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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Committee of the Whole  
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, Commissioner of Finance and Commissioner of Works  
Report: #2024-COW-22  
Date: June 12, 2024

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**Subject:**

Durham Meadowway Visioning Study – Project Outcome and Next Steps, File# D21-50-50

**Recommendation:**

That the Committee of the Whole recommends to Regional Council:

- A) That Regional Council endorse the Durham Meadowway Visioning Study as the framework and strategy to implement the active transportation corridor and linear park, forming Stage 1 of the project;
- B) That Regional Council authorize the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development to negotiate and execute a Memorandum of Understanding between the Region and the City of Pickering, Town of Ajax, Town of Whitby and City of Oshawa, outlining a framework for the Region to cost-share 20 per cent (estimated at \$240,000) and the affected area municipalities cost-sharing 80 per cent of the Preliminary Design study for the Durham Meadowway trail, based on their respective uncompleted portion of the Durham Meadowway, subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Finance and Regional funding through the Region's 2025 Business Planning and Budgets process; and

- C) That a copy of this report and Council resolution be sent to the City of Pickering, Town of Ajax, Town of Whitby, City of Oshawa, Durham OneNet Inc., Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, Parks Canada, the City of Toronto, Infrastructure Ontario and Hydro One Networks Inc.
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## **Report:**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 On March 20, [Report #2024-COW-11](#) was presented to Committee of the Whole, which included the following recommendations to Regional Council:
- a. That Regional Council endorse the Durham Meadoway Visioning Study as the framework and strategy to implement the active transportation corridor and linear park, forming Stage 1 of the project; and
  - b. That Regional Council authorize the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development to negotiate and execute a Memorandum of Understanding between the Region and the City of Pickering, Town of Ajax, Town of Whitby and City of Oshawa, outlining a framework for the Region to cost-share 20 per cent (estimated at \$240,000) and the affected area municipalities cost-sharing 80 per cent of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment study for the Durham Meadoway trail, subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Finance and Regional funding through the Region's 2025 Business Planning and Budgets process.
- 1.2 On March 27 at Regional Council, the matter was referred back to staff. Through its deliberations, Regional Council was generally in support of the Visioning Study, but requested a follow-up report before the summer recess to review cost-sharing and project management approaches for the design work needed to implement the Durham Meadoway. In particular, it was noted that portions of the trail have already been built in some areas and some wanted assurance the recommended approach is fair and equitable.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to address Regional Council's request and provide additional information on potential cost-sharing and project management approaches for the Durham Meadoway.

## **2. Durham Meadowway Visioning Study – Stage 1**

- 2.1 [Report #2024-COW-11](#) provided background information and an overall summary of the Durham Meadowway Visioning Study, including a link to the Visioning Study report.
- 2.2 The completion of the Study as Stage 1 of the project forms an important milestone for the Durham Meadowway. It showcases the potential for the Durham Meadowway and creates a cohesive vision for what can be a legacy project in Durham. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Durham Meadowway Visioning Study be endorsed as the framework and strategy to implement the active transportation corridor and linear park, and that Stage 2 advance as one project to maximize efficiencies.

## **3. Preliminary Design for the Durham Meadowway – Stage 2**

- 3.1 Stage 2 involves undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) study for the Durham Meadowway project to advance the design for the multi-use path and identify the locations for gateways, amenities and other features along the route including proposed secondary uses on Hydro One transmission corridor lands.
- 3.2 Since the March Committee of the Whole report was prepared, the province has proposed revoking the Municipal Class EA process and creating a streamlined Municipal Project Assessment Process (MPAP). Of note, no municipal transportation projects are included as part of the MPAP, meaning that the Durham Meadowway would not be subject to an EA process if the proposal to revoke the Municipal Class EA process is approved. In the likelihood that the Municipal Class EA process is revoked by 2025, the Stage 2 work would be transformed into a Preliminary Design<sup>1</sup> study rather than a Municipal Class EA Study, and is referred to as such in Recommendation B.
- 3.3 Although potentially no longer subject to an EA process, the Durham Meadowway Preliminary Design would require the same environmental and technical studies, not only to meet Hydro One design reviews but also to provide important background information towards obtaining the necessary environmental permits and approvals from various agencies. Additional public and Indigenous consultation and project

