



Development Services Staff Report

Report Number: DS01-2022
Report Title: Breslau Settlement Area Transportation and Land Use Plan
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Meeting Type: Committee of the Whole Meeting
Meeting Date: February 7, 2022
eDocs or File ID: DM76122 and DM76123
Consent Item: No
Final Version: Yes
Reviewed By: Deanne Friess, Director of Development services
Final Review: Senior Management Team

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Township of Woolwich, considering Report DS01-2022 respecting Breslau Settlement Area Transportation and Land Use Plan:

1. accept this report as information; and
2. endorse the recommendations in Report IS32-2021 for the preferred alignment and cross section of the proposed Breslau East Connector Road.

Background:

The Breslau Settlement Area, outlined on the map below, is comprised of the older village residential, the village main street, new residential areas, commercial areas and employment areas. The Breslau Settlement Plan was adopted by Council in 2016 as a Secondary Plan for the area. Outside of the Breslau Settlement Area are designated Rural lands and the Waterloo Region International Airport. The Breslau Settlement Plan recognizes that a potential GO Station will be planned for the area in the general location adjacent to Greenhouse Road, implementing an approved Environmental Assessment by Metrolinx in 2009. The GO station will function primarily as a commuter focused station which will require a significant surface parking area accessory retail and other complementary commercial uses. The planned adjacent employment designation will allow freestanding commercial uses to support the GO station. A recent change in the funding, requiring the full cost of the station to be borne by the developer, has resulted in reduced interest by the development community. The planning framework will now need to change to allow much higher densities to fund the station on private land or the funding

structure needs to change with more public funding. The result is that location options for the GO Station are under review by the Region of Waterloo and Metrolinks. Delineation of the urban structure is provided on attachment 1 of this report.

Figure 1 – Breslau Settlement Area Boundary



Breslau East Connector Road Background

In 2012, the Development Services Department initiated the process to prepare a Secondary Plan to accommodate future growth in the Breslau area in the Township of Woolwich. This planning exercise was necessary given that the Region, in 2009, adopted a new Regional Official Plan (ROP) that significantly altered the policy framework of Breslau by redesignating it from a rural settlement to an Urban Area, similar to the three adjacent cities. This new designation has (1) changed Breslau's built form

and function as a result of accommodating greater densities; (2) required all new development be on full municipal service; and (3) required the planning of services, infrastructure and transportation corridors to maintain flexibility of extending out towards Breslau's ultimate urban limit being Shantz Station Road to the east, new Highway 7 to the north, the Grand River to the west and Kossuth Road to the south as depicted in the above attachment (i.e., "Breslau's Ultimate Urban Area"). Breslau's Ultimate Urban Area is shown on attachment 4 of this report.

Township staff worked with the Consulting Team through the Secondary Plan process which included a detailed evaluation of the land use, transportation, servicing, and environmental aspects of the area. A series of Community Building Workshops and public meetings were held to discuss preferred growth options, wastewater capacity, engineering water modeling, required infrastructure and transportation improvements, environmental protection, and the need for cross-boarder servicing agreements (approved by Council) to service the growth. The Secondary Plan process also included discussions with the Ministry of Transportation concerning the proposed design of new Highway 7 and its implications. Various stakeholders, public individuals and agencies were involved in the development of the new Secondary Plan for the area.

Staff presented report E66-2015 to Council on December 8, 2016, and a supplementary report E11-2016 in February 2016 to Council to summarize the findings of the secondary planning exercise and a recommendation to adopt Official Plan Amendment No. 25 which is the new Settlement Plan for the Breslau Settlement area. A transportation policy in the plan recommended undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for a new connector road from Greenhouse Road to Fountain Street to connect the older community of Breslau with a developing new mixed use neighbourhood east of Hopewell Creek. The Breslau Settlement Plan received approval from the Region in November 2016 but final approval was not until 2017 after the settlement of appeals.

In November 2018 the Township of Woolwich issued a Request for Proposal for the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) to determine the preferred alignment and preliminary design of the new connector road in Breslau. The EA was awarded to Associated Engineering and the EA process was commenced in March 2019.

