

Report to: DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Report Date: June 19, 2007

SUBJECT: Renaming of Highway 7 within the Town of Markham
PREPARED BY: Robert Tadmire Extension 6810

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report entitled "Renaming of Highway 7 within the Town of Markham", dated June 19, 2007, be received;

And that the Town of Markham request the Region of York to consider options for renaming the section of Highway 7 within the Town of Markham under the Region's jurisdiction from "Highway 7" to a name more representative of an urban arterial road than a Provincial Highway;

And that the Region consult with other York Region municipalities (Vaughan and Richmond Hill) and adjacent Regions and municipalities that also have Highway 7 frontage, and with the public and area businesses;

And that one of the options considered be the possible renaming of Highway 7 to Avenue 7;

And that the Town request the Region of York to initiate a request to the Ministry of Transportation for the transfer of the Provincially owned section of Highway 7 in the Town of Markham to the Region of York;

And further that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On April 24, 2007, Council passed a resolution requesting that staff do whatever is necessary to start the process of changing the name of Highway 7 within the Town of Markham to something more representative of an urban arterial road than a Provincial Highway. This report provides information relating to this request. It outlines Regional and Provincial responses regarding a proposed name change for Highway 7.

If Council wishes to continue to pursue the renaming of Highway 7 the report recommendations provide a starting point for a name change request.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Development Services Committee members with information regarding the jurisdictional issues and processes involved with

renaming Highway 7 in the Town of Markham.

BACKGROUND:Highway 7

On April 24, 2007, Council passed a resolution requesting that staff do whatever is necessary to start the process of changing the name of Highway 7 within the Town of Markham to something more representative of the community context, and in keeping with Town and Region guidelines, practices and policies, as well as reflecting public input. Council also requested that staff report back to the Development Services Committee explaining the jurisdictional processes and issues involved.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Highway 7 through Markham is currently under the jurisdiction of the Region of York from Yonge Street in the west to Donald Cousens Parkway in the east. The remainder of Highway 7 from Donald Cousens Parkway to the York-Durham Line remains under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation. Any renaming will require a coordinated effort with the Region and the Province to initiate a single staged renaming of the entire length of Highway 7 in the Town of Markham.

Staff at the Region's Transportation and Works Department has indicated that, although there is no formal process for renaming of a regional road, Markham Council is required to adopt a formal request to the Region of York to rename the section of Highway 7 under Regional jurisdiction. This request would be considered by Regional Council, who would then request their staff to provide a recommendation to approve, or deny the Town's request and explaining the issues involved with a renaming.

Regional Staff have expressed concern

Regional Staff further advised that Highway 7 is a recognized road name across the GTA and is the second busiest thoroughfare next to Yonge Street. They expressed concern about the impact of a name change on residents and businesses fronting Highway 7, and the likelihood of opposition. It was noted that a Highway 7 address has a cachet for businesses and any change would likely result in complaints to the Town and Region. A substantial public consultation process would likely be required to address concerns.

The effect of a name change on adjacent municipalities within and beyond York Region (Figures 1 and 2), would become a consideration with respect to street name continuity and addressing issues. Regional Staff indicated that the City of Vaughan is looking into renaming a portion of Highway 7 to Avenue 7, but only within the core area.

MTO not receptive to name change

After contacting several staff from the Ministry of Transportation regarding a Highway 7 renaming, a response was received from a staff member from the Traffic Operations Engineering Section of the Traffic Office in the Highway Standards Branch. We were informed that the Ministry of Transportation uses a numbering system to identify the

highway network and that this system has proven to be the best means of communicating route guidance information to road users in North America and Europe. With the exception of the QEW, Ontario uses numbers to identify provincial highways for safety and cost effectiveness reasons. Consequently, the Ministry of Transportation has not altered the name of any provincial highway, regardless of its functional change in an urbanized context.

The Ministry of Transportation representative also added that technical research, such as human factors testing, supports the use of numbers as the best way to provide route guidance to road users. The Ministry of Transportation is concerned that a change in the method used in identifying a provincial highway could result in inconsistencies in the overall signing system as well as increasing costs to the province, local residents and business owners.

In circumstances where provincial highways are transferred to local authorities, the local road authority assumes control over all aspects of the transferred road including the name or number of the roadway.

Conclusion

It is unlikely that the Region of York will be able to get the Ministry of Transportation to change the name of the section of Highway 7 within Markham that remains under the Ministry's jurisdiction. If Council wishes to proceed with a renaming request on the balance of Highway 7 a formal request must be submitted to the Region of York. The recommendation incorporated into this report accommodates this option.

