



## **STAFF REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**STAFF REPORT NO:** DSR-124-19

**DATE:** November 27, 2019

**To:** Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Members of Council

**From:** Tim Cane, Director of Growth

**Subject:** Innisfil Mobility Orbit - Vision

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

For years, Innisfil has been anticipating an opportunity for a Metrolinx GO Station to underpin the Town's development as a complete community. This report discusses the next steps to help advance the vision for the Innisfil Mobility Orbit - Rural Re-Imagined.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That Council endorses the Mobility Orbit Vision, as presented by Partisans and outlined in Staff Report DSR-124-19 dated November 27, 2019, as the basis for reimagining rural growth in an environmentally, culturally, economically, and socially sustainable and modern way that leverages the new Metrolinx Go Station as the catalyst for this new Innisfil community on the 6th Line, east of 20 Sideroad;**
- 2. That Council authorizes advancing \$620,000 from Capital Project RDS-358 (Go Station Integration and Mobility Hub/Smart City Implementation) to resource the next phase of the Mobility Orbit Vision, including the Town's efforts to advance the Go Station design and construction as quickly as possible;**
- 3. That Staff engage with residents, businesses and other community stakeholders during the policy development process that will create the regulatory framework for the fulfilment of the Innisfil Mobility Orbit Vision, which will protect and preserve the agricultural and environmental fabric of Innisfil and Lake Simcoe; and,**
- 4. That Staff work collaboratively with Metrolinx and the Cortel Group Inc. to finalize a GO Station design consistent with the Innisfil Mobility Orbit Vision before the end of the first quarter 2020.**



## TOWN OF INNISFIL STAFF REPORT

**STAFF REPORT NO:** DSR-124-19  
**DATE:** November 27, 2019  
**TO:** Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Members of Council  
**FROM:** Tim Cane, Director of Growth  
**SUBJECT:** Proposed Innisfil Mobility Orbit Vision  
**Cross Reference** DSR-045-19; DSR-172-18; DSR-141-16; DSR-132-16

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### RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council endorses the Mobility Orbit Vision, as presented by Partisans and outlined in Staff Report DSR-124-19 dated November 27, 2019, as the basis for reimagining rural growth in an environmentally, culturally, economically, and socially sustainable and modern way that leverages the new Metrolinx Go Station as the catalyst for this new Innisfil community on the 6<sup>th</sup> Line, east of 20 Sideroad;
2. That Council authorizes advancing \$620,000 from Capital Project RDS-358 (Go Station Integration and Mobility Hub/Smart City Implementation) to resource the next phase of the Mobility Orbit Vision, including the Town's efforts to advance the Go Station design and construction as quickly as possible;
3. That Staff engage with residents, businesses and other community stakeholders during the policy development process that will create the regulatory framework for the fulfilment of the Innisfil Mobility Orbit Vision, which will protect and preserve the agricultural and environmental fabric of Innisfil and Lake Simcoe; and,
4. That Staff work collaboratively with Metrolinx and the Cortel Group Inc. to finalize a GO Station design consistent with the Innisfil Mobility Orbit Vision before the end of the first quarter of 2020.

### BACKGROUND:

For years, Innisfil has struggled with the challenge of growing responsibly, including the provision of 'big city' amenities, local jobs, and leading edge services and programs, while at the same time maintaining and protecting the agricultural and environmental health that makes Innisfil a distinct and sought after community to live, work and play. This report and the presentation that Council will receive on November 27 outlines an innovative vision that may just allow our residents to have the best of both worlds: urban benefits within a rural community. Put another way, if the community does not reimagine its approach to growth, it is

likely that it will develop like other rural communities have in the Greater Toronto Area, such as Markham or Mississauga, that have little to no agricultural area left.

The hotly anticipated Metrolinx GO Station in Innisfil should underpin the Town's development as a complete community that responsibly embraces new residents and jobs amidst the continued growth of the Greater Toronto Area. In 2017, the Innisfil GO Station, located at the 6<sup>th</sup> Line, was added to the Metrolinx Regional Express Rail (RER) Program with an anticipated opening date ranging between 2022 and 2025.

On November 29, 2018, as outlined in DSR-172-18 (received by Council on December 12, 2018), Metrolinx announced a fundamental shift to realize new stations using a Developer Oriented Transit (DOT) model that relies on developer partnerships to pay for new rail stations. Through approval of DSR-172-18, Council also directed Staff to "prepare a Request for Proposal for a **Master Plan around the GO Train Station that will articulate a vision for a world-class mobility hub integrated into a Smart Neighbourhood.**" Through the RFP Process, with funding from approved Capital Project RDS358 (GO Station Integration and Mobility Hub/Smart City Implementation), Partisans was engaged to undertake a comprehensive visioning exercise using world class examples and 'next practice' thinking to establish a common vision for the Innisfil Mobility Orbit (IMO).

