



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

**Official Plan Amendment for Sheppard East Light Rail
Transit (LRT) – Request for Direction**

Date:	May 15, 2008
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	Ward No. 41 and 42 - Scarborough-Rouge River and Ward No. 44 Scarborough East
Reference Number:	Pg080026

SUMMARY

On March 21, 2007 the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) endorsed a light rail transit plan for the City of Toronto which included seven projects across the City. Amongst them was the Sheppard East route from the existing Don Mills station on the Sheppard subway to Morningside Avenue and possibly to Meadowvale Road. An environmental assessment study is presently underway for this project.

The City’s Official Plan, Map 5 Surface Transit Priority Network, identifies Sheppard Avenue East from Don Mills Road to McCowan Road as a surface transit priority route.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council’s authorization for the preparation of a City-initiated Official Plan Amendment to amend Map 5 of the Official Plan in order to extend the surface transit priority route on Sheppard Avenue, east from McCowan Road to Meadowvale Road.

The official plan amendment would enable construction of the project to commence in a timely manner upon approval of the environmental assessment study and procurement of funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. Staff be directed to prepare a draft official plan amendment to extend the surface transit priority route along Sheppard Avenue East, from McCowan Road to

Meadowvale Road to be considered at a public meeting at the July 2, 2008 meeting of Planning and Growth Management Committee; and

2. Notice for the public meeting under the Planning Act be given according to the regulations under the Planning Act.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on March 21, 2007 the Toronto Transit Commission endorsed the Toronto Transit City – Light Rail Plan as the basis and priority for rapid transit expansion within the City.

On June 15, 2007 the Province of Ontario announced the MoveOntario 2020 funding program for 52 transit initiatives in the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton. This funding program included all the light rail transit lines in the Transit City Plan.

At its meeting on July 11, 2007 the Toronto Transit Commission approved an implementation work plan report on the Toronto Transit City plan which identified the Sheppard LRT project as one of the three strong candidates for early implementation achieving significant benefits.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. The key objectives include: building strong communities; wise use and management of resources; and, protecting public health and safety. City Council's planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS.

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe provides a framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe including: directions for where and how to grow; the provision of infrastructure to support growth; and protecting natural systems and cultivating a culture of conservation.

City Council's planning decisions are required by the Planning Act to conform, or not conflict, with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Official Plan

The City's Official Plan, Map 5 Surface Transit Priority Network, identifies Sheppard Avenue East from Don Mills Road to McCowan Road as a surface transit priority route. In addition, Policy 2.2.3 h) in the Plan further outlines the type of transit priority measures on routes identified on Map 5. These include dedicated lanes for transit and priority at signalized intersections.

In addition, the Implementation section of the Official Plan contains a policy 5.3.1.1 which states that all public works should conform to the Official Plan. This is in line with the Planning Act (R.S.O. 1990) Section 24 which states that where an official plan is in effect, no public works shall be undertaken that does not conform to the Plan. Therefore the amendment is necessary to allow for the possibility of the transit line extending to Meadowvale.

COMMENTS

Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

The proposed official plan amendment would be consistent with the PPS and would not conflict with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Official Plan

In order for the Sheppard East Light Rail Transit to be constructed, east of McCowan Road, the City's Official Plan would need to be amended to address its Policy 5.3.1.1 and the Planning Act (R.S.O. 1990) Section 24 requirement for public works to conform to an official plan in effect. Therefore the amendment is necessary to allow for the possibility of the transit line extending to Meadowvale Road.

Environmental Assessment Study

A Transit Class Environmental Assessment Study was commenced for the project in late 2007. The first set of public consultations took place on April 15 and 17, 2008 for which the notice for the meeting identified the need for an official plan amendment, east of McCowan Road on Sheppard Avenue. A further round of public consultations are planned for late May 2008. The public consultations meet the Planning Act requirements as well as those of the Environment Assessment Act.

It is TTC's staff's intention to bring forward the Environmental Assessment report, through the Toronto Transit Commission, to the same meeting of Planning and Growth Management Committee as the Public Meeting for the Official Plan Amendment so that they may inform each other and be considered together.

CONTACT

Rod McPhail
Director, Transportation Planning
Tel. No. (416) 392 8100
Fax No. (416) 392 3821
E-mail: rmcphail@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Gary Wright, Chief Planner & Executive Director
City Planning Division