


Sent by Email

July 3, 2024

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez
Minister of Transport
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
TC.MinisterofTransport-MinistredesTransports.TC@tc.gc.ca

 Corporate Services Department Legislative Services Division	
Date & Time Received:	July 03, 2024 2:02 pm
Original To:	CIP
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Take Appropriate Action	<input type="checkbox"/> File <input type="checkbox"/>
Notes/Comments:	

Subject: Director, Economic Development & Strategic Projects, Report ECD 03-24
Corridor Design for a High Frequency Rail Station in Pickering

The Council of The Corporation of the City of Pickering considered the above matter at a Meeting held on June 24, 2024 and adopted the following resolution:

1. That Report ECD 03-24 regarding the Corridor Design for a High Frequency Rail Station in Pickering completed by Weston Williamson & Partners (WW+P) be received;
2. That the appropriate City of Pickering officials be authorized to submit the confidential information package entitled "City of Pickering – HFR Corridor Design" to VIA HFR-VIA TGF.;
3. That the Mayor be requested to send a letter of support for the City of Pickering to be a host community for a VIA HFR Station to VIA HFR-VIA TGF.;
4. That the City Clerk forward a copy of Report ECD 03-24 to the Minister of Transport Canada, the CEO of VIA HFR-VIA TGF., and to the Region of Durham; and,
5. That the appropriate City of Pickering officials be authorized to take the necessary actions as indicated in this report.

A copy of Report ECD 03-24 is attached for your reference.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at 905.420.4660, extension 2019.

Yours truly,



Susan Cassel

City Clerk

Encl.

SC:am

Copy: Alexander Harras Regional Clerk, Director of Legislative Services, Region of Durham

Chief Administrative Officer
Director, Economic Development & Strategic Projects



Report to Council

Report Number: ECD 03-24

Date: June 24, 2024

From: Fiaz Jadoon
Director, Economic Development & Strategic Projects

Subject: Corridor Design for a High Frequency Rail Station in Pickering
- File: D-1600-002

Recommendation:

1. That Report ECD 03-24 regarding the Corridor Design for a High Frequency Rail Station in Pickering completed by Weston Williamson & Partners (WW+P) be received;
2. That the appropriate City of Pickering officials be authorized to submit the confidential information package entitled "City of Pickering – HFR Corridor Design" to VIA HFR-VIA TGF.;
3. That the Mayor be requested to send a letter of support for the City of Pickering to be a host community for a VIA HFR Station to VIA HFR-VIA TGF.;
4. That the City Clerk forward a copy of Report ECD 03-24 to the Minister of Transport Canada, the CEO of VIA HFR-VIA TGF., and to the Region of Durham; and,
5. That the appropriate City of Pickering officials be authorized to take the necessary actions as indicated in this report.

Executive Summary: The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work conducted by Weston Williamson & Partners (WW+P) for the Conceptual Design of a proposed High Frequency Rail (HFR) Station in Pickering.

The Toronto to Quebec City corridor is one of the most populated and economically active regions in Canada. An increase in public transportation between this corridor will significantly reduce the congestion, carbon footprint, and travel time within the region. In 2016, VIA Rail Canada (VIA) submitted a proposal to the federal government for a High Frequency Rail (HFR) service between the Toronto to Quebec City corridor. In 2022, The City of Pickering's Economic Development & Strategic Projects Department collaborated with the Region of Durham's Planning & Economic Development Department to propose a plan for an HFR station stop in Pickering. The plan included a jointly commissioned Business Analysis Study on the VIA HFR project by WSP with a proposed stop in Pickering (Resolution #873/22).

Since 2022, Transport Canada and VIA have made significant progress on the HFR project, including releasing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to qualify bidders for the project, the formation of the HFR executive team, and releasing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select from a group of qualified bidders.

In 2023, Members of Council approved the hiring of WW+P to undertake the Design of a HFR Station in Pickering (Resolution #337/23). The scope of work outlined how the proponent will develop a high-level, functional, concept plan (which includes corridor development) for an HFR Station. The final design incorporates the vital need of community space by incorporating the station stop with the district park, relocating heritage facilities to a dedicated space, and promotes the growing Agri-Tourism in Pickering, making it an enjoyable experience for all.

Following the work conducted by WW+P, the next steps involve submitting the confidential information package entitled “City of Pickering – HFR Corridor Design”, that was provided to Council during an in-camera meeting on June 24th, to VIA HFR-VIA TGF. This would allow the City of Pickering to be one of the first municipalities to create and present a business analysis study and conceptual plan. This step will further enhance the City of Pickering’s proposal for an HFR Station stop in Pickering.

Relationship to the Pickering Strategic Plan: The recommendations in this report respond to the Pickering Strategic Plan Priority of Advance Innovation & Responsible Planning to Support a Connected, Well-Serviced Community.

Financial Implications: This report contains no financial implications to the City of Pickering.

Discussion: The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the work conducted by WW+P for the Conceptual Design of a HFR Station in Pickering.