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<sup>1</sup> A Preliminary Design takes a project to a 30 per cent level of design, which is consistent with the Municipal Class EA process for Schedule C projects (e.g., road widenings, new arterial road alignments or extensions and new off-road trails of a certain cost threshold). Environmental background studies and a review of alternative alignments are typically completed at this stage.

documentation, while no longer mandatory, would be highly recommended for the project as the design work advances. Notwithstanding the above, there may be opportunities to streamline the Preliminary Design study from an overall project management perspective without having to follow the Municipal Class EA process.

3.4 The environmental and technical studies required to support the Preliminary Design work, as noted in the Visioning Study, include the following:

- Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment
- Terrestrial and Aquatic Biologic Inventory
- Fluvial Geomorphological Assessment
- Hydrologic and Hydraulic Analysis
- Structural Engineering and Crossing Design of Watercourses
- Road Crossing Assessment
- Topographic Survey (where needed to supplement existing data)
- Provincial Secondary Land Use Program (PSLUP) Requirements (for land uses on transmission corridor lands)

3.5 Additional studies beyond the Preliminary Design work would be addressed during the detailed design and project tendering stage, which could include the following for specific sections of the trail and adjacent lands:

- Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment
- Additional hydrology, hydraulics and fluvial geomorphology assessments (to refine bridge placement and design)
- Wetland evaluation
- Geotechnical work
- Confirmation of utilities
- PSLUP requirements in terms of licencing of secondary land uses on transmission corridor lands from Infrastructure Ontario and Hydro One

3.6 As a follow-up to Regional Council deliberations, Regional staff have analysed three project management and cost-sharing options for the Stage 2 work in part to illustrate that the staff recommendation being put forward is the most fair and equitable for all:

- a. Option 1 – The Region of Durham lead the project management for the Preliminary Design study, based on length of unbuilt trail facilities for the Preferred Route with the Interim Routes in each area municipality. The Region would contribute 20% of the study cost with the Region's share estimated at

\$240,000. Area municipal contributions are based on the percentage of the future total length of multi-use path that needs to be constructed, using the length of the Preferred Route with the Interim Routes for each of the four benefitting area municipalities. This is the same cost-sharing arrangement to what was presented in March COW report. Area municipalities would be co-proponents with the Region for the project.

- b. Option 2 – Each area municipality would lead the project management for the Preliminary Design work within their own boundaries, also based on length of unbuilt trail facilities for the Preferred Route with the Interim Routes in each area municipality, with the Region contributing an estimated \$240,000 of that cost. The Region would be a co-proponent for each of the four area municipal studies and would provide a coordinating role in terms of achieving the overall vision for the project.
  - c. Option 3 – Each area municipality leads the project management for the Preliminary Design work within their boundaries, also based on length of unbuilt trail facilities for the Preferred Route with the Interim Routes in each area municipality, with the Region not contributing to any of the Preliminary Design cost. The Region would provide a supporting role and work with the area municipalities in terms of achieving the overall vision for the project through the four area municipal studies.
- 3.7 Table 1 provides Regional and area municipal cost estimates for each of the project management and cost-sharing options, assuming the \$1.2 million cost estimate for the Preliminary Design study.
- 3.8 For Options 1 and 2, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is proposed to outline Regional and area municipal roles/responsibilities for the execution of the Preliminary Design work and Regional funding contributions. An MOU should also be created under Option 3 between the Region and each area municipality, but only in terms of a supporting and review role.
- 3.9 Under Option 2, a 10 per cent increase in the costs for each area municipality was assumed with the Region's contribution estimate at up to \$240,000. This increase is to account for additional overall costs for the Preliminary Design as a result of having four individual projects to manage (as opposed to one project under Option 1), not only in terms of conducting the technical and environmental studies, but also project management and public consultation costs. As such, the Region's \$240,000

combined contribution to the area municipalities overall amounts to 18.5 per cent rather than 20 per cent of the overall Preliminary Design cost.