The IMO Vision aligns various stakeholder interests and creates a singular vision that drives all parties towards a new form of growth: *Rural Reimagined*.

The IMO represents a one-time opportunity to completely shape a blank greenfield canvas around a future rail station. We envision the Metrolinx station becoming the centre of an orbit that initiates a new form of urban development. Blending the best proven examples of community building with new forward-thinking technologies to reimagine public and private spaces that will promote inclusion, establish climate friendly design and improve quality of life.

Starting with the new GO station, IMO will spread and influence an approximate radius of 800 metres containing mixed use development achieving densities in excess of 150 people and/or jobs per hectare (minimum of about 30,000 people and/or jobs), as identified and previously approved in the Town's Our Place Official Plan. The momentum of development, through multiple phases of a long-range Orbit Potential and Innovation Plan (OPIP) focused on the singular vision, will create a landmark community that embraces community building – physically, socially and digitally.

After being awarded the RFP in May of this year, Partisans architectural firm has been working with the Town and key stakeholders to articulate this vision for the IMO. Building on this work, from September to December of this year, a group of Ryerson University students has been assisting Staff with initiating the OPIP with policies to help implement the IMO vision over the next 80 years.

The Alcona North and South Secondary Plans remain 'parked' as the County undertakes the Municipal Comprehensive Review to allocate 2041 population and employment numbers for Innisfil and other lower tier municipalities. Growth associated with these areas, together with directing growth to mixed use main streets, is not considered to be in addition to growth directly associated with a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA), as contemplated by provincial policy. In other words, the MTSA associated with the Mobility Orbit is not meant to take growth away from other urban lands in the Town or other municipalities.

## **ANALYSIS/CONSIDERATION:**

### A Vision in Words:

Although further details will be provided at the Council meeting on November 27, 2019, including the visuals related to the vision, the summary of the narrative for the Innisfil Mobility Orbit Vision for a next generation community located 60km north of Canada's largest city, Toronto is set out below. It's entitled ***Rural Reimagined***.

*The Orbit is a cutting-edge community where small town and rural lifestyles co-exist with the benefits and attributes of urban living. The public realm is at the forefront with housing density & affordability, mobility, transit, arts, culture, technology, connectivity, business, digital innovation, economy, healthcare, social cohesion & infrastructure, sustainability, agriculture, open spaces, access to trails & waterfront and walkability which are all part of this rural reimagination.*

*The vision recognizes Innisfil for its unique context and character; proposes a new urban fabric that will push the limits of possibility; igniting interested and inspiring citizens today and tomorrow to be part of this new place. At the heart of it we imagine a cohesive center for Innisfil, currently a municipality of clustered hamlets, that will gravitate and grow around a new regional transit link and cultural center slated to be built in the next four years. The city, inspired by the idea of an orbit and ripple, is a dynamic embrace of its agricultural roots with 21st century city building and architectural thinking.*

*The Orbit means great architecture. It's where architecture and design push the envelope towards an artful yet sustainable city of the future. As an extension of the tradition of the garden city, the Orbit vision is the outcome of a forward-thinking collaboration between next generation architects, city leaders, community builders, and developers.*

*The Orbit is a clean slate to reimagine how a community of tomorrow is built today. Mobility, transit links, new technology streets and infrastructure, streetscapes, social interaction, health and wellness, a digital and connected community with a vibrant and robust modern economy based on critical thinking, technology, new tech agriculture, advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, with a vibrant "start up" energy and culture all shape The Orbit towards the future of placemaking and city building.*

*The characteristic orbit plan and density ripple is based on an innovative series of concentric "squircles" (literally where squares and circles merge) emanating from the new transit hub and melding with the existing grid of the region. Imagine that our squircle is a modern version of an old European city layout.*

*The Orbit will grow over generations to a potential of 150,000 people and jobs. The Orbit creates a dynamic center of activity for visitors and residents alike, appealing to a variety of lifestyle activities that are possible and available in the area. Famed Canadian cottage country destinations Lake Simcoe and the Muskokas as well as Collingwood, are a stone's throw away, as is the Greater Toronto Area.*

*Offering a rural-urban, all-season experience and easy access to the City. The planned project has the capacity to absorb over 40 million square feet (4 million square meters) of newly built modern community.*

