

# The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole  
Transportation Services  
May 5, 2022

Report of the Commissioner of Public Works

## South York Greenway Cycling and Pedestrian Corridor Route Alignment and Project Advancement

### 1. Recommendations

1. Council endorse the preferred route alignment, in principle, of the South York Greenway Cycling and Pedestrian Corridor, as shown on Attachment 1.
2. Council authorize the direct purchase of detailed design services for three priority sections of the South York Greenway Cycling and Pedestrian Corridor from WSP Canada Inc., in the amount of \$1,367,628.80, excluding HST.
3. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Clerks of the Cities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

### 2. Summary

This report seeks Council endorsement of the preferred route alignment of the South York Greenway Cycling and Pedestrian Corridor (South York Greenway) and further seeks Council authorization of a direct purchase for detailed design services from WSP Canada Inc. (WSP) for three priority sections of the route.

Key Points:

- The South York Greenway is a proposed major east-west spine for cycling, walking and micro-mobility extending from Highway 50 to York-Durham Line and once completed, would provide active transportation connections across the cities of Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Markham
- An extensive consultation process was undertaken to engage with residents, local municipalities and key stakeholders to identify opportunities, constraints and best practices from similar projects
- Three priority sections totalling 15.4 kilometres have been identified to advance detailed design work to expedite construction

- Advancing detailed design work of the three priority sections would better position the Region’s application for the new Federal Active Transportation Fund by demonstrating project viability

### **3. Background**

#### **The South York Greenway is a proposed major east-west cycling and walking route extending from Highway 50 to York-Durham Line**

In the southern end of the Region in the vicinity of the 407 Hydro Corridor, the South York Greenway is envisioned to provide a commuter and recreational east-west spine of active transportation infrastructure, helping connect communities, major mobility hubs and destinations through the Cities of Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Markham.

#### **September 2019, Council was advised a feasibility study would be undertaken to better identify a preferred route alignment**

In [September 2019](#) Council was advised a feasibility study would be undertaken for the South York Greenway with a primary purpose to better define a preferred route alignment. The study would also identify opportunities and constraints, project costs and a priority implementation plan.

The preferred route alignment, developed through extensive collaboration with local municipalities, residents and other key partners, would create connections to communities, major mobility hubs, key destinations and Regional trails. It would also address major barriers around interchanges that have historically been a challenge for active transportation users.

A key objective during the study was that the preferred route aligns with locally-led initiatives and major local mobility hubs, including:

- Comprise part of the Vaughan Super Trail
- Provide connections to the future Yonge Subway Extension, Richmond Hill Centre and Markham/Langstaff Gateway areas
- Connect through Markham Centre Trails to provide new linkages east to Rouge National Urban Park

#### **An extensive consultation process-was undertaken to engage with key stakeholders, local municipalities and residents**

A technical advisory committee comprising of the Region’s local municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Parks Canada, Ministry of Transportation Ontario (407 ETR), Infrastructure Ontario and Hydro One was formed to better understand the opportunities and constraints throughout the corridor to help inform the feasibility study. Adjustments to the proposed

preferred route alignment were made based on feedback received through the technical advisory committee meetings held in early 2021 and 2022, and several individual stakeholder meetings to ensure all requirements were addressed.

Residents were engaged through two Public Information Centres held in December 2021 and April 2022. The proposed preferred route alignment was shared, and participants provided input through an online interactive mapping tool, which were received for consideration when further defining the preferred route alignment.

There will be opportunities for further stakeholder and agency engagement as the project proceeds to the engineering design phase for specific sections. The project team will also engage with the Region's Accessible Advisory Committee as part of initiating the detailed design work.

## **4. Analysis**

### **The South York Greenway corridor was analyzed through the feasibility study and a preferred route alignment has been identified**

Regional level trail connections, such as the South York Greenway, can transform communities. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, walking and cycling have become more important and expanding the Region's active transportation network is necessary to ensure more sustainable and eco-friendly ways to travel.

As the entire South York Greenway corridor spans over 50 kilometres east-west across the Region, the feasibility study analyzed opportunities, constraints, design considerations, best practice reviews of other jurisdictions and lessons learned to help inform a preferred route alignment. The preferred route alignment considered various recommendations, such as alignment with locally-led active transportation initiatives, avoiding hydro tower infrastructure and connections to major mobility hubs and key destinations. This work is informing discussions with the Province to allow for future South York Greenway connections to be protected through the Transit Oriented Community lands for the Yonge North Subway Extension in the Cities of Markham and Richmond Hill. A copy of the preferred route alignment is included as Attachment 1.

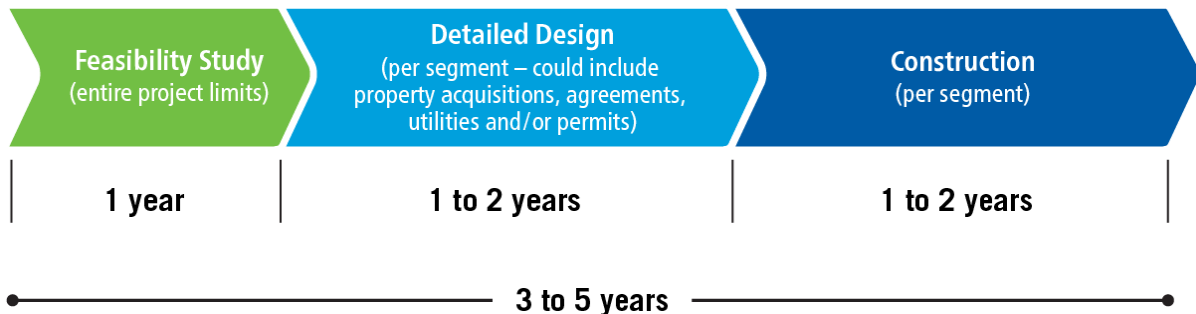
In addition, the preferred alignment leverages existing infrastructure as much as possible and identifies areas where new active transportation infrastructure can be implemented.

