



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: November 20, 2017

Report Number: SRPRS.17.179

Department: Planning and Regulatory Services
Division: Development Engineering and Transportation

Subject: **Metrolinx's Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan**

Purpose:

To update Council with respect to Metrolinx's Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan; to seek Council's endorsement of staff comments regarding the transportation infrastructure projects and initiatives recommended for Richmond Hill; and to provide formal input to Metrolinx regarding the Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan as part of their consultation process.

Recommendation(s):

1. Staff Report SRPRS.17.179, regarding Metrolinx's Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan be received;
2. Metrolinx be advised that the Yonge North Subway Extension is the top priority for the Town of Richmond Hill, and that the Town requests Metrolinx to seek opportunities to advance the funding and construction of the Yonge North Subway Extension within the timeframe of the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan;
3. Metrolinx be requested to advance the timing of Regional Express Rail Service (frequent all-day and two-way service) on the Richmond Hill GO Rail Line within the timeframe of the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan;
4. Metrolinx be requested to consider the addition of a Grade Separation project on Elgin Mills Road at the Richmond Hill GO Rail Line, as part of identifying a Freight Cluster at this location in the Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan;
5. Metrolinx be requested to reconsider including a GO Station or Mobility Hub at 16th Avenue, within the Town's Key Development Area;

6. Staff be directed to continue to work with Metrolinx, York Region, other agencies and stakeholders with respect to the timing and funding of the Richmond Hill infrastructure projects and initiatives identified in the Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan;
7. The Town Clerk be directed to forward a copy of Staff Report SRPRS.17.179 to Metrolinx as the Town's comments regarding Metrolinx's Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan;
8. The Town Clerk be directed to forward a copy of Staff Report SRPRS.17.179 to York Region as the Town's comments regarding Metrolinx's Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan; and
9. The Town Clerk be directed to forward a copy of Staff Report SRPRS.17.179 to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change as Richmond Hill's formal response to the Environmental Bill of Rights posting 013-1550 "A Call for Comments on the Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan".

Contact Person:

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Dan Terzievski, Director, Development and Engineering, (905) 747-6358.

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Regulatory Services

Approved by: Neil Garbe, Chief Administrative Officer

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), Town Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and Chief Administrative Officer. Details of the reports approval are attached.

Background:

Metrolinx's "The Big Move" – Regional Transportation Plan (2008)

In 2008, Metrolinx released its first regional transportation plan entitled *The Big Move*. In this document, Metrolinx set out a comprehensive Regional Plan to improve transportation infrastructure and services across the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA).

Several projects of note from *The Big Move* that have since been completed to date within the Town of Richmond Hill include: the Highway 7 East Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), from Yonge Street to the Unionville GO Station in Markham; and the Richmond Hill GO line extension to Gormley and the construction of a new GO Station.

Metrolinx's update to "The Big Move" Regional Transportation Plan

In 2016, Metrolinx commenced a review of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) with the purpose to continue to build on *The Big Move*'s transportation infrastructure recommendations and to continue to expand and optimize the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area's rapid transit network, furthering the goal of an integrated transportation system for the horizon year 2041.

Discussion Papers and Technical Background Papers inform the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan Update

As part of the update to *The Big Move*, Metrolinx released a Discussion Paper in August 2016. Staff reviewed this Discussion Paper and provided Council endorsed comments to Metrolinx in October 2016 (through Staff Report SRPRS.16.182) to be considered as part of the RTP update. Several of these comments are reiterated in this report. Staff Report SRPRS.16.182 is included in Attachment 1 for reference.

In addition to the August 2016 Discussion Paper, Metrolinx issued several focused draft technical background papers in August 2017 that would help to inform the update to the RTP. Richmond Hill staff also reviewed these papers and provided comments to Metrolinx through several working group discussions as well as in written form on September 7, 2017, specifically with respect to the Regional Cycling Network Study and the Regional Parking Study. Staff comments on the two background papers are included in Attachment 2 for reference.

Metrolinx releases Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan for review

Metrolinx released its Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), dated September 2017 for review and consultation with municipalities, partners, stakeholders, and the public. Attachment 3 contains the draft Executive Summary of the study report.

