



York Region

Infrastructure Master Plan Update
Public Consultation Centre 2, Meeting 3

Meeting Notes

**King City Community Centre
2nd Level Auditorium
25 Doctors Lane
King City**

6:30 pm-9:00 pm

November 21, 2007

The electronic version of these meeting notes could be found at:
<http://york.waterwastewatermasterplan.ca>

I. Opening

Dave Hardy (Facilitator, Hardy Stevenson and Associates Limited) opened the session. He welcomed the 34 attendees and introduced the project team members.

Dave asked if there were any political representatives or any First Nations representatives in attendance, and there were none. Dave then introduced Regional staff and the project team leaders in attendance.

II. Presentation

Paul May, Director of Infrastructure Planning, gave a presentation on behalf of the Region of York on the infrastructure Master Plans and York Region's sustainability principles. A copy of this presentation is available online at: <http://www.york.waterwastewatermasterplan.ca/files/Presentation-Nov-6-2007.pdf>

III. Dialogue Session

A resident commented that as population grows, lake levels drop, especially in Lake Ontario. The resident said that this problem should be acknowledged.

Paul May answered that the level of Lake Ontario has decreased but not as much as other lakes (e.g. Lake Huron). He also pointed out that 80% of the water taken from Lake Ontario goes back to the lake; therefore, the overall impact on it is minor. Nonetheless, he acknowledged that there are always things that could be done better.

The resident then commented that the planning approach should be reversed. The Region's current approach is to take the population and their needs as a starting point, and then look into resources to satisfy them. Given that the water system has limits, planning should be based on how many people can be supported in a sustainable way, and not vice versa.

A resident asked about including high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on roads being widened to 6 lanes. He asked how many 6-lane roads currently exist. Paul indicated that he did not have an exact number, but gave examples such as Woodbine Avenue and Highway 7 from Pine Valley to Woodbine. The resident continued to say that many people are against widening to 6 lanes. He is concerned that what is being called a 6 lane road may actually be wider than that.

Paul said the existing Transportation Master Plan identifies projects of 6 and 4 lanes. In terms of how we widen, the report "Towards Great Regional Streets" provides guidance. No streetscaping was done to enhance Woodbine Avenue. The Region plans to do things differently now, and will provide streetscaping. The Region is trying to accommodate sustainable transportation choices. In order to provide this, some 6-lane roads are required.

A resident asked what the criteria are for deciding which roads to widen. Paul indicated that the Region will only widen roads in cases where HOV lanes are justified. There must be a minimum number of cars with 2+ occupants and there must currently be bus use. If those criteria are not met, a road will not be widened. Even once a road is selected, it will go through the environmental assessment (EA) process.

A resident said to look towards public transportation. The roads proposed to be widened will contribute to pollution in the Region. The resident said he would like to be able to take a train to the subway to get to Toronto.

Another resident suggested that York Region residents are pleased that roads will not be widened without the provision of HOV lanes, but suggested that there will still be resistance to any widening. The resident added that transit should be more accessible.

Paul agreed that the Region needs improved rapid transit. He said there should be dedicated lanes for buses. If demand exists, bus lanes could be converted to light rail in the future. The HOV lanes are a first step that provides some benefit.

A resident asked what time during the day HOV lanes will be in effect.

Paul May stated that HOV lanes would be in effect during weekday morning and afternoon peak periods.

Another resident stated she does not want 16th Avenue to be widened. She also does not want Bayview Avenue south of the 407 to be widened. She does not want to see a dedicated bus lane in Thornhill, as she fears that heritage will be destroyed. She suggested that the Yonge Street subway be extended north of Steeles instead. Paul replied that York Region has put plans for surface rapid transit on hold from Steeles Avenue to Highway 7 until they know the timing of the Yonge Street subway extension.

A resident asked where stormwater fits into the Water and Wastewater Master Plan.

Paul May answered that storm water management is not a regional responsibility; it is an area municipality responsibility. He then asked George Zukovs, President of XGG Consultants, to elaborate.

George Zukovs explained that municipalities could be committed to address stormwater issues, but this is only possible with the involvement of conservation authorities and the Region. He mentioned that existing stormwater systems can be retrofitted, and there are opportunities to educate the public. He pointed out that stormwater is a key resource, and the public should think about optimizing its use.

If the Region gets across the idea of using stormwater effectively, he said, the Region has real opportunities to advance its current practices in restoring water, storing water, putting water in cisterns, expanding impervious areas, and allowing stormwater to infiltrate back underground.

A resident stated that stormwater management is a key issue and proposed that it be included as part the Region's *Water for Tomorrow* program. The resident also suggested domestic storm water collection should be used as a method of recycling and that educational programs would be essential in this regard.

A resident said she would like to see more transit access in Nobleton. She said it is difficult to get around without a car. She would also like to see more bicycle lanes and sidewalks in Nobleton. Paul responded by mentioning there is now a draft Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan for York Region. York Region Transit takes the results of the TMP and provides transportation improvements accordingly.

A York Region Transit (YRT) representative added that service plans are made every 5 years, subject to budget and Council approval. The proposed routes are prioritized according to need, where the most riders will benefit.

A resident said that the Province is seeking a target of 40% intensification, and therefore water and sewer mains will need to be expanded to meet new demands. Is the Province ready, the resident asked, to pay what is required to accommodate new water and wastewater demand?

