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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2022-INFO-95
Date: November 18, 2022

Subject:

Durham Meadoway Visioning Study

Recommendation:

Receive for information

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Durham Meadoway Visioning Study, which commenced in October 2022.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Planning Division (Transportation Planning Section) is coordinating the Durham Meadoway Visioning Study in partnership with the City of Pickering, the Town of Ajax, the Town of Whitby and the City of Oshawa. Proposed as an active transportation corridor and greenspace connecting Rouge National Urban Park in the City of Pickering to Simcoe Street in the City of Oshawa, the Durham Meadoway will connect four municipalities along 27 kilometres of the Gattineau Hydro Corridor. The Durham Meadoway will be an easterly extension of the existing 16 kilometre Meadoway that has transformed the hydro corridor in Scarborough and which currently terminates at the Rouge National Park.

- 2.2 Following a process that provides opportunities for public input, the study will provide a common vision and framework that will guide future detailed planning, coordination and implementation of future active transportation infrastructure, along with potential ecological enhancements and community amenities within the corridor.
- 2.3 In May 2005, the Region first declared an interest in the opportunity for a trail within the Gatineau Hydro Corridor, in response to a Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing process regarding opportunities for Regional and area municipal public uses on hydro corridor lands (Report #2005-P-41).
- 2.4 In October 2006, the Region approved the first Regional Trail Network, which included an alignment within the Gatineau Hydro Corridor. The RTN was subsequently updated in 2015 and 2018 ([Report #2018-COW-125](#)).
- 2.5 In December 2017, a conceptual alignment for the trail was identified in the Durham Transportation Master Plan (2017) and was incorporated into the Region's Primary Cycling Network as part of the 2021 Regional Cycling Plan update ([Report #2021-COW-26](#)).
- 2.6 In November 2021, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was released for the provision of consulting services to develop a plan for the Durham Meadoway. SvN Architects + Planners (SvN) was retained in mid-2022 as the lead consultant to support the development of the Visioning Study as part of a multidisciplinary team of architects, planners, urban designers and landscape architects.

3. Project Scope

- 3.1 The Visioning Study will be the first of several initiatives that will be needed to take the Durham Meadoway from concept to construction. Future technical studies, detailed design, costing and implementation will be addressed through subsequent projects. The Visioning Study will ensure that the Durham Meadoway is well coordinated, informed by common goals with a consistent, cohesive approach to design. It will also support the Region and its area municipal and agency partners to pursue external funding opportunities for detailed design and implementation if available.
- 3.2 The scope of the study is outlined below:
- Develop a coordinated vision and guiding principles to support decision-making.
 - Confirm a functional alignment for a multi-use trail.
 - Articulate potential experiences, activities, amenities and gateways that could be programmed or evolve over time at locations along the corridor.

- Develop illustrations that will inform the overall look of the future Durham Meadoway.

The process will culminate with a Durham Meadoway Visioning Study report that will be presented and made publicly available at the conclusion of the process.

- 3.3 A series of preliminary guiding principles were developed to help determine the scope of the study in light of the potential community benefits a facility of this type and scale can provide, as presented in Table 1. These principles will be presented for stakeholder input and could be refined through the Visioning Study process.

Table 1: Durham Meadoway Preliminary Guiding Principles

Principle	Description
Natural Environment 	Protect sensitive plant and animal habitats and seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Provide opportunities for visitors to learn about the natural environment and encourage community stewardship.
Healthy, Active Lifestyles 	Encourage a range of active and passive recreational opportunities.
Connectivity and Accessibility 	Design a multi-use trail that is continuous, safe, easy-to-navigate and designed for all ages and abilities. Minimize conflict between different uses and ensure emergency and maintenance access.
Community 	Create places for people to gather and socialize and design pathways and entrances from adjacent communities that are welcoming and foster a sense of place. Minimize impacts on surrounding neighbourhoods.
Identity 	Showcase Durham Region's unique cultural and environmental heritage, and identify opportunities to incorporate public art, distinctive signage and other placemaking elements.

4. Study Areas

- 4.1 To support initial background research and analysis, Transportation Planning staff identified both a Corridor Study Area (CSA) and a Greater Study Area (GSA). The CSA is the area encompassing the potential alignment options for the Durham Meadowway, and the GSA is the area within a 15- to 20-minute walkshed around the CSA (see Attachment #1).

5. Project Timeline

- 5.1 The Visioning Study will take place over a three-phase process, beginning in Fall 2022 and concluding in Fall 2023.

Input and support from stakeholders will shape an ambitious yet achievable vision and will inform refinements to proposed alignments. Figure 1 illustrates the planned frequency and timing of municipal, agency and public engagement:

Figure 1: Durham Meadowway Visioning Study Timeline

Phase 1: Vision and Functional Alignment	Phase 2: Concept Development	Phase 3: Study Finalization
Fall 2022 / Winter 2023	Winter / Spring 2023	Summer / Fall 2023
- Initial Stakeholder Information Session - Stakeholder Working Group Meetings (3) 1st Public Open House - Planning and Economic Development Committee Project Status Update	- Stakeholder Working Group Meeting 2nd Public Open House - Planning and Economic Development Committee Project Status Update	Planning and Economic Development Committee Final Report

- 5.2 Engagement with Indigenous communities will form part of the Visioning Study process.
- 5.3 At the request of area municipal staff, additional presentations may be scheduled with area municipal councils and committees.

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. Objective 1.1: Protect, preserve and restore the natural environment, including greenspaces, waterways, parks, trails, and farmlands.
- b. Objective 1.5: Expand sustainable and active transportation.
- c. Objective 2.1: Revitalize existing neighbourhoods and build complete communities that are walkable, well-connected, and have a mix of attainable housing.
- d. Objective 3.3: Enhance communication and transportation networks to better connect people and move goods more effectively.
- e. Objective 5.1 Optimize resources and partnerships to deliver exceptional quality services and value.

7. Next Steps

7.1 In January/February 2023, the Project Team will be hosting a public open house to gather input from community stakeholders on the overall vision, guiding principles, potential design elements and community amenities and a preliminary alignment for discussion. The open house is intended to be held in two locations. Further details will also be made available on the project webpage on Your Voice Durham [<https://yourvoice.durham.ca/durham-meadoway>]

8. Attachments

Attachment #1: Durham Meadoway Study Areas

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Planning and
Economic Development

Attachment 1: Durham Meadowway Study Areas

