

Brimley Road and Highway 401 Interchange Modifications Class Environmental Assessment Study

Date:	June 1, 2010
To:	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	Ward No. 37 & 38 Scarborough Centre and 41 Scarborough-Rouge River
Reference Number:	pw10045 (09 193818 EPS 00 TM)

SUMMARY

A Class Environmental Assessment Study was undertaken to address opportunities to provide for additional movements at the Brimley Road interchange with Highway 401 and develop a more pedestrian and cycling-friendly environment.

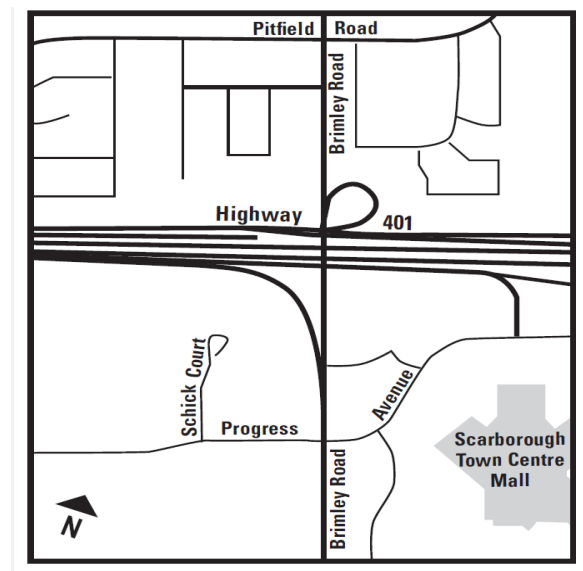
The transportation policies in the Scarborough Centre Secondary Plan include the reconfiguration of the Brimley Road interchange as part of initiatives to improve the connectivity and accessibility of the road network in the Centre.

The evaluation of a reasonable range of alternative solutions, which included consultation with the public and review agencies, resulted in the following Recommended Design, Attachment 2:

- The realignment of the existing free-flow eastbound Highway 401 off-ramp at Brimley Road, presently allowing only southbound movement onto Brimley Road, to a signalized T-intersection allowing both northbound and southbound movements onto Brimley Road.

A Notice of Study Completion must now be issued and the Project File placed in the public record for a 30-day review period in

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accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. authority be granted to the Chief Planner & Executive Director of City Planning to issue a Notice of Study Completion and to file the Project File for Brimley Road Highway 401 Interchange Modifications Class Environmental Assessment Study in the public record for 30 days in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment; and
2. the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact for this year's budget. However, the estimated cost of implementing the recommended realignment of the Brimley Road off-ramp is \$ 3.0 million. Cost sharing opportunities would need to be explored further with the Ministry of Transportation.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Scarborough Centre Secondary Plan, which is part of the City's Official Plan, includes the following policy:

"Policy 5.10 The connectivity and accessibility of the road network in the Centre will be enhanced by initiatives including, but not limited to:

- (a) the reconfiguration of the Brimley Road interchange with Highway 401, having regard to providing for additional movements and to develop a more pedestrian and cycling-friendly environment;"

This Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study is implementing this policy.

The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) allowed a 1,797 dwelling unit development proposal on the Transmetro Properties Limited property in the south west quadrant of Highway 401 and Brimley Road. One of the conditions of Draft Plan approval by the OMB included the provision of a public road connection between Schick Court and Brimley Road. Such a connection is only possible if the highway off-ramp is realigned to a T-intersection. The OMB has given the City until October 21st 2010 to seek all the necessary approvals for the road connection and the off-ramp realignment so that Transmetro Properties will design, fund and construct the public road connection between Schick Court and Brimley Road. Should the City not meet this deadline, Transmetro

would only be obligated to provide an emergency access between Schick Court and Brimley Road.

The subject study is also satisfying the condition imposed by the OMB which would obligate Transmetro Properties Limited to provide a public road connection between Schick Court and Brimley Road.

COMMENTS

Existing Conditions

The Highway 401 interchange at Brimley Road presently provides the following movements:

- northbound on Brimley Road to westbound on Highway 401 (on-ramp)
- eastbound on Highway 401 to southbound on Brimley Road and onto Progress Avenue (off-ramp)

There are no sidewalks along the west side of Brimley Road from Progress Avenue to just north where the eastbound highway off-ramp meets Brimley Road. Similarly, pedestrian traffic is not allowed along the east side of Brimley Road from north of Progress Avenue to just north of the Highway 401 westbound on-ramp. There is a pathway loop in the southwest quadrant of the interchange which provides a pedestrian and cycling connection between the area north and south of the highway. Attachment 1 illustrates the existing conditions.

Study Process

The study has been completed according to the requirements for a Schedule 'B' project under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (the Class EA). As a requirement of Schedule 'B' projects, if City Council endorses the recommendations of this Study, the Project File will be filed in the public record for a minimum 30-day review period.