3.10 Under Option 3, the same cost overall as for Option 2 was applied per area municipality, without any Regional contributions.

**Table 1: Cost Sharing for Preliminary Design Study**

Item	Pickering	Ajax	Whitby	Oshawa	Total
Existing MUP Length (km)	2.68	3.78	1.33	0.00	<b>7.79</b>
Future Unbuilt MUP Length (km)	8.77	3.37	8.61	6.37	<b>27.12</b>
Per cent of Future Unbuilt MUP Length	32.3	12.4	31.7	23.5	<b>100.0</b>

**Option 1: One Co-ordinated Phase 2 Project**

20 per cent Regional Cost Share Contribution (\$)	77,611	29,823	76,195	56,372	<b>\$240,000</b>
80 per cent AM Cost Share Contribution (based on unbuilt MUP) (\$)	310,442	119,292	304,779	225,487	<b>\$960,000</b>
Option 1 Total Cost (\$)	388,053	149,115	380,973	281,858	<b>\$1,200,000</b>

**Option2: 4 Individual AM Phase 2 Projects (with Region in coordination role)**

Regional Cost Share Contribution (up to \$240,000) (\$)	77,611	29,823	76,195	56,372	<b>\$240,000</b>
Individual AM Cost Share Contribution (based on unbuilt MUP) (\$)*	341,487	131,221	335,257	248,035	<b>\$1,056,000</b>
Option 2 Total Cost (\$)	419,097	161,044	411,451	304,407	<b>\$1,296,000</b>

**Option 3: 4 Independently Led AM Phase 2 Projects (with Region in support role)**

AM Preliminary Design Cost (\$)*	419,097	161,044	411,451	304,407	<b>\$1,296,000</b>
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Notes:

AM = Area Municipality; MUP = Multi-Use Path

Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

\*10 per cent added to the Option 1 AM cost share to account for increased project management, scoping and consultation costs.

3.11 Under Options 2 and 3, an area municipality could include detailed design work as part of the project (refer to Sections 3.4 and 3.5), but the Region has only included cost-sharing of the Preliminary Design components in the budget forecast for 2025.

#### **4. Advantages for Region Leading/Coordinating the Project**

4.1 As demonstrated in Section 3 above, Option 1 (with the Region leading the Preliminary Design study for the Durham Meadoway) offers several advantages over Options 2 and 3:

- a. Economies of scale for engineering and technical studies – Having one consultant team undertake the work to support Preliminary Design, in theory, would be cheaper than having separate project teams for each of the four area municipalities. Not only would there be potential savings in terms of scoping the environmental fieldwork, but also for project management and consultation costs.
- b. Hydro One and Infrastructure Ontario technical review – Having one submission of the Durham Meadoway trail alignment for the preliminary design, rather than as four separate studies that potentially could be at different levels of detail, would make the review process easier for these agencies and clearer for the Region and area municipalities from a project management perspective.
- c. Design consistency for the project – Creating consistency in terms of the design of the multi-use path, gateways, user amenities such as benches and the identification of secondary uses such as parks on the transmission corridor lands would be easier to achieve as one project than as four separate projects. Achieving a Preliminary Design level of detail for the entire corridor would also be easier as one project, as physical and budget realities may cause the work to be undertaken in different timeframes if split between the area municipalities.
- d. Coordinated public and Indigenous consultation – An approach to gathering public and Indigenous input on the design for the multi-use path as well as related amenities would be much easier to achieve as one project. Having four separate projects for consultation may be confusing and counterproductive to garner constructive feedback and meaningful engagement.

