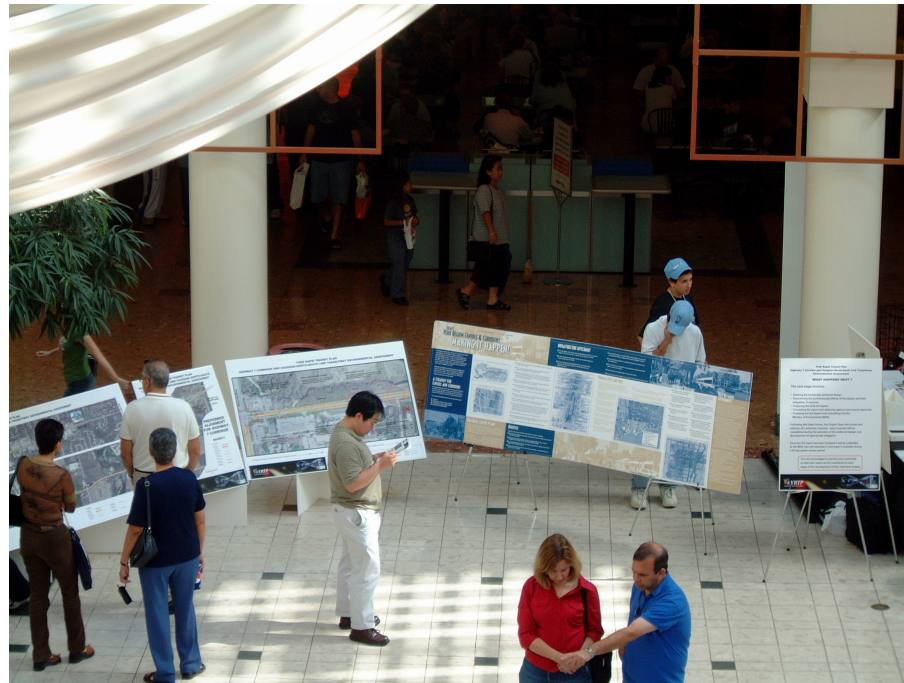


6. PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

6.1 THE ORIGINAL EA PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

Five features that are key to successful planning under the Environmental Assessment Act are described in the “Interim Guidelines on Environmental Assessment Planning and Approval, Ministry of Environment, 1989” are:

- Consideration of reasonable alternatives;
- Consultation with affected parties;
- Consideration of all aspects of the environment (i.e., natural, social, economic, cultural and technical);
- Systematic evaluation of net environmental effects; and
- Clear and complete documentation of the planning process.



The consultation process developed for the Highway 7 and Vaughan North-South Link EA was designed to contribute to the achievement of each of these key features. As such an extensive public involvement program was followed during this process. The process consisted of:

- Seven Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings;
- A number of meetings with individual technical agencies and key stakeholders including,
 - York Regional Health Unit,
 - Ontario Realty Corp,

- York Regional Fire Coordinator,
- York Region Police Chief,
- Municipal Emergency Response Services
- CN North America,
- GO Transit,
- Rouge Park,
- Environment Canada,
- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency – Ontario Region,
- Ministries of Environment, Culture, Education, Health, Municipal Affairs and housing, Natural Resources, Solicitor General, and Transportation,
- First Nations,
- Property owners, and
- Beechwood Cemetery.
- Preparation and distribution of Fact Sheets
- Development of a website to inform the public of the project process.
- General presentations to a wide variety of stakeholders, opinion makers and community groups;
- Four rounds of Public Consultation centres (each PCC was conducted in at least 3 different venues in order to maximize the number of people from the general public that had access to the data). The following table summarizes the information that was presented at the PCCs.

| PCC # | PCC Purpose | Dates |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Familiarize the public with the YRTP program, to provide the public with an opportunity to review and provide input regarding the collection of background data and to summarize the findings of the previously completed Need and Justification Study. | February 6 th , 7 th and 12 th 2003. |
| 2 | Provide the public and opportunity to review and provide input regarding the comparative assessment of the alternatives, the determination of the preferred undertaking, potential environmental effects, and proposed mitigating measures, and to obtain feedback on specific concerns or preferences. | April 24 th , 25 th and 26 th 2003. |
| 3 | Present to the public the preferred route for a median transitway and describe its main characteristics as the recommended undertaking. | September 18 th , 19 th , 20 th , and 23 rd 2003. |
| 4 | Provide an opportunity for the public to review the findings of all steps in the EA process including an overview of the findings of the analysis of both alternatives to the undertaking (alternative transportation solutions) and alternative methods of carrying out the undertaking (routes and technologies). | September 9 th , 11 th , 17 th , and October 28 th , 2004. |