Metrolinx requested comments from public agencies by November 17, 2017. Town staff has provided Metrolinx with a draft copy of the Town's comments; however Metrolinx staff has also acknowledged that formal Council-adopted comments can be received

after this due date, as Metrolinx staff only recently presented the Draft 2041 RTP to Richmond Hill's Council at the November 6, 2017 Committee of the Whole meeting. A final draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan report is expected to be brought forward to the Metrolinx Board of Directors on December 7, 2017 for approval.

The purpose of this staff report is to highlight the key policy directions and recommendations in the Draft 2041 RTP that affect the Town of Richmond Hill, and to identify and document any staff and Council comments and concerns with respect to these. These comments are summarized in the sections that follow.

The Region of York also brought a staff report entitled Draft Metrolinx 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (YR Report) to the Regional Committee of the Whole on November 2, 2017. It should be noted that the comments provided in SRPRS.17.179 with respect to the Draft 2041 RTP are generally consistent with those in York Region's report.

Metrolinx's Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan:

The Draft 2041 RTP's purpose is to build on *The Big Move's* transportation infrastructure recommendations. It will continue to expand and optimize the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area's rapid transit network, furthering the goal of an integrated transportation system for the horizon year 2041. The Draft RTP is intended to align with the Province's 2017 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Province's Five Year Climate Change Action Plan.

The Draft 2041 RTP established five key strategies, and the projects and initiatives that are identified in this plan are linked to one or more of these. These five strategies are:

1. Complete delivery of current regional transit projects
2. Connect more of the Region with frequent rapid transit
3. Optimize the transportation system
4. Integrate land use and transportation
5. Prepare for an uncertain future

Below are the key initiatives and projects identified under each strategy that affect the Town of Richmond Hill. Staff and Council comments related to these strategies, initiatives and projects are also included below.

Strategy 1: Complete the Delivery of Current Regional Transit Projects

A primary strategy of the 2041 Draft RTP is to complete projects that are "In Delivery". In Delivery projects vary in scale and are either currently under construction or in the advanced stages of planning.

The following is a list of “In Delivery” Projects that have been included in the 2041 Draft RTP, that are either located within or have implications to Richmond Hill:

- Regional Express Rail (RER)
- GO Rail service extension to Bloomington and the completion of the new Bloomington GO Station
- Completion of the South Yonge Bus Rapid Transitway, from Highway 7 to 19th Avenue:
- Completion of Highway 7 West Bus Rapid Transitway, from Helen Street to Yonge Street:

Town of Richmond Hill Comments:

The Town of Richmond Hill is generally supportive of all of these projects, and is pleased to see that the extension of GO train service to Bloomington will be completed by 2019. The Town is also appreciative that work on Bus Rapid Transit will continue to move toward completion, particularly along the Yonge Street section, where it will help to support the intensification along the Yonge Street corridor, and at the Richmond Hill Centre and Key Development Areas at Yonge and Carrville/16th as well as Yonge and Bernard. However there are two key concerns that the Town would like consideration to be given to as part of the 2041 RTP update.

First, with respect to RER, the Richmond Hill GO line continues to be excluded from the RTP, with consideration of an RER service on the Richmond Hill line only identified as a project beyond 2041. Instead, the plan only recommends the expansion of the conventional peak hour service to all-day (single direction) by 2041. While the Town recognizes that there are challenges with ownership and flooding along this line, Town staff continues to recommend (consistent with the Town’s previous comments in Staff Report SRPRS.16.182) that Metrolinx review and seek opportunities to advance Richmond Hill GO line infrastructure improvements in order to provide RER service within the 2041 time frame.

Secondly, while the Town staff is appreciative of the completion of infrastructure to support new residential areas in the northern parts of Richmond Hill, Town staff continues to urge Metrolinx (consistent with the Town’s previous comments in Staff Report SRPRS.16.182) to consider identifying a new GO Station and/or Mobility Hub at 16th Avenue, as part of the 2041 RTP update. This mobility hub is identified in the Town’s Yonge/Carrville/16th Avenue Key Development Area Secondary Plan which is an area identified to receive the second highest level of density within the Town, next to the Regional Centre at Highway 7 and Yonge Street.

Strategy 2: Connect more of the Region with Frequent Rapid Transit

The Draft 2041 RTP's second strategy is to connect more of the GTHA with frequent rapid transit through the principles of advancing "In Development" projects, and establishing the 2041 Frequent Rapid Transit Network.