During this period, members of the public and any other interested individual, interest group, or government agency, may request that a Part II Order be issued by the Minister of the Environment. If granted, a Part II order elevates the status of the project from a Class EA Study to an Individual Environmental Assessment. If this occurs, the project cannot proceed until the proponent completes an Individual Environmental Assessment Study and receives approval from the Minister. If a Part II Order is not granted or if no requests or objections are received during the filing period, the project is approved under the Environmental Assessment Act and may proceed.

Public Consultation

Public involvement is an integral and ongoing part of the study process. The public consultation requirements of the Class EA were met and surpassed. A Notice of Study Commencement and Public Open House was issued in January 2010 which appeared in two publications of the Scarborough Mirror. Notices were also distributed to various Staff report for action – Brimley Road and Highway 401 Interchange Modifications Class Environmental Assessment Study

agencies, residents within a limited area and stakeholders. An internet website for the project was also setup.

An Open House introducing the study and presenting an evaluation of alternative solutions was held on January 18, 2010. Approximately 40 people attended the Open House. Most attendees were supportive of the suggested improvements to the interchange. The proposed inclusion of sidewalks along Brimley Road was positively received as enhancing the pedestrian connections to the Centre.

A second Open House was held on May 6, 2010 presenting a preliminary recommended solution which included a signalized 'T-intersection' off-ramp allowing both left and right turns onto Brimley Road. The Open House was attended by approximately 25 people who were generally supportive of the proposed recommendations.

Environmental Assessment Findings

(1) Identification of the Problem or Opportunity

The Scarborough Centre Secondary Plan, part of the City's Official Plan, envisions improved connectivity and accessibility of the road network in the Centre through initiatives such as the reconfiguration of the Highway 401-Brimley Road interchange and a potential east-west road connection between Schick Court and Brimley Road. It also envisions enhancements to accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists in the Centre.

There is an opportunity to realign the eastbound Highway 401 off-ramp at Brimley Road from a free-flow condition allowing exit to only southbound Brimley Road to a signalized T-intersection, and allow for exit to both northbound and southbound Brimley Road. Furthermore, such a re-alignment would then allow for the public road connection between Schick Court and Brimley Road to be constructed. In the absence of the ramp re-alignment, the east-west public road connection to Brimley Road would not be permitted due to unsafe traffic operations. Introduction of the new traffic signal would provide safe crossing opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists.

(2) Identification and Evaluation of Alternative Solutions

Various alternative solutions were identified for the eastbound Highway 401 off-ramp and the westbound on-ramp at Brimley Road. These alternatives were then evaluated based on technical, socio-economic, natural environment, cost and policy criteria.

Presently the Highway 401 eastbound off-ramp at Brimley Road operates under free-flow conditions allowing only southbound access onto Brimley Road. Alternative solutions for the eastbound Highway 401 off-ramp at Brimley Road included three main alternatives:

Alternative 1: Do Nothing

Continue with the present off-ramp which allows only southbound access onto Brimley Road.

Alternative 2: Realign the existing off-ramp further north but maintain access to only southbound Brimley Road.

Alternative 3: Realign the off-ramp to a T-intersection and signalize it allowing both northbound and southbound access onto Brimley Road.

The assessment of the above alternatives resulted in recommending Alternative 3, which would allow access to both southbound and northbound Brimley Road. It best meets the policy objectives and at the same time improves the pedestrian and cycling environment along Brimley Road. It also allows for the public road connection between Schick Court and Brimley Road.

Sidewalks along both sides of Brimley Road are recommended to allow for a convenient pedestrian connection between the area north and south of the highway. The feasibility of incorporating bicycle lanes on that section of Brimley Road will be explored further during the detailed design stage. As a result of these improvements, the pathway loop in the southwest quadrant of the interchange is proposed to be removed. Attachment 2 illustrates the recommended alternative.

Presently access to the westbound Highway 401 on-ramp at Brimley Road is possible only for northbound traffic. Alternative solutions to provide access from southbound Brimley Road to the westbound Highway 401 on-ramp included three main alternatives:

Alternative 1: Do Nothing

Continue with the present access to the on-ramp for the northbound traffic only.

Alternative 2: Allow for left turn onto the ramp with a new connection for the southbound traffic on Brimley Road.

Alternative 3: Provide a new on-ramp connection in the north east quadrant of the interchange for the southbound traffic on Brimley Road to get onto westbound Highway 401.

The assessment of the above alternatives resulted in this study recommending Alternative 1. Access to the westbound on-ramp for southbound traffic on Brimley Road is not pursued further as part of this study. Ministry of Transportation staff expressed the need for such an addition to be addressed in the context of a larger corridor study. The Ministry of Transportation has initiated a Class Environmental Assessment study for the Highway 401 corridor from Warden Avenue to Brock Road scheduled for completion in the summer of 2011. City staff will ensure that further access to the westbound on-ramp is explored through the larger corridor study.

Next Steps

Upon approval of this report by City Council, the Project File will be compiled and filed in the public record for a minimum 30-day period. Once EA approval is received, detailed design will need to be initiated in collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation for construction of the Recommended Design. Cost sharing opportunities for the next phases will need to be explored further with the Ministry of Transportation.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Existing Conditions
Attachment 2: Recommended Design for eastbound Highway 401 off-ramp at Brimley Road

