PW-E6-1

VAUGHAN

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FOR INQUIRIES: **PLEASE QUOTE ITEM & REPORT NO.**

July 4, 2011

Regional Clerk
Regional Municipality of Peel
10 Peel Centre Drive
Brampton ON L6T 4B9

RE: GTA WEST CORRIDOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY
DRAFT TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REPORT
WARD 1
(Deferred Item)

Attached for your information is **Item 39, Report No. 32,** of the Committee of the Whole regarding the above-noted matter which was adopted, *as amended,* by the Council of the City of Vaughan at its meeting of June 28, 2011.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey A. Abrams
City Clerk

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES	
COPY TO:	
Chair	
CAO	
Corporate Services	
Public Works	
Employee and Business Services	Sept 8 RC 2011
Health Services	File
Human Services	
Peel Living	

Attachment:

Extract

1. Preliminary Study Area
2. GTA West Development Transportation Strategy Summary
3. GTA West – New Transportation Corridor Alternative 2 (carried forward)
4. GTA West – New Transportation Corridor Alternative 3 (carried forward)
5. GTA West Corridor - Preliminary Route Planning Study Area
6. Vaughan Areas Affected by the Preliminary Route Planning Study Area
7. Principles for Defining the GTA West Preliminary Route Planning Study Area

JAA/pa

(A copy of Attachments 1-7 to the City of Vaughan is available from the Office of the Regional Clerk)

REFERRAL TO
RECOMMENDED
DIRECTION REQUIRED
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED ✓

City of Vaughan, Office of the City Clerk, 2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, Vaughan, Ontario L6A 1T1
Tel: 905.832-8504 website www.vaughan.ca email Jeffrey.Abrams@vaughan.ca

CITY OF VAUGHAN PW-E6-2

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 28, 2011

Item 39, Report No. 32, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted and amended, by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 28, 2011, as follows:

By approving Clauses 1, 3 and 4 of the Committee of the Whole recommendation; and

By approving:

> *That this Council request MTO to provide the City with information supporting the routing of the proposed GTA West Corridor through this Municipality specifically and York Region generally, to ensure that it will follow a route with the least socio/economic and environmental impact and be reflective of the Provincial Framework/Guidelines.*

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39 **MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION (ONTARIO)**
GTA WEST CORRIDOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY
DRAFT TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REPORT
WARD 1
(Deferred Item)

The Committee of the Whole recommends:

1) **That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, dated May 31, 2011, be approved;**

2) **That the recommendation contained in the following Communication C5, Member's Resolution submitted by Regional Councillor Schulte, be approved:**

WHEREAS, **the Province of Ontario has required municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe including York Region to plan for growth in accordance with the Provincial Growth Plan, and**

WHEREAS, **the Province has identified the GTA West Corridor in the Growth Plan as part of the required infrastructure to support growth, and**

WHEREAS, **the Ontario Ministry of Transportation is undertaking the multi-staged GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment study, and**

WHEREAS, **MTO has released a draft Transportation Development Strategy Report for public comment as part of Stage 1 of the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment study, and**

WHEREAS, **Council supports the expeditious completion of the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment study, and**

WHEREAS, **the proposed GTA West Corridor through the City of Vaughan will bisect the Greenbelt and the Natural Heritage System in Vaughan, encompassing the Purpleville Creek headwaters (endangered red side dace habitat) East Humber River environmentally significant area (ESA #127)/Humber River Cold Creek environmental policy areas; and**

WHEREAS, **the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment study recognizes that the natural features of this area are important and must be protected, and**

WHEREAS, **the Greenbelt Plan policy 4.2.1.2(d) stipulates that "New or expanding infrastructure shall avoid key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features unless need has been demonstrated and it has been established that there is no reasonable alternative", and**

.../2

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED **that Council request MTO to confirm in Stage 2 of the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment study that the proposed GTA West Corridor through the City of Vaughan has less socio/environmental negative impacts than an alternative corridor that crosses the Oak Ridges Moraine;**

3) That the following deputations and communications be received:

1. **Mr. David Brand, 232 Camlaren Crescent, PO Box 190, Kleinburg, L0J 1C0 and Communication C24, dated June 14, 2011;**
2. **Mr. Ken Nieuwhof, Kleinburg Area Ratepayers' Association, P.O. Box 202, Kleinburg, L0J 1C0 and Communication C23, dated June 24, 2011; and**
3. **Mr. Stephen Roberts, Sustainable Vaughan, 143 Vaughan Mills Way, Woodbridge, L4H 1K2; and**

4) That the following Communications be received:

C11 Mr. Antony Niro, Time for Change Vaughan, dated June 13, 2011; and
C16 Regional Councillor Schulte, dated June 14, 2011.