On December 7, 2021, Infrastructure Services staff brought report IS32-2021 to Council requesting endorsement of the preferred alignment for the Breslau East Connector Road and advised Council of the anticipated construction cost of \$26,600,000. Council deferred the recommendation to allow Planning staff to come back to Council to provide information regarding the planning of the Breslau area and the justification for new road which is the purpose of this report.

Comments:

Breslau Transportation Plan

Through the Secondary Plan process the existing and planned transportation system was evaluated using background/focused data, studies and regulatory jurisdictions to develop a transportation plan to best serve the planned densities and land uses for the Breslau Settlement area and beyond. In addition, as part of a visioning exercise through the Breslau Secondary Plan, Council approved 8 Guiding Principles. Four of these principles are reflected in the proposed Connector Road Environmental Assessment (EA):

Principle 3: To create well designed, safe, attractive and sustainable residential neighbourhoods that are integrated with the existing community in a logical, compatible, efficient and cost-effective manner.

Principle 5: To develop a well-connected, multi-modal and safe *active transportation* system that promotes walking, cycling and transit usage, as well as providing an efficient road network for motor vehicles.

Principle 6: To promote “green” and “healthy” neighbourhoods and buildings that are attractive, accessible, energy efficient and include an array of sustainable design features that promote a healthy, active lifestyle.

Principle 8: To manage growth within Breslau over time in a manner that respects the existing residents, is logical, efficient and cost effective, balanced with employment opportunities and is reflective of the financial and administrative capabilities of the Township.

The policies developed and future initiatives and improvements recommended through this planning exercise to provide for the planned growth shall align with these Guiding Principles approved for Breslau. Given that planning of Breslau considered not only the existing settlement limits but also the ultimate settlement limits (as shown on attachment 4), this led to developing several key transportation policies for the Plan to provide for an appropriate, integrated transportation system in keeping with the Guiding Principles.

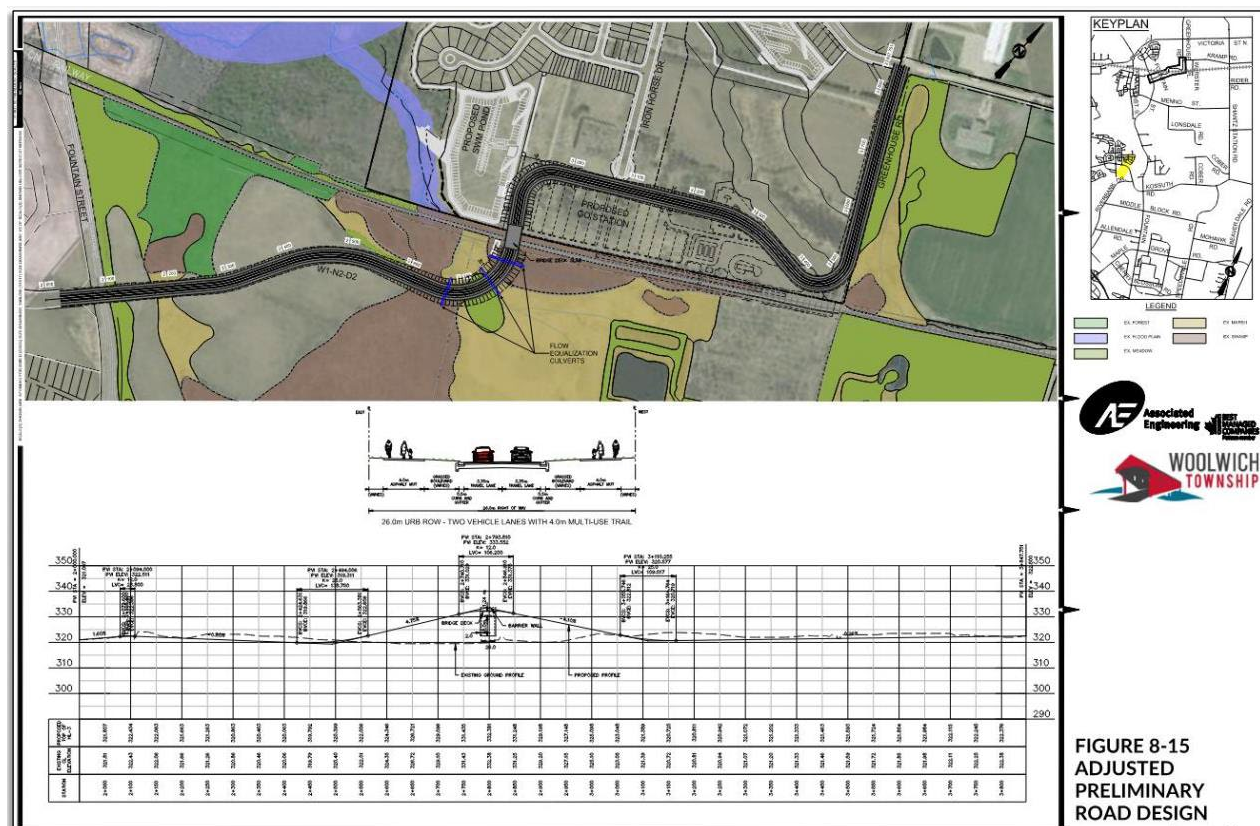
Firstly, the road system is to reflect a modified grid (Breslau Settlement Plan Policy 7.16.8.1 b) which supports the integration and long-term development of the community. A modified grid pattern provides direct routes to strategic destinations as well multiple options to better disperse the traffic and to reduce carbon emissions. It also supports the looping of the transit system.