*It will truly be a place to grow.*

### Community Stakeholder Engagement

In preparing the draft vision for the Innisfil Mobility Orbit, Staff have undertaken the following engagement activities thus far:

- Stakeholder Working Group  
Staff have met more than five times with this Working Group comprised of key stakeholders involved with the Mobility Orbit such as Metrolinx, the County of Simcoe and key landowners, developers and consultants. The purpose of this group was to share information and ideas, as well as receive input on the development of the IMO.
- Resident Focus Group  
Staff met twice with this group of residents in the fall of 2019. Members were selected from a group of residents that had expressed interest in previous community projects. Feedback from the group was received with respect to the Orbit context, growth models and global examples of MTSA projects. Feedback from the group was generally positive with an understanding that responsible growth for Innisfil had to be at a greater density to preserve rural landscapes, the health of the lake and our environment, and existing neighbourhoods. In addition, the financial and social benefits of higher density development with quality open spaces was discussed and incorporated into the IMO Vision.
- BILD – Simcoe Chapter (October 25)  
Staff provided an update on the Mobility Orbit to the Simcoe Chapter of BILD and will continue to remain engaged with this group in receiving feedback for the refinement and implementation of the Orbit Vision. Members of the Development Liaison Group were invited to attend Council on November 27, 2019 to hear the presentation.

Dialogue will continue with stakeholders and broad public consultation will run concurrently as staff work to refine the Vision through the Go Station design and OPIP process, should the Vision be adopted by Council. As part of this, community consultation activities will consist of the following:

- Establishment of a project webpage for establishing a common information base and a Get Involved Innisfil link to solicit on-line stakeholder feedback;
- Open houses and public meetings as part of the planning development process to refine and implement the Orbit Vision;
- Focus groups and direct stakeholder engagement on specific matters;
- Reports to Council at key project junctures, including the proposed design of the Go Station;
- Additional stakeholder input opportunities as identified in the future OPIP project plan.

### Integration with *Innovative Innisfil 2030 Community Strategic Plan*

The recently adopted *Innovative Innisfil 2030 Community Strategic Plan* (I12030) has a simple vision statement:

**Community First. Future Next. Balance Always.**

Supporting this vision are three pillars: Grow, Connect, and Sustain. The Innisfil Mobility Orbit has the unique ability to contribute and advance the objectives of each pillar. Specifically:

## **Grow**

### *1.1 Plan for and Manage Growth*

The proposed minimum density of the IMO as established in Our Place will urbanize more densely than previously seen in the Town. The benefit of this new form of growth is that rural, agricultural and green spaces will be better protected. Main streets, and the balance of the Alcona North and South Secondary Plans can grow as contemplated to provide for a mix of densities and housing types. The Town's future intensification study can rely on the higher densities within the MTSA to better maintain the character of existing neighbourhoods.

### *1.2 Promote Economic Development*

The implementation of the Orbit will include the development of policies, strategies and approaches to develop a new modern economy that will create well-paying local jobs for our citizens. By creating jobs for both new and existing residents, the proportion of Innisfil residents having to commute outside of the community for work will decrease. This will result in a more diversified commercial tax base and allow for the Town to more efficiently fund the delivery of services and programs for residents. It will also increase the convenience and breadth of local retail options.

### *1.3 Improve Service Offerings*

The Orbit will provide opportunities to add new programs, enhancing what we already have and increasing operational efficiency to deliver greater levels of service across the Town.

## **Connect**

### *2.1 Develop Unified Town Identity*

As the Orbit becomes a destination and meeting place for all Innisfil residents, this will provide the opportunity for us to get to know our neighbours, support one another, and live in a united community.

### *2.2 Enhance Movement of People*

The Orbit will be centred on Innisfil's GO Station, which will be integrated into both the Innisfil Transit Service as well as the transit systems provided by the County of Simcoe and City of Barrie. These public transportation options will eliminate distance barriers, while providing Innisfil residents with the ability to travel safely, affordably and efficiently to where they need to be.

### *2.3 Enable Community Health and Wellness*

Promoting community health and wellness within the Orbit will be critical to achieving a high quality of life for all Innisfil residents. This is particularly the case for the new Innisfil residents that will be living within the Orbit, where it will be important to provide access to high quality parks and open spaces as well as other health services and amenities. This will enable

community members to be their best selves and align with the recently adopted *Our Health: Innisfil's Health & Wellness Strategy*.