Council, at its meeting of June 7, 2011, adopted the following (Item 11, Report No. 30):

That consideration of this matter be deferred to the Committee of the Whole meeting of June 14, 2011, to permit further consultation.

Committee of the Whole recommendation of May 31, 2011:

1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, dated May 31, 2011, be approved; and

2) That the presentation by Mr. Jin Wang, Team Leader, Urban Planning Office, Ministry of Transportation, 777 Bay Street, 30th Floor, Suite 3000, Toronto, M7A 2J8 and Mr. Neil Ahmed, McCormick Rankin Corporation, 2655 North Sheridan Way, Mississauga, L5K 2P8 and Communication C2, presentation material, be received.

Report of the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, dated May 31, 2011

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, in consultation with the Director of Policy Planning and the Director of Legal Services, recommends:

1. THAT the presentation from the Ministry of Transportation with respect to the GTA West Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study and draft Transportation Development Strategy be received;

2. That Vaughan Council advise the Ministry of Transportation (Ontario) that the City of Vaughan will continue with the planning of lands affected by the GTA West Corridor Route Planning Area while ensuring appropriate secondary and official plan policies for those lands recognize and protect for the GTA West Corridor as it is being defined through the on-going Provincial environmental assessment process;

3. That the Minister of Transportation be requested to finalize the GTA West Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Stage 1 Study in an expeditious manner and then proceed immediately to initiate Stage 2 of the Environmental Assessment Study for the new corridor;

4. That the Ministry of Transportation be requested to work with the City of Vaughan and the Region of York during Stage 2 of the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment Study process to expedite the determination of the routing for the GTA West Corridor such that those areas within the GTA West Corridor Study Area which are not required for the new highway can be released for development in accordance with the City's Official Plan as soon as possible;

5. That the Ministry of Transportation be requested to integrate the provisions of at least one full interchange with Highway 400 to service the 400 North Employment Area Secondary Plan (OPA 637) area together with a Regional arterial connection in conjunction with Stage 2 of the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment Study; and

6. That a copy of this report be forwarded to the Province, the Ministry of Transportation, the City of Brampton, Town of Caledon, Township of King, Region of Peel and Region of York.

Contribution to Sustainability

The proposed GTA West Corridor is expected to contribute to economic and social sustainability by addressing long-term inter-regional transportation deficiencies and opportunities. The proposed solutions would develop an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that enables the efficient movement of people and goods, and provides better transportation linkages between Urban Growth Centres in the GTA West Preliminary Study Area. However, the GTA West Corridor is expected to traverse the most intact and sensitive area of the Greenbelt in Vaughan. To be fully sustainable, the environmental issues must be fully explored and addressed through Stage 2 of the GTA West Corridor EA.

Economic Impact

There are no immediate economic impacts associated with this report.

Communications Plan

A copy of this report will be forwarded to the Province, the Ministry of Transportation, the City of Brampton, Town of Caledon, Township of King, Region of Peel and Region of York.

Purpose

This report is intended to provide an overview of the GTA West Corridor Planning Transportation Environmental Assessment Study update and the conclusions of the draft Transportation Development Strategy (TDS) Report, which was released by MTO in March 2011 for public review and comment. In addition, it provides a series of recommended responses to the draft TDS Report for Council's consideration.

Background - Analysis and Options

In June 2006, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal released the *Growth Plan* for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) area. The *Growth Plan* outlines a set of policies for managing growth and development, guiding planning decisions, and presenting a planning "vision" for the GGH area. The GTA West Corridor is identified in the Growth Plan as part of the required transportation improvements to support the vision. The *Growth Plan* builds on other key government initiatives including the *Greenbelt Plan (*established through the Greenbelt Act *2005)* and the *Provincial Policy Statement (2005).* The *Growth Plan* is accompanied by *the Places to Grow Act* (2005), which requires all planning decisions made by the Province, municipalities and other authorities to conform to the policies contained in the *Growth Plan*. Jointly, the *Greenbelt Plan* and *Growth Plan* provide clarity and certainty about urban structure, where and how future growth should be accommodated, and what must be protected for current and future generations in the GGH area.