Secondly, with only two crossings over the rail line being Woolwich Street and Fountain Street, and limited opportunities for other future crossings, to implement the modified grid and address the key principles, the proposed connector was identified. This was also reflected in policy (Breslau Settlement Plan Policy 7.16.8.1 h) and illustrated in “Schedule ‘C’ – Transportation Network – of the Breslau Settlement Plan, which provided and conceptually identified a Potential Connecting Corridor between Fountain Street North and Neighbourhood 2. This road connection is considered an important community

connectivity corridor that will serve to integrate the north-east neighbourhoods with the south-west neighbourhoods of the Breslau Settlement Area and will serve and support the Proposed GO Station. The Transportation Network is shown on attachment 2 of this report and conceptually shows the location of the connector road. The Breslau Settlement Plan notes that the preferred alignment would be determined through an Environmental Assessment (EA) process and the road construction would be funded by Development Charges.

Thirdly, identifying trails/pathway corridors and connections of the Plan to implement Guiding Principle #5 in developing a well-connected, multi-modal, and safe active transportation system.

Once the Breslau Settlement Plan was adopted by Council in December 2016 and received final approval in 2017, staff undertook the EA process. The connector road policy also committed the Township to initiate the EA process within 2 years of the Plan's final approval so that lands within the Thomasfield Homes' draft plan, which may be impacted by this new road, would not be kept frozen for a considerable period of time. The EA was conducted from 2019 to 2021 and determined the preferred alignment for the connector road which would provide a direct connection between the historic and new areas of Breslau and encourage cycling and walking. The proposed delineation of the connector road as presented in the EA and staff report IS32-2021 is shown in the image below. Full copy of report IS32-2021 is attached in Attachment 5 to this report.



The proposed connector road will provide connectivity and integration of the Hopewell Crossing Subdivision as well as other future lands to the north of the rail line and east of Hopewell Creek (i.e., Breslau Ultimate Settlement Area) with the existing Breslau area west of Fountain. The benefits of the road to integrate the two communities of Breslau are as follows (the Breslau neighbourhoods are shown on attachment 3 of this report):

- to support the creation of a core commercial area along Woolwich Street;
- to provide a more direct connection to many public services such as the two schools and the Breslau park and community centre for the lands to the east;
- to provide a link from the existing community and future Breslau Properties development with a more direct access to the GO Station, industrial lands and future school on the lands to the east. This link will also connect residential lands to the proposed industrial lands. Creating an integrated multi-modal community;
- to further enhance the active transportation networks as the road will accommodate a multi-use pathway;
- to potentially provide a more direct and accessible route between two major transportation facilities in the region, the planned GO Station, and the Airport; and,
- to allow for an efficient and looped transit network in the future.

