



Committee of the Whole Meeting

Minutes

CW#04-25

Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 9:30 a.m.

Council Chambers

225 East Beaver Creek Road

Richmond Hill, Ontario

A Committee of the Whole meeting of the Council of the City of Richmond Hill was held on Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. in Council Chambers via videoconference.

Committee Members present in Council Chambers:

Councillor Liu (Chair)
Mayor West
Regional and Local Councillor Chan
Regional and Local Councillor DiPaola
Councillor Davidson
Councillor Thompson
Councillor Cui
Councillor Cilevitz
Councillor Shiu

Staff Members present in Council Chambers:

D. Joslin, City Manager
S. Adams, Commissioner of Corporate and Financial Services
G. Galanis, Commissioner of Planning and Building Services
P. Masaro, Commissioner of Infrastructure and Engineering Services
T. Steele, Commissioner of Community Services
A. Dimilta, City Solicitor
M. Flores, Director, Policy Planning
D. Guy, Director, Community Standards
G. Li, Director, Financial Services and Treasurer
S. Aiello, Manager, Development Zoning and Committee of Adjustment
K. Chaudhry, Manager, Heritage and Urban Design
S. DeMaria, Manager, Development Planning
M. Dobbie, Manager, Park and Natural Heritage Planning
M. Fartsalas, Manager, By-law Policy and Adjudication
K. Graham, Manager, Development Planning

M. Lam, Manager, Revenue Billing
S. Tu, Manager, Financial Reporting and Accounting
A. Dickinson, Project Manager Affordable Housing
K. Faria, Senior Planner - Development
A. Patel, Senior Planner - Parks
P. Vega, Urban Design/Heritage Planner
K. Davey, Communications Consultant to the Mayor
N. Sabet, Executive Assistant Member of Council
R. Ban, Deputy City Clerk
S. Dumont, Council/Committee Coordinator
L. Sampogna, Council/Committee Coordinator
C. Connolly, Legislative Services Assistant

Staff Members present via videoconference:

C. Debi, Director, Communications Services
F. Suppa, Director, Infrastructure Planning and Development Engineering
L. Conde, Manager, Strategy and Government Relations
H. Ng, Manager, Transportation and Traffic
J. Walters, Manager, Engineering Subdivisions and Infrastructure Planning
S. Fiore, Senior Planner - Development

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. Council Announcements

Councillor Cilevitz advised of the growing number of measles cases across Canada, shared her experience of getting a measles antibody test, urged residents born on or before 1957 to do the same, and encouraged everyone to get vaccinated to protect against preventable diseases.

Regional and Local Councillor Chan acknowledged that Spring was approaching, recognized the many Nowruz celebrations in Richmond Hill, and extended a Happy Spring to the community and a Happy Nowruz to everyone celebrating.

Councillor Cui acknowledged that March was a month of many festivals and community celebrations, and extended his best wishes to all.

3. Introduction of Emergency/Time Sensitive Matters

There were no emergency/time sensitive matters raised by Members of Committee.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: Mayor West

That the agenda be adopted as distributed by the Clerk with the following additions:

- a) Delegation from Maria Danko, 297 Richmond Street, regarding Notice of Intention to Designate 297 Richmond Street - (Item 10.1);
- b) Delegation from Hamid Kashani, HK Architects, regarding the Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan - (Item 10.2);
- c) Delegation from Ian Andres, Goodmans LLP, regarding the proposed Comprehensive Zoning By-law (Centres and Corridors) and Accessible Parking By-law for the City of Richmond Hill - (Item 10.3);
- d) Delegation from Robin McIntosh, Richmond Hill resident, regarding the Member Motion submitted by Councillor Davidson with respect to Suspend City of Richmond Hill Use of the X (Twitter) Platform - (Item 10.4);
- e) Correspondence received regarding the proposed Comprehensive Zoning By-law (Centres and Corridors) and Accessible Parking By-law for the City of Richmond Hill - (Item 11.15);
- f) Correspondence received regarding Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law Enactment - (Item 11.16);
- g) Correspondence from Michael Theodores, 481 Major Mackenzie Drive East, dated March 18, 2025, regarding the Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan - (Item 11.17).

Carried Unanimously

5. Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest by members of Council under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

6. Identification of Items Requiring Separate Discussion

Committee consented to separate items 11.4.1, 11.6, 11.7, 11.8, 11.9, 11.10, 11.11, 11.13, 12.1 and 12.2 for discussion.