FINANCIAL TEMPLATE: (external link)

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable

ENGAGE 21ST CONSIDERATIONS:

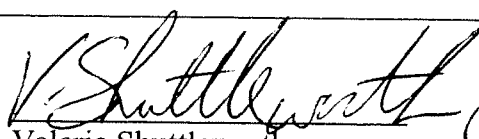
Not applicable

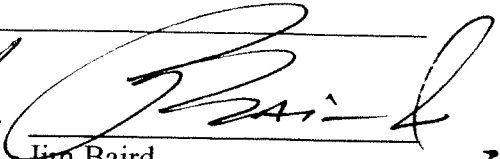
BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Fire Department, Region of York and Ministry of Transportation were consulted to confirm road ownership, street name approvals and obtain street name change procedural information.

RECOMMENDED

BY:


Valerie Shuttleworth,
M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Director of Planning and
Urban Design


Jim Baird,
M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Commissioner of
Development Services

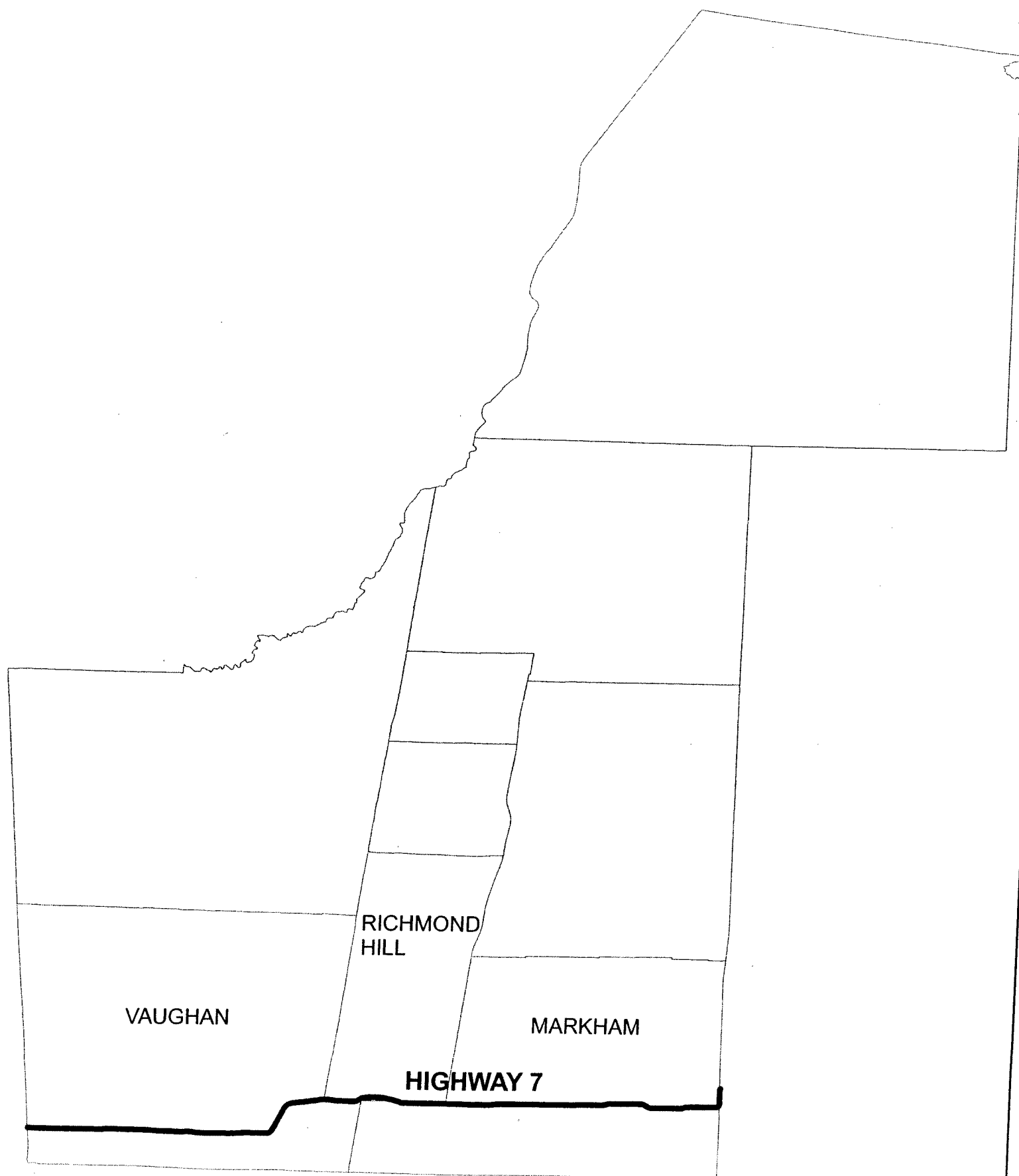
ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 1 – Highway 7 within York Region