6.2 CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

The VNSL Subway Alignment Optimization study followed a similar process to the original EA with an emphasis on ensuring that interested parties were:

- Informed throughout the study by the use of various communication channels and techniques including individual meetings with stakeholders, two Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings; and a Public Consultation Centre,
- Involved throughout the study period and as well notified of appropriate milestones;
- Provided access to current information in an efficient manner;
- Provided sufficient time to respond to question and data request; and
- Encouraged to participate in an issue identification and resolution process.

The process ensured that concerns and issues were brought forward early and addressed appropriately during the course of the study.

6.2.1 Technical Advisory Committee and Technical Agencies

The majority of the agencies that were members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the Region’s Highway 7 and VNSL EA process was reconvened for the Conditions of Approval process as shown in the table below. Municipalities such as Markham and Richmond Hill decided not to participate since the limits of the supplementary VNSL Alignment Study were set outside of their jurisdiction; on the other hand 407 ETR was invited and participated in the TAC meetings.

| TAC Member | HWY 7 & VNSL EA Process | COA Process |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| York Region (including York Region Transit) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Town of Markham | ✓ | |
| Town of Richmond Hill | ✓ | |
| City of Vaughan | ✓ | ✓ |
| City of Toronto | ✓ | ✓ (*) |
| TTC | ✓ | ✓ |
| GO Transit | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) | ✓ | ✓ (*) |
| Ministry of Transportation | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ministry of Culture | ✓ | ✓ (*) |
| Toronto and Region Conservation Authority | ✓ | ✓ |
| 407 ETR | | ✓ |

(*) – Were invited but did not attend the TAC meetings.

Two meetings conducted with the TAC were the following:

- May 5, 2006: to present and review the scope that would be carried out as part of the Subway Alignment Optimization Report, as dictated by the Conditions of Approval. Additionally the group discussed the feasibility and necessity for alternate accesses to the 407 Station (i.e. from Highways 407 and 400).
- October 26, 2006: held prior to the Public Consultation Centre (PCC), to present to TAC members the material for the PCC and obtain their feedback.

At each meeting TAC representatives were given the opportunity to express any concerns their agencies may have with regards to the project and to highlight any issues that may need to be addressed during the project process.

6.2.2 Technical Agencies

Participating technical agencies continued to be involved during the study and were actively involved in scoping the issues, developing and assessing alternative alignments, and developing mitigating measures for unavoidable impacts. In addition to the TAC meetings, consultation with agencies was held through individual meetings, site visits, and email/telephone correspondence. Individual meetings were conducted with the following agencies:

- 407 ETR/MTO: to focus on the 407 Station location restrictions. It was agreed that the selected alternative must avoid any at-grade facility or potential of encroachment (passengers or employees) on the Hwy 407 right of way for safety and legal reasons. The Hwy 407 station was located outside of the Highway 407 right of way.
- TRCA (three meetings): focusing on impacts to Black Creek and its fill regulation limits as a result of the subway tunnel and Hwy 407 station facility construction. The following concerns were raised:
 - a) Need to address measures to mitigate any possible ground water effects.
 - b) Run-off water from the Station parking facility and the future MTO parking and maintenance facility may have to be treated by two ponds located on either side of the Creek's tributary. This will be re-visited when both projects are at the design stage.
 - c) The backwater effect on ORC land will need to be addressed prior to development of associated services with the anticipated facilities of the Highway 407 Transitway such as the service yard and parking lot.

d) Any road access crossing the Creek's valley should be on bridge structure spanning the meander belt and erosion limits.

