



OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2017

Status of Road Widening Environmental Assessments

Inside This Issue

- 1 AGM & Member’s Meeting
- 1 Status of Road Widening EA
- 2 Priority Community Projects
- 2 York Downs URA Workshop
- 3 Electrification of the Go Train
- 3 Rooming Housing and STAs
- 4 Amazon’s Second Headquarters?
- 5 Markham Development Charge Study
- 6 Development Charge for Library Service

We need your help to join URA board of director and serve community.

For further, please email info@unionvilleresidents.ca

**AGM & Members’ Meeting
Nov 6th 2017 (7-9 PM)
Pan Am Centre – Room 3**

**Keynotes : York Region Master
Transportation Plan**

Speakers

- Brian Titherington, Director, Transportation & Infrastructure Planning
- Sabeen Makki, Sr Transportation Policy & planning Specialist

Progress has continued on the environmental assessment of various regional road widenings in our area.

During the summer, URA reps met with the project team for the widening of 16th Avenue. Public meetings were held in October. The preferred solution has been identified as including:

- Widen to 3 lanes in each direction, including one Transit/HOV lane, between Hwy 404 and McCowan Rd. Some minor property takings will be needed.
- Maintain current road width east of McCowan due to right-of-way limitations. Instead, transit priority (e.g. queue jump lanes) will be used at the intersection with Markham Road.
- Multi use path (MUP) on north side, and sidewalk on south side, except between Warden and Kennedy where a MUP on both sides will be constructed.
- Provide over-road connection at Bruce Creek between trails on the south side of 16th to future trails in York Downs, as the bridge clearance at Bruce Creek is too low to go under 16th however, a trail connection under 16th at Berczy Creek may be feasible.
- Expand the centre line except adjacent to York Downs, where expansion will be to the north.

URA is also represented on the stakeholder working groups for McCowan and Kennedy widenings. While the Kennedy group is to have its first meeting in late October, the McCowan group has met twice and provided input to the project team. A public meeting on McCowan was held in early October to assess public sentiment on various options. A preferred solution will be identified in the coming months.

Unfortunately, other than small portions of McCowan and 16th Avenue, these projects are not currently in York Region’s 10-year Capital Plan. The Region has committed to reviewing the Capital Plan and possibly revising it in early 2018.

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2017

Update on Priority Community Projects

As discussed in our August newsletter, the URA Directors have developed 5 community improvement project ideas to advocate for. The members approved these ideas in September. Since then, we have reviewed them with Councillor Hamilton and with City staff. Updates are as follows:

- Trail connection under Highway 7 east of Unionville Main Street – good project. Target for 2017 feasibility study and 2018/19 design and construction.
- Trail connection from Quantztown Park under GO tracks to Vanessa Rd – Engineering will conduct feasibility study in 2018.
- Markham Centre Rouge Valley improvements – awaiting completion of Markham Centre Greenlands Plan, to be finalized end of year. As there is already \$2M of Section 37 money earmarked for this, a good start can be made on implementation.
- More shuttle buses to Unionville GO – to be discussed with York Region Transit.
- Streetscape Plan for Unionville Main Street – \$75K proposed for 2018 budget.

After these meetings, another trail project was identified by community members and presented as a petition to Council. This involves constructing an asphalt trail connection between Briarwood Park and Carleton Rd. We understand that this work has been budgeted for 2018.

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York Downs URA Workshop – URA Position

Density

- North, West & South sides should match existing neighbourhoods.
- Overall should match Angus Glen at 16.7, not Beckett Farm. This also helps traffic.
- Higher density and retail is better on the East side, where higher density and transit exists, and/or site interior for condos blocks.

Traffic

- Development should only proceed as traffic capacity is available.
- Road exit to Warden is needed.

Built Form

- There should be no midrise, retail, commercial or place of worship adjacent or close to 16th. Only green space or low density residential.

