

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Council Report**Item 1**

Subject:	Highway 48 Corridor Visioning Exercise Update
Staff Report No.	DS-004-20
Department:	Development Services
Date:	February 4, 2020

Recommendation:

- 1) That Council receive Report No. DS-004-20 for information.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the Highway 48 Corridor Visioning Exercise.

2. Executive Summary:

Under Council direction, staff are undertaking a joint study with the City of Markham for Highway 48. The Town has retained The Planning Partnership to support the Highway 48 Visioning Exercise. The Visioning Exercise will explore themes of connectivity, urban/rural transition, and the creation of a sense of place to produce a preferred land use scenario and identify next steps for the study area.

The work plan for the Study has been developed to include an interactive process that is grounded in community engagement. The work plan is organized into three phases (Background, Preliminary Scenarios, and Preferred Scenarios). The final potential land use scenario will be formulated through input from the consultation process, Town staff, stakeholders, and civic leaders.

3. Background:

On May 21, 2019, Council directed staff to undertake a visioning exercise for the Highway 48 Corridor. On July 16, 2019, Council authorized staff to initiate the procurement process for consulting services to conduct the Highway 48 Visioning Exercise ([Report No. DS-034-19](#)). The purpose of the Visioning Exercise is to determine possible future land use concepts for the Highway 48 Corridor study area which runs north to Stouffville Road, west to McCowan Road and, south to incorporate lands within the City of Markham's Hamlet of Dickson Hill (Attachment #1). The Town has now retained The Planning Partnership as a consultant for the Study.

4. Analysis and Options:

In keeping with the scope of work outlined in the Terms of Reference, The Planning Partnership has submitted a proposed work plan addressing the key components for optimal capacity for development including:

- Environmental analysis,
- Transportation analysis,
- Servicing analysis, and
- Land use concepts/scenarios.

These key components will serve as a basis to develop a preferred land scenario which will recognize the development potential for the study area. When fully realized, the Highway 48 corridor could evolve to be a vibrant "Mixed-Use Centre" offering a diverse range of housing, retail, and employment options connected by a network of streets and open spaces that provide linkages to neighbourhoods and community facilities.

4.1 Approach

The work program for the study has been organized into three phases – Background, Preliminary Scenarios and Preferred Scenarios. This process will be based on a high-level of understanding of opportunities and constraints within the study area. The work program includes extensive public consultation between the Town, public, landowners and other agencies. Dates for the public consultation are yet to be confirmed. It is staff's understanding that City of Markham staff will be reporting to their Council on February 10, 2020 on this matter as well. Once endorsed by the City of Markham Council, staff will have authorization to participate in a Joint Working Group with Town staff.

4.2 Work Plan

In order to meet the requirements for the study, The Planning Partnership has developed a three-phased methodology support the creation of the Vision and Land Use Scenarios for the study area (Attachment #2).

- i. Phase 1
 - Review the Background/Existing Conditions,
 - Prepare the Consultation Strategy,
 - Draft the Vision, Principles, Frameworks, and Initial options, and
 - Prepare for Workshop #1.
- ii. Phase 2
 - Confirm the Vision + Principles and Frameworks,
 - Refine the Initial Options for input,
 - Develop an Emerging Preferred Option, and
 - Prepare for Workshop #2.
- iii. Phase 3
 - Finalize the Preferred Option and Demonstration Plan based upon all of the inputs, and
 - Prepare the Final Master Plan and Identifying the Next Steps.

The workshops in Phase 1 and 2 will include landowners, stakeholders and the general public from both the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the City of Markham. The Planning Partnership will use Workshop #1 to draft the vision, principles, framework and initial options while Workshop #2 will be a means to receive feedback on the emerging preferred option for the land use scenario. In addition to the work program, The Planning Partnership will ensure that all Stakeholders within a reasonable distance of the study area are identified. The Planning Partnership will also provide updates to both City of Markham Council and Town Council.

During the course of the Visioning Exercise, the Town and City of Markham will individually be maintaining a webpage for the project. All project information and opportunities for public consultation will be posted to the *Come Together Whitchurch-Stouffville* platform.

Following the selection of a preferred scenario, next steps will be identified by the consultant for necessary requirements to proceed. This will include the identification of required policy amendments, required studies, zoning, and community benefits. The final Highway 48 Visioning Exercise plan will incorporate the Vision and Principles for the study area and outline its various components through mapping, images, street cross-sections, demonstration plans, and a 3D model, including:

- Land uses and built form (building types and heights) a block and street pattern; and,
- Transportation systems (transit, roads and active transportation).

Staff will continue to keep Council apprised as the study proceeds.

5. Financial Implications:

None at this time.

6. Alignment with Strategic Plan:

1. Fiscal Sustainability

Working toward a sustainable budget that ensures the protection and maintenance of core services now and into the future.

- Capital financing and debt strategy
- New revenue sources: grant funding, community contributions toward major capital expenditures, sponsorship of programs
- Invest in budget systems (process enhancement)

2. Expanding the tax base through a growing, diversified economy

Building and maintaining a tax base that supports the highest quality program and service delivery.

- Focus on servicing and development of Provincially Significant Employment Zones
- Update the Economic Development strategy and continue to attract businesses to locate in WS
- Identify expansion areas for Industrial / Commercial growth

7. Attachments:

1. Map of Study Area
2. Work Plan

8. Related Reports:

July 16, 2019 – DS-034-19, Highway 48 Corridor Visioning Exercise (D08)

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For further information on this report, please contact the Department Head: Haiqing Xu, Director, Development Services at 905-640-1910 or 1-855-642-8697 ext. 2431 or via email at haiqing.xu@townofws.ca