The feasibility study also proposed interim alignments that can be achieved in the near-term to provide a continuous route while the longer-term routes are further explored. Safety reviews will be included in the detailed design work where existing at-grade crossings are to be used as part of interim alignments.

## Staff recommend advancing detailed design for three priority sections of the South York Greenway to support the Region’s application for the Federal Active Transportation Fund

The preferred route alignment requires detailed design work before the project can advance to construction. The process timeline is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
**Process Timeline**



In July 2021, the federal government announced a new Federal Active Transportation Fund of \$400 million dedicated to expanding and enhancing active transportation networks in communities, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund will invest in projects that build new and expanded networks of pathways, bike lanes, trails and pedestrian bridges, and supports active transportation planning and stakeholder engagement activities. Projects must demonstrate their viability and be completed by March 2026 to be eligible for funding.

Staff have identified three priority sections of the South York Greenway proposed to have engineering design work advanced. The three priority sections, totalling 15.4 kilometres, are identified in Attachment 1 and are summarized below:

1. Sections V2 + V3 A-C in the City of Vaughan (7.1 kilometres) (maps 1,2,3) – Providing connection from the future Martin Grove Cycle Tracks, Vaughan Sports Grove Park, north-south connection to the Humber River Trail to the future Weston Road cycling facilities and Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. This segment will also comprise part of the Vaughan Super Trail.
2. Sections M7 + M8A in the City of Markham (3.6 kilometres) (maps 11,12) – Connecting along the south side of Highway 407, the Rouge Valley Trails in the east to the on-street bike lanes along Copper Creek Drive, providing a connection to Rouge National Urban Park in the west.
3. Section M11A in the City of Markham (4.7 kilometres) (maps 11,12) – Providing a link on the north side of Highway 407 from the Rouge Valley Trails in the east to Rouge National Urban Park. This segment will also comprise part of Markham’s Trail Loop.

Advancing the design work of the three priority sections better positions the Region's application for the new Federal Active Transportation Fund by demonstrating project viability.

As the route progresses to detailed design, staff will work closely with local municipalities, Conservation Authorities and all other stakeholders to better define aspects such as design elements, ownership and maintenance, phasing and implementation.

### **Staff recommend a direct purchase award for detailed design work for three priority sections**

A direct purchase award for the priority sections would expedite the project, leverage work already underway and demonstrate good value for money for the Region.

WSP Canada Inc., has the knowledge and expertise required to deliver the detailed design for the priority sections as demonstrated through their leading the feasibility study and familiarity of the project. In addition, time and cost savings would be realized through moving the project from feasibility stage to construction-ready more expeditiously and eliminate duplication of work.

The detailed design includes 15.4 kilometres, equating to approximately \$89,000 per kilometre for the priority sections. Recent bids for similar detailed design work for the Lake to Lake Route in Richmond Hill averaged approximately \$98,000 per kilometre. As a result, staff concluded the quoted detailed design cost represents good value for money for the Region.

Pending grant funding, a direct purchase of the detailed design through WSP better positions the Region to meet the requirements of the Federal Active Transportation Fund, ensuring the March 2026 completion timeline could be met.

Staff recommend a direct purchase award of \$1,367,628.80, excluding HST, be authorized to WSP Canada Inc. for detailed design work for the three priority sections.

## **5. Financial**

To position the Region best to benefit most on the potential of the Federal Active Transportation Fund, staff recommend proceeding with detailed design by WSP for \$1,367,628.80, excluding HST. The three priority sections identified for construction total approximately \$8,250,000, which could qualify for up to 60% funding.

The estimated cost to construct the entire route is approximately \$95 million, which includes anticipated costs for planning, design, construction administration, inspection and a contingency of 20% as the project is still in the feasibility stage. The South York Greenway, once completed, will include major grade separations that will eliminate barriers for pedestrians and cyclists. These make up a significant component of the anticipated costs.

The South York Greenway will be built on a section-by-section basis. Funds for detail design of the priority sections are included in the 2022 Capital Budget. Future sections for design and construction will be included in the 2023 Capital Budget.

## **6. Local Impact**

The South York Greenway will span the entire length of York Region and provide active transportation infrastructure that can be used recreationally and by commuters, including access to numerous trails. Regional level trail connections, such as the South York Greenway, transform communities by creating connections to Regional destinations for residents and tourists, including the Rouge National Urban Park, the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and the Richmond Hill Centre. Signage and wayfinding to identify and designate the South York Greenway will be addressed as significant portions are completed.

Staff will also continue to work closely with local municipal staff and Regional stakeholders on the implementation of the route to ensure alignment with local active transportation networks such as the Vaughan Super Trail, the Lake to Lake Route, Markham Centre Trails and Rouge National Urban Park.

## **7. Conclusion**

The South York Greenway is anticipated to be a major east-west spine and southern landmark for the Region providing active transportation infrastructure.

This report seeks Council endorsement of the preferred route alignment for the South York Greenway, as identified in Attachment 1, further to the feasibility study.

This report further seeks Council authorization for the direct purchase award of \$1,367,628.80, excluding HST, to WSP Canada Inc. for detailed design services of three priority sections of the South York Greenway Cycling and Pedestrian Corridor.

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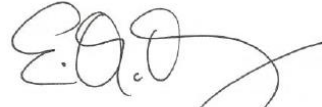
For more information on this report, please contact Brian Titherington, Director, Transportation Infrastructure Planning at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75901. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

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Commissioner of Public Works



Approved for Submission:

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Chief Administrative Officer

April 14, 2022  
Attachment (1)  
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