- City of Vaughan (several meetings): to discuss the integration of the station facilities into the VCC land-use and road network plans. It was agreed that:
 - a) The optimized subway alignment would continue to respect the easement negotiated by the City with the developers that own the land north of Peelar Road.
 - b) In principle, the proposed location of the VCC Station and the associated PPUDO, bus stops/layover bays, bus circulation patterns and other station facilities were acceptable to the City of Vaughan.
 - c) The proposals will be reviewed during the detail design phase, considering any variation of the VCC future plans that may have been occurred at that time.
- York Region Transit (YRT): YRT provided input to the project through the internal project team. Feeder service routing (considering the location of the subway station facilities), bus stops and layover options were discussed and agreed upon, for scenarios in which the VCC road network would be at least partially implemented when the subway commenced operation and the case where the planned development of VCC has not yet started.
- MTO (several meetings): discussions focused on the coordination between the subway and MTO's planned Hwy 407 Transitway. Specific issues covered included parking requirements, horizontal and vertical alignment coordination, bus terminal location, and Hwy 407 Station surface amenities. In principle, MTO agreed with the functional layout of the facilities described in Section 3 of this Report and concluded that close coordination will be required during the MTO Transitway Study (scheduled to start in early 2007) and the design phase of the subway extension.
- TTC (several meetings): discussions with TTC addressed operational and technical issues and requirements, alignment coordination (specifically at the Steeles West Station), and special track requirements; It was concluded that:
 - a) The alignment should comply with TTC design standards and permit the maximum system service speed of 80 km/h
 - b) The alignment must match TTC EA's preferred alignment at Steeles West Station.
 - c) A triple track, as shown in the TTC EA should be included just north of the Steeles West Station.

- GO Transit: discussions addressed bus facility requirements at 407 Station. In principle, the facility, as described in Section 3, complies with the bus stop and layover requirements discussed.
- Brampton Transit: Their potential bus requirements at 407 Station were provided and accommodated in the proposed arrangement for transfer facilities.
- Hydro One: During this study process, alignment and construction effects on Hydro One infrastructure were being evaluated by TTC and discussed with Hydro One. The Region's Study Team received input from Hydro One/TTC in the fall of 2006. After reviewing this input, the study team requested a meeting with Hydro One (December 2006) to present the preferred alignment and to discuss effects and potential mitigation measures.

6.2.3 Other Stakeholder Consultations

During the course of the study, the team consulted with several owners of property, either developed or in the process of being developed, along the routes under study. These consultations took the form of meetings, exchange of draft options analysis material and/or attendance at presentations. Consultations held, and the property involved in each discussion included:

- Smartcentres: lands north of Highway 7 in VCC;
- Toromont: lands south of Highway 7 in VCC;
- Bentall: lands south of Toromont, north of Highway 407, and west of Jane;
- United Parcel Service (UPS): UPS facility located at 2900 Steeles Avenue West – the north-east quadrant of the Steeles Avenue and Highway 400 Interchange;
- Ontario Realty Corp (ORC): lands between Steeles Avenue and Highway 407, west of Jane Street;
- Beechwood Cemetery.

6.2.4 Public Consultation Centre

A Public Consultation Centre (PCC) was conducted on Tuesday November 28th, 2006 to allow the general public to review and comment on the alignment alternatives and recommendations. A notice for the PCC was advertised to area residents and interested parties in the local newspaper (Vaughan Citizen). Additionally, the notice was mailed or emailed to: members of the public who signed in at the previous Highway 7 & VNSL Study PCCs and agreed to receive project information; members of the public who requested to be put on the project mailing list; First Nations

groups; relevant municipal, provincial and federal agencies (i.e. the government Review team – GRT); and local property owners.

The material on display consisted of 13 presentation boards. Attendance at the PCC was approximately 25 people, with 12 participants signing-in. Attendees included those who were familiar with the project from previous PCCs, members of the public who were previously unaware of the project, and several stakeholders and property owners. Some of the stakeholders attended to confirm that mitigation discussed at prior meetings was being incorporated in the recommended design. Representative comments made by attendees included the following:

- Effects on UPS operations need to be addressed and construction coordination (between UPS and the Region) is essential;
- The delay, to customers destined for York University, associated with the transfer from the bus to the subway at the 407 Station could result in customers deciding to drive their car instead. It was noted that any delay associated with the transfer would be alleviated by the decreased travel time on the subway.
- Vibration effects of subway operation in the tunnel adjacent to the planned new Bentall development (optics manufacturing) north of Hwy 407 need to be assessed.
- Effects on Black Creek and valley lands.

The PCC presentation materials and notice were also made available on the Viva project website at www.vivayork.com.

6.2.5 MUNICIPAL APPROVALS

At important decision points in the study, formal presentations were made to the Region's Rapid Transit Steering Committee to summarize the assessment of alternatives, the recommended alignment and major recommendations of the study, including the final submission of this report.