"In Development" projects are those that do not yet have full funding in place, but are currently at various stages of the planning and design process.

Projects identified as part of the 2041 Frequent Rapid Transit Network will help to complete the network and will have the following characteristics:

- Frequent - 10-15 minute all day service, seven days a week
- Reliable – Separated from general purpose traffic or have traffic signal priority

The following projects are considered as "In Development" in Richmond Hill:

- The 7.4 km extension of the Yonge Street Subway north, from Finch Station to Highway 7 linking Richmond Hill to Downtown Toronto; and
- The completion of the Yonge BRT, from 19th Avenue to Mulock Drive.

The following projects are proposed as part of the 2041 Frequent Rapid Transit Network in Richmond Hill:

- Richmond Hill All-Day GO Service;
- BRT/LRT along Leslie Street North, from Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive;
- BRT/LRT along Major Mackenzie Drive, from Jane Street to Leslie Street; and
- Transit Priority along Major Mackenzie East, from Leslie Street to Donald Cousens Parkway.

Town of Richmond Hill Comments:

Richmond Hill is pleased to see both the Yonge Subway north extension and the Yonge BRT projects identified within the 2041 RTP update.

However, to reiterate the recommendations of Staff Report SRPRS.16.182, the Town of Richmond Hill considers the Yonge Street Subway extension as the top transportation priority for both the Town and the Region of York.

The completion of the Yonge Subway extension is important to realize the Town and Region's vision for the Richmond Hill Centre as an Urban Growth Centre, and will be a primary point of convergence for the Regional and Rapid Transit network, with

substantial demand for the Yonge subway to connect to not only Downtown Toronto, but also to other key destinations throughout the subway network.

As such, staff continues to recommend that Metrolinx seek full funding opportunities through the next steps of the 2041 RTP in order to advance the construction of the Yonge North Subway Extension to Highway 7 as soon as possible, within the 2041 horizon or earlier.

Town staff also recommended that Metrolinx give further consideration to identifying significant longer term projects beyond the 2041 horizon such as the extension of the Yonge Subway north of Richmond Hill Centre and Highway 7, since these types of projects need significant lead times in planning and property protection.

Richmond Hill staff is supportive of the 2041 Frequent Rapid Transit Network identified transit network improvements, which are consistent with the needs identified in York Region's Transportation Master Plan (2016).

However, as noted previously in this report, the Richmond Hill GO rail all-day service is identified as being conventional peak direction service only, with frequent 15-minute all-day and two-way Regional Express Rail service only being identified as a project beyond 2041.

Town Staff continues to recommend and encourage Metrolinx review and seek opportunities to advance Richmond Hill GO line infrastructure to provide Region Express Rail service prior to 2041.

With respect to the Major Mackenzie Drive and Leslie Street projects, staff recommend that these projects be closely aligned with anticipated growth and development along these corridors, including Richmond Hill's future Civic Precinct.

Strategy 3: Optimize the Transportation System

The Draft 2041 RTP's third strategy is to optimize the transportation system to make the best possible use of existing and future transportation assets. Metrolinx intends to pursue the following actions:

- Advance the integration of fares and services across the regional transit network to remove barriers to transit use by developing an integrated fare system across municipal boundaries.
- Expand the first and last mile choices for all transit stations to maximize all-season access.
- Progress in Transportation Demand Management (TDM) initiatives to continue to support the shift in travel behavior from single occupant vehicles to sustainable modes of transportation and explore how the pricing of mobility, inclusive of paid parking, could be used for such behavior change.

- Expand the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) network and explore High Occupancy Toll (HOT) network to support higher occupancy travel and faster bus service.
- Propose a Regional Strategic Goods Movement Network that identifies Elgin Mills Road from Yonge to just east of Highway 404 as a Freight Cluster Connector. A Freight Cluster is defined as areas with high concentrations of land uses related to logistics, warehousing and the movement of cargo.

Town of Richmond Hill Comments:

Again, Richmond Hill staff is generally supportive of these initiatives.