7. Adoption of the Remainder of Agenda Items

On a motion of Councillor Cui, Committee unanimously adopted those items not identified for separate discussion

8. Public Hearing(s)

There were no public hearings.

9. Presentation(s)**9.1 Presentation by Maria Flores, Director, Policy Planning, and Michelle Dobbie, Manager, Park and Natural Heritage Planning, regarding the Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan - (Item 11.8)**

Maria Flores, Director, Policy Planning, provided introductory remarks regarding the proposed Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan, highlighting years of discussions and the community's vision for the park as a central gathering space in Richmond Hill. She emphasized its significance as a symbol of the City's origins and its ongoing evolution as the community continues to grow.

Michelle Dobbie, Manager, Park and Natural Heritage Planning, provided an overview of the Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan developed with the help of the consulting team, Janet Rosenberg & Studio. She reviewed the location of the park, outlined the project timeline, the vision, park design options, top three elements preferred, and community feedback. M. Dobbie provided a virtual walking tour of the plan's key elements, covering travel options to the park, proposed parking arrangements, and potential future enhancements. She concluded by presenting staff's recommendations for the park's future development.

Moved by: Councillor Cilevitz

- a) That the presentation by Maria Flores, Director, Policy Planning, and Michelle Dobbie, Manager, Park and Natural Heritage Planning, regarding the Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan, be received with thanks.

Carried Unanimously

10. Delegation(s)**10.1 Maria Danko, 297 Richmond Street, regarding Notice of Intention to Designate 297 Richmond Street - (refer to Item 11.4.1)**

Maria Danko, 297 Richmond Street, owner, addressed Committee regarding Notice of Intention to Designate 297 Richmond Street. She stated that when she and her husband purchased the home in 2010, it was poor in condition, and they had plans to renovate it. She highlighted the values of unrenovated heritage homes in the neighbourhood,

discussed the City's grant incentives, and noted the need for additional funding. She advised of their intention to sever the lot to assist with financing, and requested the Committee delay its decision to allow time to explore the severance process.

10.2 Hamid Kashani, HK Architects, regarding the Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan - (refer to Item 11.8)

Hamid Kashani, HK Architects, addressed Committee regarding the Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan. He stated that the proposed park site hosted the November 2022 rally for Mahsa Amini, a 22-year old woman whose tragic death sparked the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement among Iranian communities worldwide. He advised of his discussions with Regional and Local Councillor Chan and City staff regarding a proposed memorial site in her honour, noting that it was not included in the staff report. H. Kashani advised of their participation in the public consultation for the park design which included their proposal, and urged Council to establish a memorial in a prominent location on the site.

10.3 Ian Andres, Goodmans LLP, regarding the proposed Comprehensive Zoning By-law (Centres and Corridors) and Accessible Parking By-law for the City of Richmond Hill - (refer to Item 11.10)

Ian Andres, Goodmans LLP, representing Baif Developments Limited, addressed Committee regarding the proposed Comprehensive Zoning By-law (CZBL) (Centres and Corridors) and Accessible Parking By-law for the City of Richmond Hill. He advised that the proposed CZBL does not preserve the zoning approved by an Ontario Municipal Board Order in 2016, nor does it comply with Subsection 37 of the *Planning Act* for his clients' parcels located at Yonge and Major Mackenzie, and requested that all references to his clients' lands be removed from the CZBL to maintain prior approval. I. Andres also expressed concerns with his clients' lands located at the Yonge and Bloomington area, explaining past zoning approvals were not properly captured in the proposed CZBL. Additionally, he advised there were concerns with electric vehicle parking requirements, and requested that staff work with his client to address their concerns as further detailed in his written submission included as part of Agenda Item 11.15.

10.4 Robin McIntosh, Richmond Hill resident, regarding the Member Motion submitted by Councillor Davidson with respect to Suspend

City of Richmond Hill Use of the X (Twitter) Platform - (refer to Item 12.1)

Robin McIntosh, Richmond Hill resident, addressed Committee regarding the Member Motion submitted by Councillor Davidson with respect to Suspend City of Richmond Hill Use of the X (Twitter) Platform. She shared her experience with the use of the X, and suggested that the City transition to Bluesky Social, noted entities using that platform, and the benefits of doing so.