The Toronto-Quebec City corridor is VIA-Rail Canada’s (VIA) busiest passageway with 3.6 million riders in 2019 alone. VIA’s passenger service experiences an increase in delays due to congestion caused by other operators utilizing the same rail lines, including Metrolinx, Canadian Pacific (CP), and Canadian National (CN). Thus, VIA submitted a proposal to the federal government in 2016 for a High Frequency Rail (HFR) service between the Toronto to Quebec City corridor using the Havelock Line of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP). This proposal suggested dedicated rail lines for passenger service to bypass current issues and delays with freight trains on shared lines.

The Government of Canada launched the procurement process of the HFR project through the announcement of a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI). Additionally, the RFEOI was supported by a multi-year process that included a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) followed by a Request for Proposal (RFP) in March 2022. The Minister of Transportation also announced the establishment of the VIA Rail Subsidiary VIA HFR- VIA TGF.

In partnership with the Region of Durham, the City hired WSP in April 2022 to conduct a Business Analysis Study on the VIA HFR project with a proposed stop in Pickering (Resolution #873/22). The report from WSP highlights potential for a Transit Oriented Community (TOC) surrounding the HFR station. Correspondingly, City staff presented the findings of the study

from WSP to the VIA HFR-VIA TGF team. The feedback was positive, and the VIA HFR-VIA TGF team recommended that the City of Pickering continue their work on the project.

In October 2023, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was posted on the City's bids&tenders website. Upon careful review of all proposals and relevant documents received, WW+P was selected as the highest qualified bidder. Council approved the hiring of WW+P in November 2023 (Resolution #337/23).

The goal of the Corridor Design was to evaluate the policy framework and create a conceptual plan for a HFR Station in Pickering. During the information phase, it was crucial for the team at WW+P to gain a clear understanding of the project and the progress made thus far. In consultation with City staff, the deliverables identified were to produce a comprehensive conceptual plan for an HFR Station (and Corridor) within the targeted areas identified by the City of Pickering and to develop the design incorporating all relevant details. Additionally, the team was advised to consider the logistical restrictions outlined in the pre-existing report by WSP, which included data assumptions about the possible station location.

Further to the WSP Business Analysis Study, two sites were determined to be the best fit (Attachment 1). WW+P was prompted to build upon the assumptions of the WSP report and conduct a conceptual design and planning vision to unlock the under-utilized lands within the Seaton Community and address a larger transportational need within Pickering, while also being responsive to the local community through consultation with key stakeholders. WW+P studied both Durham Region and the City of Pickering's Official Plans. The evaluation also considered noise limitations, vibration, dust, light, safety, existing rail alignment, and odour studies. Following thorough evaluations, the north site (Scenario 1 in Attachment 1) was chosen as the preferred location out of the two identified sites.

City staff advised WW+P to prioritize the preservation of parks and environmentally friendly structures, while also creating a hub which would directly link the station stop to the district park, heritage facilities, and Agri-Tourism. The final design from WW+P incorporates relocation of the heritage facilities to a dedicated space and promotes the growing Agri-Tourism in Pickering, which would support locally grown and produced products.

The station design was thoroughly planned by WW+P who based the conceptual design on their expertise in delivering Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) and award-winning station design. The design of the station and new corridor are an integrated approach to building communities within cities and deploying a truly Canadian aesthetic that resonates with VIA Rail's values.

Due to the sensitive commercial information regarding the competitive advantages of this project, Members of Council were provided a confidential information package entitled "City of Pickering – HFR Corridor Design" during an in-camera meeting prior to the June 24, 2024 Council Meeting.

In the 2024 federal budget, the Government of Canada introduced legislative amendments to make VIA HFR-VIA TGF Inc. an Agent of the Crown, enabling VIA HFR-VIA TGF Inc. to deliver High Frequency Rail on behalf of the government. Budget 2024 also proposes to provide \$371.8 million over six years, starting this year, to VIA HFR-VIA TGF Inc. and

Infrastructure Canada to advance design and development of HFR. Concurrently, the 2024 Field Study Program for VIA HFR, focusing on environmental factors like air quality and wildlife, is ongoing until December 2024, aiming to offer data to guide project decisions, prescribe protection if needed, and engage Indigenous Peoples to incorporate their knowledge and guidance in shaping project plans and development.

It is therefore recommended that Council authorize staff to submit the confidential information package entitled "City of Pickering – HFR Corridor Design", with a letter of support from the Mayor, to the VIA HFR-VIA TGF team. City Staff will also seek opportunities to engage key stakeholders including Ministry of Transportation (MTO), Metrolinx, Infrastructure Ontario (IO), Canadian Infrastructure Bank, and Transport Canada (TC) to enhance the City of Pickering’s proposal for a HFR Station in Pickering.

Attachment:

- 1. Proposed Sites

Prepared By:

Approved/Endorsed By:

Original Signed By:

Original Signed By:

Usman Malik, B.Eng
Senior Officer, Economic Development
& Strategic Projects

Fiaz Jadoon, Ec.D., CEcD, MPM, B.COMM
Director, Economic Development &
Strategic Projects

FJ: um

Recommended for the consideration
of Pickering City Council

Original Signed By:

Marisa Carpino, M.A.
Chief Administrative Officer

**Scenario 1:
York-Durham Line
& Highway 7**

1

**Scenario 2:
York-Durham Line
& Whitevale Road**

2