### *2.4 Enhance Civic Engagement*

With Innisfil residents living in higher density within the Orbit, the Town will work collectively to make informed decisions, set civic priorities, and bring about positive social change.

### *2.5 Facilitate Community Experiences*

The Orbit is envisioned as becoming a destination and meeting place for all Innisfil residents, while also attracting visitors from outside of the community. This will be achieved by actively developing a variety of inclusive programs and events that provide cultural, educational, recreational, and entertainment opportunities for all our residents, while also supporting those same opportunities led by community members and partners.

## **Sustain**

### *3.1 Maintain and Protect Existing Infrastructure*

While the development of the Orbit will be focused on new approaches to efficiently deliver new services and infrastructure, intensifying growth at a higher density within the Orbit will also help the Town realize opportunities to extend the service life of existing infrastructure. This will be achieved through the application of strategic investments and implementation of effective operational support procedures.

### *3.2 Promote Environmental Sustainability*

Developing at a higher density within the Orbit will significantly limit the amount of new land that is used for residential development in Innisfil. This will be critical to promoting environmental sustainability in Innisfil by protecting and enhancing the Town's natural resources and reducing the environmental impact of climate change. It is also necessary in order to protect the small-town charm and rural amenities that Innisfil residents love dearly and want to protect.

### *3.3 Ensure Financial Stability*

As already noted, when growth is concentrated at a higher density within the Orbit, this will limit the amount of new land that is used for new residential development. At the same time, this will also limit the amount of roads, sidewalks, trails and parks to be created and maintained by the Town. This is therefore supporting the financial sustainability of the Town, while the realization of the Orbit vision will help provide new opportunities to increase revenues and maximize value for Innisfil residents.

## Future Steps

The development of the IMO and GO Station rely on a series of complex processes including but not limited to the following:

*Phase 1 – Development of the Orbit Potential and Innovation Plan (OPIP)(2020)*

The Town is working with Ryerson University to investigate best/next practice policy development related to major transit station areas globally. This support and expertise will continue into the new year and complement a more specific policy development exercise through OPIP and the necessary experts to ensure the Orbit is delivered as envisioned.

Staff anticipate having the expert team assembled in Q2 2020 with a delivery date for OPIP by the end of 2021 or sooner if possible. The consultant team will need expertise in a wide range of topics from traffic, rail/transit, parks, placemaking, economics, internet of things, employment, architecture, servicing, costings, environment, safety, technology and social inclusion/enterprise – to name a few. The background research undertaken by Ryerson will input into the RFP process to identify the ideal policy project team.

#### *Phase 2 – Design and Construction of the Station (2022)*

The new Go Station is considered a Public Service Facility and therefore only requires site plan approval once an agreed upon station design is in place between the Town, Metrolinx and the developer (i.e. Cortel Group). Station design is set to begin early in 2020 with a station opening date in 2022. However, complexities of the project may shift those dates.

With respect to the station design process, Cortel is currently working with Partisans and other consultants to cost station options consistent with the IMO Vision. Staff expect to report back to Council in February with a preferred station design that will form the basis of a subsequent agreement between Metrolinx and Cortel.

#### *Phase 3 – Supporting Residential and Mixed-Use Development (2021)*

Phases 4 and 5 of the Sleeping Lion development (between Webster Blvd and the rail line) would be developed concurrently with occupancy coinciding with the opening of the expanded wastewater treatment plant in 2023. Cortel has agreed to re-examine Phases 4 and 5 of the Sleeping Lion approved draft plan to align with the Orbit vision.

Phase 5 (approx. 10 acres in size) immediately east of the rail line and north of 6<sup>th</sup> Line represents an initial opportunity to start implementing the IMO Vision with a new style of built form and community building. The Town anticipates that this design will be done in conjunction with the station design process.

#### *Phase 4 – Additional Growth to Fund Station (2022 to 2032)*

The significant costs to the developer to construct the Go Station and Mobility Hub will require additional residential units and employment uses that currently would not fit in the settlement boundary of Alcona. To provide certainty for the infrastructure investment, a series of planning approval processes potentially including:

- Delineation of a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) under section 2.2.4. of the Growth Plan 2019. Consistent with the Growth Plan 2019 and the IMO Vision, the MTSA will:
  - Provide for diverse mix of uses and housing types for both existing and planned transit levels;
  - Facilitating joint development projects;
  - Establishing alternative development standards (i.e. parking, built form, etc.); and,
  - Precluding development that does not achieve transit supportive densities.
- Participation in the County Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process as a true

lower tier partner respectful of Schedule 7 population and employment numbers across the entire County.