11. Committee and Staff Reports

11.1 Minutes - Official Plan Update Committee Meeting OPUC#01-24 held September 10, 2024

Moved by: Councillor Cui

a) That the minutes of the Official Plan Update Committee meeting OPUC#01-24 held September 10, 2024, be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

11.2 Minutes - Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting AAC#03-24 held November 28, 2024

Moved by: Councillor Cui

a) That the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting AAC#03-24 held November 28, 2024, be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

11.3 Minutes - Heritage Richmond Hill Meeting HRH#01-25 held February 6, 2025

Moved by: Councillor Cui

a) That the minutes of the Heritage Richmond Hill meeting HRH#01-25 held February 6, 2025, be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

11.4 Extract - Heritage Richmond Hill Meeting HRH#02-25 held March 6, 2025

11.4.1 SRPBS.25.027 - Notice of Intention to Designate 297 Richmond Street - City File D12-07379 - (HRH Item 6.1)

Moved by: Councillor Cilevitz

- a) That staff report SRPBS.25.027 regarding Notice of Intention to Designate 297 Richmond Street, be received;
- b) That City Council state its intention to designate the property at 297 Richmond Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* in recognition of its cultural heritage significance, and in accordance with the Statement of Significance: 297 Richmond Street, attached as Attachment “A” to staff report SRPBS.25.027;
- c) That staff be directed to publish and serve Council’s Notice of Intention to Designate as per the requirements of the *Ontario Heritage Act*;
- d) That if there are no objections to the designation in accordance with the provisions of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, that staff be directed to place a Designation By-law before Council at a future Council meeting for adoption;
- e) That staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Carried Unanimously

11.5 SRIES.25.004 - Authorize Execution of Amending Subdivision Agreement for City Contribution - 19T-11004 Montagna Capital (BT) Inc.

Moved by: Councillor Cui

- a) That staff report SRIES.25.004 regarding Authorize Execution of Amending Subdivision Agreement for City Construction, be received;
- b) That upon the written recommendation of the Commissioner Infrastructure and Engineering Services, the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the Amending Subdivision Agreement with Montagna Capital (BT) Inc. to include a City Contribution towards the construction of boundary road improvements and active transportation improvements associated with Subdivision File 19T-11004.

Carried Unanimously

11.6 SRIES.25.005 - Authorization to Execute Servicing Agreement and Acquire Lands - 19T-02002 North Leslie Residential Landowners Group Inc.

Moved by: Councillor Cui

- a) That staff report SRPBS.25.005 regarding Authorization to Execute Servicing Agreement and Acquire Lands, be received;
- b) That upon the written recommendation of the Commissioner of Infrastructure and Engineering Services, the Mayor and the Clerk be authorized to execute a servicing agreement with the North Leslie Residential Landowners Group Inc. for the installation of a public road and municipal servicing related to Subdivision File 19T-02002;
- c) That the acquisition of lands or easements required pursuant to a condition of the servicing agreement with the North Leslie Residential Landowners Group Inc., be authorized.

Carried Unanimously

11.7 SRPBS.25.004 - Request for Approval – Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications – Yongehill Developments 11305 Inc. – 11305 Yonge Street - City Files D01-17006 and D02-17027 (Related City File: D06-18050)

Moved by: Councillor Thompson

- a) That the revised Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications submitted by Yongehill Developments 11305 Inc. for lands known as Blocks 123, 126 and 136, Registered Plan 65M-2816 (Municipal Address: 11305 Yonge Street), City Files D01-17006 and D02-17027, be approved, subject to the following:
 - i. that the City's Official Plan be amended to include site specific policies as outlined in staff report SRPBS.25.004;
 - ii. that the draft Official Plan Amendment attached as Appendix "B" to staff report SRPBS.25.004 be brought to a future Council meeting for consideration and adoption;
 - iii. that the draft Zoning By-law Amendment attached as Appendix "C" to staff report SRPBS.25.004 be finalized to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Planning and Building Services and brought to a future Council meeting for consideration and enactment; and,
 - iv. that pursuant to Section 34(17) of the *Planning Act*, Council deem that no further notice be required with respect to any necessary modifications to the draft amending Zoning By-law to implement the proposed development on the subject lands.

Carried Unanimously

11.8 SRPBS.25.023 - Request for Approval - Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan

Moved by: Councillor Cilevitz

- a) That staff report SRPBS.25.023 regarding the Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan, be received;
- b) That the Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan, attached as Attachment "A" to staff report SRPBS.25.023, be approved;
- c) That all comments be directed to staff for consideration as part of the detailed design stage for Dave Barrow Civic Square Park;
- d) That a project be included in the Capital Plan Forecast to facilitate the evolution of Dave Barrow Civic Square as contemplated in Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan, Attachment "A" to staff report SRPBS.25.023.