Flood Protection

- Need to see TRCA, MNR, Region and City approvals of revised plan.

Process

- Expert staff opinion is needed asap.
- Council direction is needed asap
- DSC & Council review, and staff report, should not be in camera

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2017



Electrification of the Go Train

The final Environmental Assessment for the electrification of the GO train system has been released and feedback is due in early November. The documentation for the assessment runs to over 3000 pages (!) From what we have been able to determine in our analysis, Metrolinx is considering the installation of 5m noise barriers through Unionville and the removal of all trees within the current railway right of way. However, they also acknowledge the Unionville Heritage Conservation District and the EA recommends that the City of Markham be consulted before any work is carried out. A "Traction Power Station" is also planned near Kennedy Road and Hwy 407.

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It is not yet clear when the Stouffville GO line might be electrified, but the EA also includes options for much greater frequency of (noisy) diesel trains to fulfill the province's Regional Express Rail initiative. Metrolinx is also studying hydrogen powered trains as an alternative to electrification. The URA will be assembling a list of questions for Metrolinx. If you would like to add to that list please contact us. You can access the environmental assessment at www.gotransit.com/electrification.

Statutory Meeting on Rooming Housing and Short-Term Accommodation

In March 2016, Gladki Consultant was retained by the city to complete a review of regulation and licensing of secondary suite, rooming housing and short-term accommodation. A statutory public DSC meeting was held December 6th, 2016 to provide feedback on Gladki's recommendation with majority of the 29 deputations objecting rooming house and short-term accommodation in anywhere of Markham

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2017

Rooming Housing and Short-Term Accommodation (Cont'd)

Gladki Consultant revised the initial recommendation based on the DSC direction from the meeting on June 12, 2017 and the public comments from the December 6th, 2016 statutory meeting with the following recommendations:

- ✓ Rooming housing and short term will not be permitted with "as of right" in any area of Markham
- ✓ Rooming housing and short-term accommodation requires a site-specific zoning bylaw amendment
- ✓ Amend zoning bylaw to define "rooming house small scale" to 3-5 rooms and "rooming house large scale" to more than 5 rooms
- ✓ Amend official plan to include rooming housing and short-term accommodation
- ✓ Amend official plan to permit shared housing large scale and shared housing long term care while shared housing supervised shall be restricted to an arterial or collector road served by public transit
- ✓ Amend official plan to define Short Term Accommodation to refer to temporary accommodation (less than 30 days and not more than 60 days each calendar year) through rental arrangements but does not include uses such as motels, hotels, bed and breakfasts

The revised recommendation was presented to Council during a DSC meeting on September 25th, 2017 followed by a public statutory meeting on October 3rd, 2017. The final recommendations on rooming housing, secondary suites and short-term accommodation bylaws will come before Council on December 4th, 2017 for final decision.

Amazon's Second Headquarters?

Did you know that Markham is part of the Toronto pitch for Amazon's HQ2 and its 50,000 new jobs? The area in Markham Centre just west of the Unionville GO station, south of Enterprise Drive and north of Hwy 407 was pitched as the 4th of 10 potential sites across the GTA for Amazon's second headquarters. Amazon has promised to make a decision by 2018 and according to Forbes magazine Toronto is a strong contender. For more on the Toronto Global pitch to Amazon go to torontoglobal.ca.



OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2017

Markham Development Charge Study

Markham development charge study was presented to the General Committee on September 18, 2017. The study will revise development charge rates based on:

- City wide hard charges per capita depending on growth related infrastructure cost, projected population and employment growth
- City wide soft charges per 10-year average service level
- Area specific charges per growth related infrastructure by net developable hectare

The report recommended the revised combined residential charges (city wide hard charges and city wide soft charges) as follows:

City Wide Hard	Current Charge	Proposed Charge	Increase \$	Increase %
Single/Semi Detached	\$22,700	\$33,643	\$10,873	48%
Multiple Unit Rate	\$17,666	\$25,729	\$8,063	46%
Large Apartment	\$14,946	\$20,149	\$5,203	35%
Small Apartment	\$11,116	\$14,813	\$3,697	33%

The report recommended the following capital program allocations:

Capital Programs	Total Capital Cost	DC eligible cost (2017-26)	DC eligible post 2026)
General government	\$28,455,500	\$17,700,700	\$8,984,760
Library	\$43,910,000	\$30,718,000	\$270,300
Fire Service	\$28,487,100	\$24,383,600	\$4,103,500
Indoor Recreation	\$156,812,300	\$109,130,200	\$151,600
Park Development	\$149,930,400	\$97,320,100	\$1,016,800
Public Works	\$40,385,600	\$18,000,100	\$8,437,400
Parking	\$1,348,300	\$1,043,000	\$89,400
Waste Management	\$6,967,100	\$4,049,500	\$2,221,000

The report recommended that staff be directed to institute a policy for office spaces to have 100% citywide soft charge for the first 100,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area, with a reduced charge of 25% on the gross floor area exceeding 100,000 sq. ft.

The report also recommended implementing a deferral for purpose built

high density rental buildings with no interest applied for 36 months if it is paid within 15 days of deferral expiry and restricting change of use for 20 years.

The development charge report will be finalized by October 6, 2017. A public meeting will be held on November 14, 2017 to be approved by Council on December 12, 2017. The new rate will commence on January 2, 2018.

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2017

Reconciling \$30 Million Development Charge for Library Service

The Markham development charge study indicated that there will be \$30 million allocated for the library service in next 10 years which is the 3rd highest amount after \$157 million for indoor recreation and \$150 million park development. The development charge study report also shows the following (right):

Program	Year	DC Eligible Cost
Anniin Community Centre and library (20,000 sq ft)	2017	\$4,566,558
Markham Centre Branch (20,000 sq ft)	2021	\$13,962,160
Future Branch (15,000 sq ft)	2025	\$10,791,874
Total	2017-2026	\$29,320,592

The Annin Community Centre and Library on 14th Avenue and Markham Road is scheduled to open at the end of 2017, with the library opening early 2018. With the opening of this library, every ward in Markham will have a library, except Ward 2 – which will have a library by 2025.

So, what exactly can the library mean to us? Recently Canada's Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Ahmed Hussen was profiled in the New York Times. Ahmed's parents were illiterate, but his mother prized education and persuaded tutors to work with her son every day after school. He spent his free time training with two running teams and reading at the public library. All those nights burrowed in the public library gave Mr. Hussen an almost encyclopedic grasp of world history and developed a sense of the world around him. This is a perfect example of the role of libraries in supporting self-directed education and personal growth.

Markham Library's budget is \$13.6M in 2017 with 3 million physical books, audio-video items, 238,000 digital items which would eventually result in 2.4M branch visits and 3.25M checkout materials such as books, magazines, research papers and audio video items. It also provides a electronic media lab, a 3D printer, 1.5 million free Wi-Fi sessions and 166,000 free computer sessions for digital inclusion.

Recently Markham public library piloted Netflix for free movie sessions to add more value to residents' pastime.

In addition to the traditional book borrowing, the Markham library also acts as community learning hub by partnering with 61 community partners, providing 3,000 programs and 100,000 program attendances from early child learning, reading club, teen Java and robotic programs to youth entrepreneurship and senior adult life time learning.

Markham Public Library did an economic impact study, using a methodology developed by Martin Prosperity Institute, based on the money saved by borrowing books, movies, eBooks, free Wi-Fi, free internet access, free room bookings, educational programs and research papers as opposed to buy the item or service. The economic impact added up to \$82.6 million – in other words every dollar spent on library services creates \$5.97 in community benefits. Next time you run out of ideas on how to spend your time pastime, may be visiting Markham Public Library is a viable option.