However, the Town does have some concerns with the identification of Elgin Mills Road as a freight cluster connector. The Town's Yonge/Bernard Key Development Areas (KDA) is situated on Yonge Street just north of Elgin Mills Road, and is expected to see the third highest densities within the Town of Richmond Hill. Through the development of the Secondary Plan, Elgin Mills Road was identified as a key transportation corridor to service this KDA. Currently, Elgin Mills Road experiences periods of significant congestion, and this is expected to increase with the development of the KDA and continued growth in the Region. This congestion is caused in part by the at-grade crossing at Elgin Mills Road and the Richmond Hill GO Rail Line. Significant operational issues and delays occur throughout the day as high volumes of GO trains and long freight trains cross Elgin Mills Road, and in particular during the peak hours.

Next to the extension of the Yonge Street Subway to Highway 7, an Elgin Mills Road grade separation at the Richmond Hill GO Rail Line is considered a top priority for the Town.

Elgin Mills Road should not be identified as a freight cluster connector, without the inclusion or identification of a grade separation at the Elgin Mills Rail crossing as a project in the 2041 RTP. Without this, a freight cluster at this location would only further congest this corridor and impact the growth and development of the Town's key development area.

As such, there is also a need for Town staff to work closely with the Province, Metrolinx, Region, CN Rail and other transportation agencies to advocate and prioritize funding for the Elgin Mills Road grade separation, possibly as part of the next steps in the 2041 RTP update process.

Furthermore, Town staff would like some clarification and justification from Metrolinx on the identification of this Elgin Mills Road corridor as a proposed goods movement route, particularly, since 19th Avenue is proposed as part of the Goods Movement Network in York Region's 2016 Transportation Master Plan, but has not been identified as part of the Draft 2041 RTP Regional Strategic Goods Movement Network.

Strategy 4: Integrate Land Use and Transportation

Metrolinx plans to strengthen the relationship between land use planning and transportation to create more complete and connected communities that are supportive of transit, walking, and cycling through the following key actions:

- Encourage the Province to review the legislative and regulatory linkage between the provincial and municipal planning framework to fully achieve the objectives in the Growth Plan and the Regional Transportation Plan.
- Focus development on Mobility Hubs and Major Transit Station Areas along Priority Transit Corridors. Plan and design communities through TDM that support and promote a shift towards sustainable travel behaviour.
- Complete the Regional Cycling Network through planning, design and construction, which include cycling facilities across the region in areas with high cycling potential near rapid transit stations, between urban growth centres, and across boundaries.
- Consider the future of parking as it relates to the delivery of parking supply to support RER, develop parking management guidelines, coordinate the review of parking requirements through transit station area by-laws and adopt a regional approach to parking management for the arrival of shared mobility.
- Work with ministries, school boards, municipalities, service providers, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to establish school travel programs to encourage the development of future generations of pedestrians and cyclists.

Town of Richmond Hill Comments:

Richmond Hill is very supportive of this strategy to strengthen the integration of land use and transportation planning. Most of the Town comments brought forward in this report respect Draft 2041 RTP are specifically focused projects that serve to integrate transportation and land use, by providing the highest transportation service levels to the areas which are identified by York Region's and the Town's Official Plans as areas to receive the development densities. For example:

- The Yonge Subway North extension is critical to support the development of the Richmond Hill Regional Centre, which has the highest densities within the Town.
- A GO Station/Mobility Hub at 16th Avenue would support the growth of the Town's Yonge/16th Key Development Area, which is to receive the second highest densities in the Town.
- A grade separation at Elgin Mills at the Richmond Hill GO Station would serve the growth and development of the Town's Yonge/Bernard Key Development Area, which is to receive the third highest densities within the Town, as well as

support the development of the Elgin Mills Road corridor as a Freight Cluster Connector as identified in the Draft 2041 RTP.

As such the Town continues to urge Metrolinx to give consideration to advancing these three projects within the timeframe of the 2041 RTP in order to support the growth and development of these three key development areas within the Town.

With respect to the remainder of the initiatives, the Town of Richmond Hill provided specific comments to Metrolinx's Technical Background Discussion Paper – Regional Parking Strategy in September 2017 to consider paid parking and its implications to the Town. Comments were also made about the need to advance timing of planned rapid transit infrastructure in support of the reduced parking supply in planned and existing developments currently experiencing parking shortage pressures (See Attachment 2).

Richmond Hill provided specific comments regarding Metrolinx's Technical Background Discussion Paper - Cycling Network Strategy in September 2017 and recommended that the off-road portion of the Lake-to-Lake Route from Leslie Street to 19th Avenue and the multiuse path identified on Leslie Street from Stouffville Road to Bloomington Road be considered as part of the category – "Secondary Route" in the Draft Cycling Network Strategy (See Attachment 2).