Carried Unanimously

11.9 SRPBS.25.024 - Local Contribution Requirement under York Region Development Charges Deferral for Affordable Rental Buildings Policy

Moved by: Councillor Cui

- a) That staff report SRPBS.25.024 regarding the Local Contribution Requirement under York Region's Development Charges Deferral for Affordable Rental Policy, attached as Appendix "A" to staff report SRPBS.25.024, be received;
- b) That the deferral of City Development Charges for the eligible affordable purpose-built rental housing project submitted by Elm 9700 Yonge Lands Limited, subject to a Development Charges Deferral Agreement being entered into between Elm 9700 Yonge Lands Limited and the Region of York in accordance with the Region's Policy, be approved;
- c) That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute any agreements referred to in item b) to staff report SRPBS.25.024 and any further documentation as necessary, between the City, the Region of York and Elm 9700 Yonge Lands Limited that are required to implement the Development Charges payment deferral upon the recommendation of the Director of Financial Services and Treasurer, and the Commissioner of Building and Planning Services;

d) That the deferral of the payment of City Development Charges otherwise owing for the same time period as the Region of York, and allow for forgivable interest on the deferred payment for future eligible proposed affordable rental developments pursuant to the Region's Policy, subject to a Development Charges Deferral Agreement being entered into with the developer and the Region of York in accordance with the Region's Policy, be approved; and,

e) That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the Development Charges Deferral Agreements referred to in item d) to staff report SRPBS.25.024 and any further documentation provided for in such agreement and/or the Region's Policy, in order to implement the Development Charges payment deferral upon the recommendation of the Director of Financial Services and Treasurer, and the Commissioner of Building and Planning Services.

Carried Unanimously

11.10 SRPBS.25.029 - Request for Approval – Comprehensive Zoning By-law (Centres and Corridors) and Accessible Parking By-law – City of Richmond Hill – City File MZBA-23-0001

Moved by: Councillor Cilevitz

a) That the municipally initiated Comprehensive Zoning By-law, City File MZBA-23-0001 to implement a Zoning By-law for the City of Richmond Hill regarding the Yonge Street and Carrville/16th Avenue Key Development Area, Yonge Street and Bernard Avenue Key Development Area, Village Local Centre, Newkirk Local Centre, Oak Ridges Local Centre, Local Development Areas, Regional Mixed-Use Corridors, and Local Mixed-Use Corridor, in accordance with the recommendations outlined in Staff Report SRPBS.25.029, be approved as follows:

i) that Council repeal the former Zoning By-laws applicable to the subject lands as outlined within the Schedules included in the draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law attached hereto as Appendix "B";

ii) that the lands located within the City's Centres and Corridors be rezoned to the new zone categories as outlined in Staff Report SRPBS.25.029 and as illustrated in the Schedules included in the draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law attached hereto as Appendix "B";

iii) that the draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law attached to Staff Report SRPBS.25.029 as Appendix “B” be finalized to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Planning and Building Services and be brought forward to the March 26, 2025 Council meeting for enactment; and,

iv) that pursuant to Section 34(17) of the Planning Act, Council deem that no further notice be required with respect to any necessary modifications to the draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law to implement a Zoning By-law for the City’s Centres and Corridors.

b) That the municipally initiated draft Amendment to Municipal Code Chapter 1106, known as the “Accessible Parking By-law” attached to Staff Report SRPBS.25.029 as Appendix “C” be approved and that the draft Amendment to Municipal Code Chapter 1106 be brought forward to the March 26, 2025 Council meeting for enactment.

Carried Unanimously

11.11 SRCFS.25.006 - Development Agreement Surety Bonds Policy

Moved by: Councillor Cui

a) That staff report SRCFS.25.006 regarding Development Agreement Surety Bonds Policy, be received;

b) That the Development Agreement Surety Bond Policy, attached as Appendix “A” to staff report SRCFS.25.006, be received for informational purposes only;

c) That staff be directed to update the standard development agreement templates to include the option to provide Pay-On-Demand Surety Bonds as a form of security; and

d) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute amending agreements to replace existing security as set out in the Development Agreement Surety Bond Policy, upon the recommendation of Commissioner of Corporate and Financial Services.

Carried Unanimously

11.12 SRCFS.25.008 - 2024 Council and Committee Remuneration and Expenses

Moved by: Councillor Cui

a) That staff report SRCFS.25.008 regarding 2024 Council and Committee Remuneration and Expenses, be received.

