



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

Official Plan Amendment for Scarborough-Malvern Light Rail Transit – Request for Direction

Date:	September 16, 2008
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	Ward Nos. 35, 36, 37, 38, 42 43 and 44
Reference Number:	pg080057

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 Scarborough-Malvern Light Rail Transit from Kennedy subway station east on Eglinton Avenue to Kingston Road, north east along Kingston Road to Morningside Avenue and then north along Morningside Avenue to the Malvern Community.

The Official Plan, Map 5 Surface Transit Priority Network, identifies the subject stretches of Eglinton Avenue and Kingston Road as transit priority segments but not Morningside Avenue or Neilson Road. The preliminary planning for the environmental assessment study is contemplating service to the Malvern Community by routing the light rail transit from Morningside onto Sheppard going west and then north onto Neilson Road. The study is also looking at serving the University of Toronto and Centennial College campuses at Morningside Avenue and Ellesmere Road by possibly routing the facility along Ellesmere Road and Military Trail.

Map 3 Right-of-Way Widths Associated with Major Streets in the Official Plan identifies the subject stretches of Eglinton Avenue, Kingston Road and Morningside Avenue to have a 36 metre right-of-way with the exception of a short stretch on Morningside Avenue just north of Lawrence Avenue which is identified as a 30 metres right-of-way.

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, and Map 3 if required, to reflect the recommended route for the Scarborough-Malvern Light Rail Transit, to be determined through the environmental assessment study process.

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 reflect the recommended alignment of the Scarborough-Malvern Light Rail Transit line, as determined by the environmental assessment study, to be considered at a public meeting of the 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.

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 Official Plan, Map 5 Surface Transit Priority Network, includes transit priority segments along Eglinton Avenue and Kingston Road but not Morningside Avenue, Neilson Road, Ellesmere Road or Military Trail.

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 an amendment to the Plan is necessary to allow for the possibility of light rail transit line along Morningside Avenue, Neilson Road, Ellesmere Road or Military Trail.

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 certain sections of the Scarborough-Malvern Light Rail Transit line to be constructed, the 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 to Map 5 is necessary to allow for the light rail transit along some of the roads.

If the right-of-way needs to be increased from 30 metres to 36 metres along Morningside Avenue, north of Lawrence Avenue to accommodate the design elements, then Map 3 of the Official Plan would also need to be amended accordingly. Right-of-way requirements along other road sections of the recommended route, determined through the environmental assessment study process, may need amendment also.

Environmental Assessment Study

The preliminary planning for an environmental assessment study was initiated for the project in early 2008. The first public consultation open houses were held on July 23 and 24, 2008.

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SIGNATURE

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