- Working with the County and Province to ensure that the necessary planning policies and approvals are in place at critical junctures to ensure the project has the certainty it needs for ongoing infrastructure investment.

#### *Phase 5 – Build-Out of the IMO Vision*

Dynamic policies anticipate continued development within the Orbit at higher densities over the next 50 years; however, this will be confirmed through the completion of the OPIP. It is anticipated that the Orbit will be the primary centre of growth beyond 2031. This concentration of growth will be concurrent with the balance of the Alcona North and South Secondary Plans as contemplated by the County MCR process together with traditional intensification along main streets through the various settlements.

#### **OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES:**

Alternative recommendations to those presented above include:

- Provide staff with alternative direction and report back to Council with a revised Orbit Vision;
- Wait to adopt the IMO Vision until the station design process has been completed;
- Approve the Vision but request further business case details regarding the proposed expenditure before approving said funds; or,
- Defer adopting the Orbit Vision until December 11, 2019 or later to allow for public feedback on the vision, while understanding that public engagement is designed to occur through the policy (OPIP) process.

Choosing any of the above options will result in project delays at a time when momentum for the Orbit Vision is critical for provincial endorsement and agreements with Metrolinx.

#### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION:**

In order to bring the IMO Vision to life, including the Go Station conceptual and schematic designs, significant resources need to be deployed.

In the 2019/2020 Budget, Council approved that \$185,000 be advanced from Capital Project RDS358 (GO Station Integration and Mobility Hub/Smart City Implementation). This funding was used to support the Orbit Visioning process to date including the work of Partisans. An additional \$25,000 has been directed to the project in accordance with staff's delegated authority through the Town's Purchasing By-law No. 032-17. These funds form part of the DC Background Study and are 50% funded from development charges.

With respect to financial resourced required to move the project forward, the following estimates are provided:

- \$200,000 (annualized cost) for a project manager contract to drive the IMO Vision to reality. Roles will include but not be limited to project coordination across stakeholders and experts, policy development, construction feasibility, project economics, and government and community liaison. Please note that discussions with Cortel have

identified the potential for the sharing of the cost of a dedicated Town representative to proactively move the project forward.

- \$260,000 for the policy process: Orbit Potential and Innovation Plan (OPIP). This estimated budget is based on a multi-disciplinary project team similar to the Our Place official plan process.
- \$110,000 for the Go Station design process. This fee does not represent the total amount but that portion likely needed for the inclusion of community space as a part of a higher design standard to ignite the IMO Vision.
- \$50,000 for internal staff costs to manage the project across the economic development, planning, engineering and operations teams.

The above amounts totalling \$620,000 would form part of the costs associated with bringing the new GO Station, therefore forming part of the DC Background Study with 90% funded by development charges.

Capital Project RDS358 would have approximately \$4.6M in the proposed capital budget for 2021. This remaining funding will be used for further implementation costs associated with the implementation and actual development of the GO station and IMO vision.

Although that capital project was listed in the 10-year capital program, it has not officially been approved by Council yet. However, the timing of the Orbit and corporate priority for the project requires these funds to be advanced ahead of the next budget cycle. There will be potential implications on other projects as a result, especially if building permit numbers remain low and DCs do not materialize as projected. But Council will be kept informed as the funding needs develop, as well as Council will need to approve the funds beyond the specific ask in this staff report for this Capital Project before the remainder would proceed.

The Mobility Orbit represents a multi-billion-dollar project for the Town that requires dedicated resources to continue to move it forward for the benefit of all residents. At a minimum, the completion of the Innisfil GO Station in Alcona is a true community asset that needs funding in the absence of the traditional Metrolinx station development model. To that end, Staff have had discussions with the largest landowner within the IMO area (Cortel Group) regarding financing options for the Innisfil GO Station as well as other related infrastructure as outlined in Staff Report DSR-192-19 also to be considered on the November 27, 2019 Council agenda.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The Mobility Orbit is truly a multi-generational vision that can realize growth differently – development that respects and maintains rural landscapes, existing neighbourhoods and the health of our green spaces and Lake Simcoe, while responsibly embracing growth within a Major Transit Station Area. Staff are excited to present the culmination of many months of work captured in the Mobility Orbit Vision for Council's consideration. If the Orbit Vision is adopted, the next phase will be the development of the Go Station design and supporting Orbit Potential and Innovation Plan (OPIP). With continued collaboration with key stakeholders, a new GO Station can commence design within weeks.

**PREPARED BY:**

Tim Cane, Director of Growth  
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