Carried Unanimously

11.13 SRCS.25.04 - Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law Enactment

Moved by: Councillor Cilevitz

- a) That staff report SRCS.25.04 regarding Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law Enactment, be received;
- b) That the Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law 22-25, attached as Attachment "1" to staff report SRCS.25.04, be enacted;
- c) That By-law 23-25, attached as Attachment "2" to staff report SRCS.25.04, be enacted to include designated Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law violations in Schedule 'A' of the Administrative Penalty By-law 69-16, as amended;
- d) That By-law 24-25, attached as Attachment "3" to staff report SRCS.25.04, be enacted to amend the Kennel Licensing By-law 188-05 and Municipal Code Chapter 321;
- e) That By-law 25-25, attached as Attachment "4" to staff report SRCS.25.04, be enacted to include designated Kennel Licensing By-law violations in Schedule 'A' of the Administrative Penalty By-law 69-16, as amended;
- f) That By-law 26-25, attached as Attachment "5" to staff report SRCS.25.04, be enacted to amend the Tariff of Fees By-law 121-24, to add fees for cat licensing and re-inspections; and
- g) That the following By-laws and all associated amendments be repealed:
- i. Animal Keeping By-law 15-88 (Municipal Code Chapter 304)
 - ii. Animal Trespassing By-law 76-79 (Municipal Code Chapter 306)
 - iii. Cat Keeping By-law 23-88 (Municipal Code Chapter 309)
 - iv. Dog Control By-law 260-99 (Municipal Code Chapter 310)
 - v. Dog Licensing By-law 15-01 (Municipal Code Chapter 314)

Carried Unanimously

11.14 Correspondence from Christopher Tanzola, Overland LLP, dated March 4, 2025, regarding the proposed Comprehensive Zoning By-law Project (Centres and Corridors) and Accessible Parking By-law - (refer to Item 11.10)

Moved by: Councillor Cui

a) That the correspondence from Christopher Tanzola, Overland LLP, dated March 4, 2024, regarding the proposed Comprehensive Zoning By-law Project (Centres and Corridors) and Accessible Parking By-law, be received.

Carried Unanimously

11.15 Correspondence received regarding the comprehensive Zoning By-law (Centres and Corridors) and Accessible Parking By-law for the City of Richmond Hill – (refer to Item 11.10)

Moved by: Councillor Cui

That the following correspondence regarding the proposed Comprehensive Zoning By-law (Centres and Corridors) and Accessible Parking By-law for the City of Richmond Hill, be received:

1. Adam Layton, Goldberg Group, on behalf of Country Wide (Jefferson) and Giuseppina Brunetto, dated March 13, 2025.
2. Adam Layton, Goldberg Group, on behalf of 9712 Yonge Street, dated March 13, 2025.
3. Adam Layton, Goldberg Group, on behalf of Yonge Ridge Developments Inc., dated March 13, 2025.
4. Adam Layton, Goldberg Group, on behalf of Country Wide Homes (Jefferson) Inc., dated March 13, 2025.
5. Adam Layton, Goldberg Group, on behalf of King South-East Developments 295 Inc., dated March 14, 2025.
6. Adam Layton, Goldberg Group, on behalf of Leslie View Developments 11580 Inc., dated March 14, 2025.
7. Adam Layton, Goldberg Group, on behalf of Yongehurst Developments Inc., dated March 14, 2025.
8. Todd Trudelle, Goldberg Group, on behalf of 2575563 Ontario Inc., dated March 14, 2025.

9. Todd Turdelle, Goldberg Group, on behalf of Baif Developments Limited, dated March 14, 2025.

Carried Unanimously

12. Other Business

12.1 Member Motion - Councillor Davidson - Suspend City of Richmond Hill Use of the X (Twitter) Platform

Moved by: Councillor Davidson

Whereas the City of Richmond Hill is committed to ensuring its communications are conducted on platforms that uphold its core values of respect, inclusivity, integrity, and responsible communication; and

Whereas X Corp., under the ownership of Elon Musk, has demonstrated actions and policies that no longer align with these values; and

Whereas Canadian municipalities use X to share public service announcements, emergency alerts, and government updates; and

Whereas Elon Musk has privileged access to U.S. government files, questions could arise about whether X's internal data is secure and whether municipal communications could be subject to monitoring or influence; and

Whereas if X's infrastructure is linked to U.S. intelligence networks, there is a risk that municipal data could be accessed, stored, or analyzed outside of Canada, raising transparency and security concerns; and

Whereas while there is no direct evidence that Musk's access to U.S. government files impacts the City of Richmond Hills' data, the possibility of increased U.S. influence over X could raise concerns about transparency, security, and content control; and

Whereas several Canadian municipalities, the Richmond Hill Public Library, as well as the Supreme Court of Canada, have already suspended their X accounts and transitioned to alternative platforms.