Under this policy framework, the GTA West Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study (GTA West EA) is designed to explore all modes of transportation options for facilitating more efficient movement of people and goods. The GTA West EA also considers other transportation plans such as Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Region of York Viva, GO 2020 and Brampton Züm.

In 2007, MTO initiated Stage 1 of the GTA West EA. The Terms of Reference for the Individual EA were approved by the Minister of Environment (MOE) on March 4, 2008.

On May 22, 2007, Council adopted staff's recommendation to endorse the York Region's Planning and Economic Development Committee resolution of May 2, 2007 with respect to the GTA West Corridor Individual Environmental Assessment as follows:

> *"The resolution of the Region of York's Planning and Economic Development Committee, contained in the report entitled "GTA West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment" (Attachment No. 2), as adopted on May 2, 2007 be endorsed;*
>
> *The Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal be advised that the City of Vaughan is willing to work in cooperation with the Province and the Region of York, and any affected municipalities, to advance the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment process concurrently with the preparation of the Region of York's Growth Management Review and the City's Consolidated Growth Management Strategy – 2031."*

The Region of York's Planning and Economic Development Committee resolution of May 2, 2007 reads as follows:

> *"The Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of the Environment be requested to expedite the GTA West Corridor and other environmental assessments that are needed to meet the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.*
>
> *The Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal be advised of the recommendation No. 1*
>
> *The Ministries of Transportation and Public Infrastructure Renewal be requested to work with York Region and other affected municipalities to investigate other processes and mechanisms that will allow the Province to plan and protect the GTA West Corridor within a two-year period."*

Generally, the purpose of the GTA West EA is to address long-term inter-regional transportation infrastructure needs. The Study also considers alternative solutions as part of developing an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that will enable the efficient movement of people and goods, and provide better economic and transportation linkages between Urban Growth Centres, which includes the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, Downtown Brampton, Downtown Milton, and Downtown Guelph. The preliminary study area is shown in Attachment No. 1.

The GTA West EA consists of two stages. Stage 1 includes transportation system planning (e.g. roads, transit, rail, etc.), followed by Stage 2, which will include alternative methods (e.g. route location for new provincial highway/transitway). Stage 2 will also include the preliminary design of the preferred route.

Stage 1 of the GTA West EA process included the following key steps:

1. Develop a Terms of Reference that guides the study (Public Information Centre #1 – April 2007)
2. Identify transportation problems and opportunities (Public Information Centre #2 – March 2009)
3. Identify and assess transportation alternatives that address the problems and opportunities (Public Information Centre #3 – November / December 2009)
4. Select preferred transportation alternative(s) and recommend a multi-modal TDS for the preliminary study area (Public Information Centre #4 – June 2010)

A Municipal Advisory Group (MAG) was also formed to consult and seek technical input from municipalities and agencies at key stages of the study. Staff from the City's Development/Transportation Engineering and Policy Planning Departments together with York Region staff participated in the MAG meetings which were held prior to each public information centre. Each round of public information centres included venues in the City of Vaughan.

On September 21, 2009, Council adopted the following resolution with respect to the location of the GTA West Corridor:

> *"Whereas there is a significant environmental constraint within the shown East West Economic Corridor;*
>
> *Whereas there is significant existing residential and planned residential development within the shown East West Economic Corridor; and*
>
> *MOVE that the Regional Municipality of York, the Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry of the Environment and Metrolinx be requested to show the GTA East West Economic Corridor north of Kirby Road from west of Concession 10 to Highway 400 in Vaughan."*

MTO also presented study updates to Regional Council in May 2007, March 2009, December 2009 and June 2010 to coincide with each round of public consultation.

The GTA West EA has reached the completion of Stage 1 in developing the Draft Transportation Development Strategy (TDS). This Strategy includes an assessment and evaluation of the area transportation system alternatives and a recommendation for the preferred alternative to be carried forward in Stage 2.