Strategy 5: Prepare for an Uncertain Future

Strategy 5 will prepare the region to proactively adapt to future technologies and climate change through the following strategies:

- Develop a regional framework for on-demand and shared mobility that complements the provincial framework.
- Develop a region wide plan for autonomous mobility.
- Coordinate across the region to address climate resiliency of the transportation system.
- Proactively prepare for future with low-carbon mobility options.
- Partner for innovation in mobility with a focus on new services, tools and business models.

Town of Richmond Hill Comment:

Richmond Hill is also reviewing its climate change efforts and supports this strategy.

Project Prioritization and Funding

Consistent with comments from Staff Report SRPRS.16.182, staff recommends that "In Development" and "Frequent Rapid Transit Network" projects be prioritized through a process that takes into account and balances local context, plans and needs.

Richmond Hill would like Metrolinx to determine if the project prioritization model could be used to group projects into phases of five or ten-year increments up to 2041.

The Draft 2041 RTP identified the need to consider alternative funding sources as part of its implementation and funding strategy. Richmond Hill is interested in receiving information on alternative funding strategies from Metrolinx that support the Draft 2041 RTP.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

There are no financial/staffing/other implications as a result of this report.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

Providing comments and input to the Draft 2041 RTP aligns with all of the Town's Strategic Plan goals. It aligns with the goal of providing for **Stronger Connections** in Richmond Hill by planning and advocating for a connected community and much needed transportation infrastructure. It aligns with the goal of **Better Choice** in Richmond Hill as this Plan would help to provide better mobility choices for Richmond Hill residents to move around efficiently within the Town and around the GTHA. The goal of **Wise Management of Resources** is also aligned since infrastructure improvements will help to encourage and optimize the use of existing infrastructure by managing traffic congestion and delays through increased mobility options and changes in travel behaviour, which also results in indirect benefits such as improved health and air quality for residents. Ultimately, better mobility choices and through the provision of necessary transit infrastructure and a connected transportation network will serve support the continued growth and development of the Town into a more **Vibrant Place to Live** and destination to visit.

Conclusion:

Metrolinx is in consultation with municipalities, partners, stakeholders and the public regarding the Draft 2041 RTP. Richmond Hill's comments on the Draft 2041 RTP will be provided to Metrolinx.

Richmond Hill is generally supportive of the strategies by Metrolinx in the Draft 2041 RTP. However, some of the Richmond Hill comments previously provided through Staff Report SRPRS.16.182 in response to the Discussion Paper for the Next Regional Transportation Plan and the comments for the Technical Background Discussion Papers are reiterated in this report.

Richmond Hill continues to identify the Yonge North Subway Extension as its number one transportation priority, and would like to see funding for this to be completely secured through the next steps of this process, and the timing of the project to be advanced as much as possible.

In addition to the extension of the Yonge Street subway, grade separation of Elgin Mills Road at the Richmond Hill GO Rail Line and the Regional Express Rail improvements along the Richmond Hill GO Line are key priorities.

Town staff also continues to request that Metrolinx give consideration to the identification and inclusion of a GO Station/Mobility Hub at 16th Avenue, within the Town's Yonge/16th Key Development Area.

Staff will continue to work with Metrolinx on the Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan and provide support to advance transportation infrastructure projects within the Town of Richmond Hill as required.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. If you require an alternative format please call contact person listed in this document.

- Attachment 1: SRPRS.16.182 – Response to Metrolinx Discussion Paper for the next Regional Transportation Plan, October 24, 2016
- Attachment 2: Richmond Hill Comments: Cycling Network Strategy and Regional Parking Policy, September 2017
- Attachment 3: Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, Executive Summary excerpt, September 14, 2017

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPRS.17.179 Metrolinx's Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan.docx
Attachments:	- SRPRS.17.179 Attachment 1.pdf - SRPRS.17.179 Attachment 2.pdf - SRPRS.17.179 Attachment 3.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 15, 2017

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Dan Terzievski - Nov 15, 2017 - 12:27 PM

Kelvin Kwan - Nov 15, 2017 - 2:15 PM

Neil Garbe - Nov 15, 2017 - 3:25 PM