Now therefore, be it resolved:

1. That staff be directed to prepare a report for Council on the suspension of all official City accounts, including Fire and Emergency Services, from X Corp. platforms and the transition to alternative platforms that align with the City's values and communication needs. The report should include:

- A review of alternative platforms that prioritize accessibility, transparency, and public engagement.
 - A timeline for transitioning while ensuring continued communication with residents.
 - A public engagement strategy to inform residents and encourage them to follow the City on new platforms.
 - Data on current users and engagement.
 - An overview of actions taken by other municipalities.
2. That staff present the report, including recommendations and an implementation timeline, to Council at the Committee of the Whole on Wednesday, April 16, 2025.

Carried Unanimously

12.2 Member Motion - Councillor Thompson - Feasibility Study for Highway 407

Moved by: Councillor Thompson

Whereas in 1987 the original intention for starting construction on Hwy 407 was to relieve traffic congestion in the rapidly growing Greater Toronto Area (GTA); and

Whereas Ontario taxpayers paid \$1.6 Billion to have Hwy 407 constructed; and

Whereas tolls were to be used to exclusively cover the highway's construction costs; and

Whereas those tolls would be lifted once those costs were covered (expected to occur within 30 years); and

Whereas, in 1998, Premier Mike Harris passed Bill 70, allowing the sale of Highway 407 to a private consortium on a 99-year lease, enabling the consortium to set its own toll rates with no safeguards against rate hikes; and

Whereas by 2014 privatization has led to a 300% increase in tolls, limiting the use of Highway 407 by Ontario residents and causing high traffic volumes on local roads; and

Whereas high tolls disproportionately affect low- and mid-income Ontario residents who rely on the Highway for commuting to work; and

Whereas trucking companies avoid Highway 407 due to its tolls, leading to high volumes of trucks on GTA roads, particularly on Highway 7 as well as Highway 401; and

Whereas a Transport Action Ontario study suggests a toll subsidy for trucks could increase truck usage of Highway 407, reducing volume on Highway 401 by 12,000 - 21,000 trucks per day; and

Whereas subsidizing truck lanes on Highway 407 would facilitate faster delivery of goods, reduce gas emissions, reduce transport costs for Ontario businesses, and support local economic development; and

Whereas a pilot project to subsidize truck lanes on Highway 407 would provide valuable insights into the economic impact of diverting truck traffic from Highway 7 and Highway 401; and

Whereas this pilot program would allow the government to conduct a cost-benefit analysis measuring potential savings in lost productivity, reduced vehicle operating costs, and increased efficiency for Ontario businesses using Highway 407; and

Whereas toll revenues from Highway 407 currently benefit private entities, while Ontario residents continue to face high costs and unnecessary traffic volumes; and

Whereas potentially purchasing Highway 407 back would eliminate profit-driven motives, allowing for toll rates to reflect public interest rather than corporate profit; and

Whereas lower tolls from public ownership would increase highway usage, alleviate traffic on other highways, and generate revenue through increased usage; and

Whereas current trends suggest that unregulated tolls will continue to see Hwy 407 remain underutilized for the foreseeable future; and

Whereas MTO projections show commuter speeds below 20-40 km/hr on all 400-series Highways by 2041, except Highway 407, whether or not Highway 413 is built.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that:

1. That the City of Richmond Hill requests the Government of Ontario to conduct a feasibility study assessing the financial, environmental, and logistical implications of buying back the lease for Highway 407.

2. That the Government of Ontario be asked to explore the possibility of the private entity implementing:
 - a. Dedicated truck lanes on Highway 407;
 - b. A one-year pilot program to subsidize or eliminate tolls for dedicated truck lanes on Highway 407;
 - c. An evaluation of the impact of dedicated truck lanes on traffic congestion, the environment and overall transportation efficiency.
3. That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Ontario Minister of Transportation and the local MPP's for Richmond Hill.
4. That this resolution be circulated to all municipalities that host a portion of Highway 407.

Carried

13. Emergency/Time Sensitive Matters

There were no emergency/time sensitive matters.

14. Adjournment

Moved by: Regional and Local Councillor Chan

That the meeting be adjourned.

Carried Unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.