funding from the Region be less than the \$1,750,000, staff will report back with a revised budget structure.

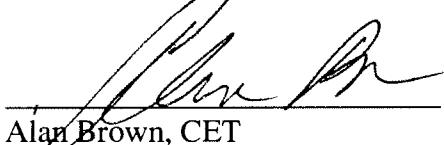

The DC Background Study has an allowance of approximately \$4.5 million for Highway 7 streetscaping from Rodick Road to Sciberras Road of which \$2.25 million (50%) is funded from Town Wide Hard Reserve. The enhanced streetscape between Rodick Road and Town Centre Boulevard is fully funded by the current VIVA project. The funding required for the streetscape enhancement between Verclaire Gate and Sciberras Road is being requested in this report. Staff will request Council approval for future funding of the balance of the streetscape enhancement from Town Centre Boulevard to Verclaire Gate when a schedule is determined by the Region.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Highway 7 is an important arterial route that provides a high volume of daily commuters through York Region. By implementing enhanced streetscape elements, the corridor is improved for pedestrian and cyclist use. The project supports the Town's strategic priorities including Growth Management, Transportation/Transit, and Environmental Sustainability.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Finance Department has reviewed and commented on this report.

RECOMMENDED BY:
Alan Brown, CET
Director of Engineering
Rino Mostacci, MCIP, RPP
Director of Planning & Urban Design
Jim Baird, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Development Services**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A – Key Map

Attachment B – Concept Enhanced Streetscape Design (4 pages)