- 4.2 Given the above observations, it is recommended that Option 1 be pursued to procure, project manage and cost-share the Preliminary Design work components for the Durham Meadoway.
- 4.3 Accordingly, under Option 1, it is recommended that a MOU between the Region and the City of Pickering, Town of Ajax, Town of Whitby and City of Oshawa, outlining a framework for the Region to cost-share 20 per cent (estimated at \$240,000) and the affected area municipalities cost-sharing 80 per cent of the Preliminary Design study for the Durham Meadoway trail, subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Finance and Regional funding through the Region's 2025 Business Planning and Budgets process.
- 5. Review of Region-Wide Development Charge Background Study for Active Transportation Infrastructure**
- 5.1 Through Committee and Council deliberations, Regional staff were requested to review how active transportation infrastructure is currently included in the 2023 Region-Wide Development Charge (DC) Background Study, and how the Durham Meadoway could be considered in a future DC Study.
- 5.2 Currently, cycling facilities on the Regional road components of the Primary Cycling Network (PCN), as identified in the Regional Cycling Plan (RCP), 2021, are funded in two ways:
- a. For cycling facilities that are part of a road widening or reconstruction project, Development Charge (DC) contributions are based on the growth-related share of the road project.
  - b. For cycling facilities that are standalone or infill projects (not tied to a road widening or reconstruction project), the Benefit to Existing (BTE) share is 77 per cent in the 2023 DC Study to reflect that these new facilities will benefit existing as well as future residents of Durham. Therefore, a significant portion of these cycling facilities are required to be funded through property taxes.
- 5.3 The Region funds the costs of the platform for multi-use paths within the Regional Road right-of-way (land acquisition, consulting design fees, utility relocation, grading and customized bridge structures) and the area municipality funds the costs of granular, asphalt, signage, markings and future operating and maintenance costs. For infill projects, the design fees are shared between the area municipality and Region through a funding formula based on the Region's share of construction cost



for the particular project. The Region is not responsible to fund multi-use paths located outside of the Regional Road right-of-way.

- 5.4 Area municipalities are responsible for recreational trails and thus these facilities are not included in Regional DCs.

## **6. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

- 6.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a. Goal 1, Environmental Sustainability: Objective 1.1: Protect, preserve and restore the natural environment, including greenspaces, waterways, parks, trails, and farmlands.
- b. Goal 1, Environmental Sustainability: Objective 1.5: Expand sustainable and active transportation.
- c. Goal 2, Community Vitality: Objective 2.1: Revitalize existing neighbourhoods and build complete communities that are walkable, well-connected, and have a mix of attainable housing.
- d. Goal 3, Economic Prosperity: Objective 3.3: Enhance communications and transportation networks to better connect people and move goods efficiently.
- e. Goal 4, Social Investment: Objective 5.1: Optimize resources and partnerships to deliver exceptional quality services and value.

## **7. Conclusion and Next Steps**

- 7.1 The Durham Meadoway project has captured the imagination of many Durham residents as a significant recreational and tourism asset for the Region. It is recommended that the necessary actions be taken so that this momentum can continue, in particular the preparation of a Preliminary Design study to advance the Durham Meadoway beyond the Visioning Study (Stage 1) to Stage 2.
- 7.2 Pending approval of the recommendations in this report by Regional Council, Regional staff will work on preparing a MOU between the Region and City of Pickering, Town of Ajax, Town of Whitby and City of Oshawa for the Preliminary Design study and will report back to Regional Council with any concerns raised and any updated recommendations stemming from the MOU discussions.

- 7.3 Following execution of the MOU, Regional staff will commence work on the terms of reference for the Preliminary Design study in collaboration with staff from the area municipalities and the conservation authorities (TRCA and CLOCA). The projected procurement timeline to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) and award the project is Q2 of 2025. The Preliminary Design study is proposed to take about 18-months to two years to complete.
- 7.4 The proposed funds for the Preliminary Design study from the Region (approximately \$240,000) will be considered as part of the annual budget process for 2025 and in consideration of other Regional budget priorities.

## 8. Attachments

Attachment 1: [Report #2024-COW-11](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Recommended for Presentation to Committee

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