The proposed connector road with a link over the rail line also supports creating an accessible and more efficient community for residents and commercial uses and would aid any industrial traffic to access Fountain Street. Without the link, the result would be increased vehicle travel times and discouraged multi modal approach. Also, growth in the easterly section is limited to using only Victoria Street (Highway 7) to drive to other sections of the community as there are no other reasonable secondary routes. Increased traffic and increased travel distances would further result in increased carbon emissions. This impact would be compounded further if the GO Station, which generates significant traffic, locates at the end of Greenhouse Road without a secondary route.

There are other policies in the Breslau Settlement Plan that require strategic road connections to integrate the transportation system to align with the Guiding Principles and offer similar benefits being, the “Dolman Street Extension” and “Ottawa Street Extension”. In addition, a planned pedestrian bridge crossing was provided over Hopewell Creek to link the two communities and access the proposed school in the Hopewell Crossing development. All of these projects have some Development Charge funding and contribute to the complete transportation system.

An issue was raised by two developers during the Environmental Assessment process concerning the cost and need of the connector road and in particular the overpass structure crossing the railway. One developer suggested that the road should terminate at the railway but still provide a multi-use pathway connection between the two neighbourhoods. Staff notes that the cost of such a connection would still require an overpass structure at a considerable expense and it would not provide the strategic link for motorist and transit as noted earlier. In addition, the projected cost of this entire road

is only an estimate and there may be potential cost savings in land purchase if certain portions of the road are acquired through the development approval process (i.e., plan of subdivision).

The initiation and implementation of this EA will allow the Township to amend the Development Charges to collect the necessary funds from new development, being the major benefitting element, since the proposed road will be needed within the 10-year capital forecast (i.e., by 2031). The sooner this EA is approved and implemented, the sooner funds can be collected and spread across new developments. Staff is proposing that the cost of the road be included in the general Township rate and not applied area specific for development only within the Breslau. This approach is consistent with other major Development Charge funded projects elsewhere in the Township. This is a cost-effective and financially prudent way to plan and develop public infrastructure.

Interdepartmental Impacts:

The information provided in this report is provided to support the recommendation in report IS32-2021 prepared by the Infrastructure Services Department. The endorsement of the Environmental Assessment by Council will allow the Finance Department to incorporate into the Development Charges Update to allow the Township to start collecting Development Charges to fund the future construction of the new connector road.

Financial Impacts:

Approval of the Environmental Assessment by Council is required to allow the Township to incorporate into the next Development Charges Update and start collection funds for the future construction.

Strategic Plan Impacts:

The Breslau East Connector Road aligns with two of the Strategic Plan focus areas: Planning for Growth and Transportation Planning. The new road is required to accommodate the existing and planned growth in the Breslau Settlement area. The planning process for the new connector road is supported by the following strategic directions:

- *Be 'ahead of the curve' in planning for future growth and ensure infrastructure capacity is available before development proceeds*
- *Make transportation planning a priority when evaluating growth and development plans*

Conclusion:

The Breslau East Connector Road has been planned for since 2016 through Council approval of the Breslau Settlement Plan. A significant amount of work has been completed and cost incurred through the Secondary Plan Process and the Road Environmental Assessment with thorough review, analysis and evaluation of alternatives. The new road will be an essential piece of infrastructure to service the Breslau area and plan for the future GO station and continued development of the Breslau area. It is staff's opinion that without the Breslau East Connector Road the area will not be efficiently planned and service the transportation, cycling and transit needs of the area, especially as Breslau expands out towards its ultimate settlement limits. The new road will be an important artery to connect the old and new areas of Breslau and allow well designed east-west access through the settlement and allow transportation connection for the ultimate urban area.

Attachments:

1. Breslau Urban Structure Plan
2. Breslau Transportation Network
3. Breslau Neighbourhoods
4. Breslau's Ultimate Urban Area
5. Report IS32-2021