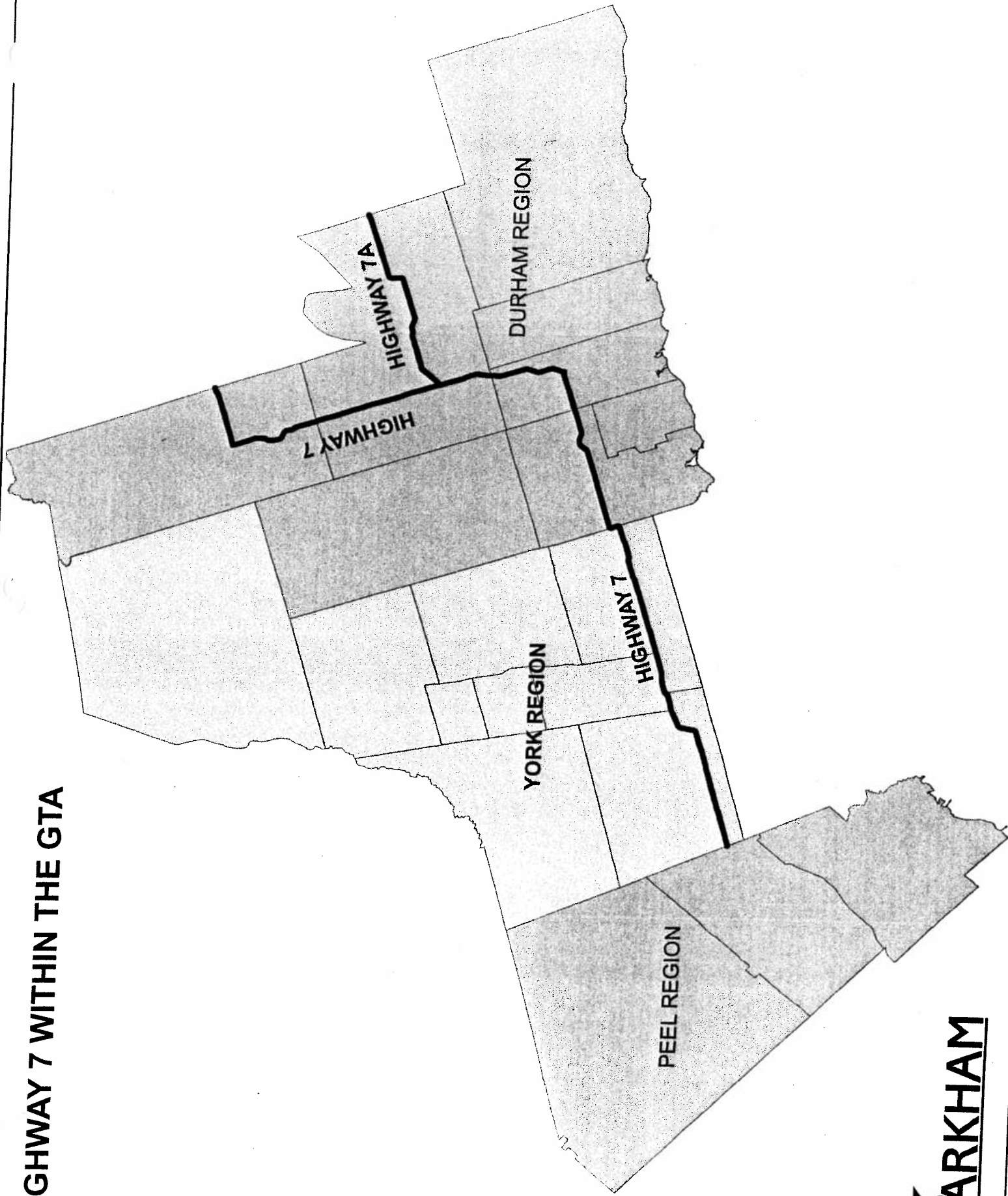
Figure 2 – Highway 7 within the GTA

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HIGHWAY 7 WITHIN YORK REGION



HIGHWAY 7 WITHIN THE GTA





RESOLUTION OF COUNCIL MEETING NO. 12 DATED JUNE 26, 2007

REPORT NO. 41 – DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

**(5) RENAMING OF HIGHWAY 7 WITHIN
THE TOWN OF MARKHAM (10.14)**

That the report entitled “Renaming of Highway 7 within the Town of Markham”, dated June 19, 2007, be received;

And that consideration of the following clauses be deferred until September, 2007 to consider alternative naming options:

“And that the Town of Markham request the Region of York to consider options for renaming the section of Highway 7 within the Town of Markham under the Region’s jurisdiction from “Highway 7” to a name more representative of an urban arterial road than a Provincial Highway;

And that the Region consult with other York Region municipalities (Vaughan and Richmond Hill) and adjacent Regions and municipalities that also have Highway 7 frontage, and with the public and area businesses;

And that one of the options considered be the possible renaming of Highway 7 to Avenue 7;”

And that the Town request the Region of York to initiate a request to the Ministry of Transportation for the transfer of the Provincially owned section of Highway 7 in the Town of Markham to the Region of York.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Sheila Birrell'.

Sheila Birrell
Town Clerk

Copy to: Jim Baird, Commissioner of Development Services
Valerie Shuttleworth, Director of Planning and Urban Design
Robert Tadmire, Planning Dept.
Denis Kelly, Region of York