Paul May answered that the cost of infrastructure is an important part of the Master Plan, as are the costs of human services. For water and wastewater, new infrastructure is financed through development charges; therefore, for every new office, house, or industrial lot there is a charge that must be paid based on the infrastructure required (water supply infrastructure, water treatment infrastructure, roads, etc). In terms of the overall water supply, there is coordination with the surrounding local governments (e.g. the Region of Peel and the City of Toronto) to see how those costs could be shared. That is the purpose of the Master Plan; to identify what the needs are, assess the costs involved and identify the best ways to make decisions.

Dave Hardy asked what the resident thought should be done.

The resident answered that we should look for more efficient ways to do things; for example, water pipes for the Yonge and Steeles area should come from Toronto and not from Peel.

Paul May indicated that there is an existing agreement in place with Toronto. However, the Region was not looking into expanding or increasing water obtained from Toronto. He pointed out that York Region will not ask Toronto to

build any more infrastructure to meet York's needs although it is expected that Toronto will have provided surplus water capacity.

Stan Holden from Genivar Ontario Inc. provided a clarification, stating that the process of bringing water from Toronto was not a simple operation; several pipelines were required. He explained that it was more appropriate to think in terms of a network of connections, rather than just one pipeline connection.

A resident asked a question about the environmental assessment process. He noted that Phase 2 of the Class EA process suggests that alternatives will be assessed at a future time, and asked what happens at the end of this process.

Paul said that at the end of the study, sustainable plans and policies, including a 5-year action plan, will be produced. Paul added that each project listed in the Transportation Master Plan will need a separate environmental assessment. He indicated that Phase 3 will look further into selected alternatives.

Stephen Collins (York Region) added that the Transportation Master Plan satisfies Phases 1 and 2 of the Class EA process. When his team conducts a road EA, they begin at Phase 1 looking at transportation needs from origins and destinations. This study assesses the requirements for transportation along corridors. While the Region is encouraging people to take transit and to walk and cycle, there is a population base that owns cars and likes to drive. The Region wants to provide transit alternatives to newcomers to York Region.

Stephen Collins also reminded the public that from its creation in 1971 the Region's population has grown almost 600%. The Region's current direction to meet the demands of such growth is to provide services, recreation facilities, and shopping amenities as close as possible to where people live, so that residents reduce their driving needs. The objective is to be convenient and accessible for people without cars.

A resident asked why a new EA is being started by the City of Vaughan when York Region recently completed one. The resident also asked how they are related.

Paul May explained that there is a two tier system for water supply and wastewater services. It is York Region's responsibility to *supply* water to all 9 municipalities. Additionally, Tom Agnew (Transportation and Works, Region of York) explained that it is the responsibility of local area municipalities to distribute water throughout their municipal jurisdiction.

Another resident asked about Phase 2 of the EA process. He asked if the Region could quantify the level of impact on the environment. Paul replied that the impact on the environment is one of the sustainability principles guiding the TMP. Each sustainability principle also has evaluation criteria. Paul suggested that residents provide the Region with ideas on how to weigh the evaluation criteria.

A resident said she echoed the earlier comments to place an emphasis on transit. She suggested the Region should be bold in the TMP update, and should put all effort into transit.

Another resident suggested the Region consider implementing reversible lanes, like Toronto has on Jarvis Street.

A resident commented that the environment is being impacted beyond specific projects.

A resident asked about the use of permeable surfaces in the Region. Stephen Collins said that a type of pavement is being developed as a permeable surface. The Region is investigating the use of this surface on a small-scale basis first. A resident suggested the Region investigate a study undertaken in Buffalo, and the experiment underway at Seneca College.

A resident expressed concern about water infiltration. She pointed out that there are a considerable number of houses without grass lawns, and that the Region should do more to limit impermeable lots and rather expand permeable area. She also wondered how to get more precipitation onto the grass.

Another resident commented that white belt areas located south of the Oak Ridge Moraine should be protected from development.

John Waller, Director, Long Range and Strategic Planning of York Region mentioned that there are three whitebelt areas in York Region. He then explained that in order to accommodate the forecasted population expected to be living in York, municipalities will have to allow development in those areas. The question to pose would be; what to develop, the timing for that, and under what circumstances. He also clarified that the white belt areas were never identified as 'no development' areas.

A resident expressed concern about new development in York Region and said that the only development that should be acceptable is sustainable development.

Paul May commented that it is not the role of the Water and Wastewater Master Plan to decide where development should occur. He explained that those decisions are much more comprehensive and many other considerations need to be taken into account; for example, the role York plays in Ontario or even in Canada. Decisions about where development should occur are sometimes beyond the Region's limits running into shared responsibilities, e.g.; getting water from Lake Simcoe as opposed to from Lake Ontario. There are concerns in each case, but overall, it is only part of a larger picture.

A resident asked if the Region could facilitate greater linkages to GO Transit's rail service through York Region. Paul stated that GO Transit's rail and bus service are important to the Region. The 2002 TMP called for all day rail service. Some new stations should be built in York. GO rail service can do more than help people going downtown.

Dave Richardson (MMM Group) provided an example of permeable pavement used on Toronto's Don Valley Parkway in the 1980s. He stated that permeable pavement still needs considerable advancement to be viable for roadways. He noted that reversible lanes are not used extensively because left turns cause significant delays for the through movements which share the reversible lane. While these lanes work well on bridges, in tunnels, or on roadways where no left turns can be made, they are more difficult to implement on city streets.

A resident stated that the TMP Update should include links to Pearson International Airport and VIA Rail.

Dave Hardy thanked the residents for participating in the PCC and closed the dialogue session. The residents were notified that minutes will be retrievable on the Region's website and the Consultants will take into consideration all the comments noted today.

END OF SESSION