Draft Transportation Development Strategy Report

The Draft TDS Report documents the planning process followed in Stage 1, including identification of specific transportation problems and opportunities within the Preliminary Study Area. The draft report addresses the development, assessment and evaluation of a range of Area Transportation System Alternatives to address the identified transportation problems and opportunities within the Preliminary Study Area. Finally, the draft report recommends a TDS based on the Area Transportation System Alternatives carried forward from the evaluation.

The process began with a comprehensive assessment of the individual elements and modes of transportation alternatives (i.e. transportation demand management, transportation system management, transit, freight rail, inter-modal, air, marine as well as roads and highways) to assess their ability to address the Preliminary Study Area's future inter-regional transportation problems and opportunities. Based on this assessment, the alternatives that were capable of substantively addressing the transportation needs were carried forward to the second stage of the process, which assembled the individual alternatives into multi-modal groups.

A "building block" approach was used to assemble the group alternatives, where each type of improvement builds on the other alternatives incrementally. The objective was first, to optimize the existing transportation network, and then incorporate non-roadway infrastructure improvements before considering the provision of new roads and / or highways. This approach was developed in line with the principles of the *Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan.*

The four groups of transportation alternatives that have been considered in the building block approach are described below.

Group 1 – Optimize Existing Networks

The first group of alternatives build upon the comprehensive strategies from the Metrolinx *RTP*, GO Transit 2020 Strategic Plan, MTO's High Occupancy Vehicle Lane Network Plan and Carpool Lot Program, Transportation System Management (TSM) measures, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) initiatives and municipal transportation plans.

In this group of alternatives, transportation initiatives focused on improving the performance of the existing transportation system for all modes of travel and freight transport through strategies designed to reduce automobile and truck demand and improve system operating efficiency. These optimization measures are most effective when applied in a combined and coordinated manner. The development of an Active Traffic Management Plan is one of the key outcomes of the study and will consider optimization measures including the following key elements:

- Expanded use of ramp metering
- High occupancy vehicle (HOV) / transit bypass at key locations
- Transit supportive highway corridors
- Enhanced incident / congestion management
- Expanded use of speed harmonization
- Provincial / employer led transportation demand management programs
- Long combination freight vehicles

Group 2 – New / Expanded Non-Road Infrastructure

This group of alternatives was developed to address future problems and build upon the significant transit, rail, marine and air service expansion initiatives, as envisioned by agencies, industry, Metrolinx and GO Transit. Group 2 includes the transit initiatives in the Metrolinx RTP and initiatives to develop a comprehensive transit network across the GTA West study area. These include:

- 15 and 25-year plans from the Metrolinx RTP
- Expanded inter-regional GO bus routes
- Inter-regional transit hubs where local transit and GO Transit connect
- New bus rapid transit links between Urban Growth Centres
- Connection beyond the GTA West study area
  - 1st Element – Inter-regional transit links to Toronto
  - 2nd Element – Linking Urban Growth Centres by transit
  - 3rd Element - Urban Growth Centres as transit gateways
- Mobility hubs
- Goods movement and freight

Group 3 – Widen / Improve Existing Roadways

This group of alternatives was developed to address the future transportation problems identified in the study area. To provide adequate traffic capacity, operations and road safety conditions on existing provincial facilities to 2031, a number of highway improvements and widening were selected beyond the current improvement program, in addition to improvements from Groups 1 and 2.

The proposed improvements include:

- widening of Highway 407ETR to 10 lanes
- extension of Highway 427 to Major Mackenzie Drive (8 lanes EA approved)
- widening of Highway 400 to 12 lanes between 407ETR and Major Mackenzie Drive
- widening of Highway 400 to 10 lanes from Major Mackenzie Drive to Highway 9

Group 4 – New Transportation Corridor (Recommended Alternative)

These final three groups of alternatives were developed to address future transportation problems in the study area. Group 4 includes all of the elements identified in Groups 1 and 2, some of the highway widenings and improvements identified in Group 3, and five corridor connection alternatives that could include freeway and transitway elements. A summary of the recommended Draft TDS Report is illustrated in Attachment No. 2.

During the fourth round of public consultation, two corridor alternatives were recommended for additional analysis as they resulted in similar sets of benefits and effects (as shown in Attachment No. 3 and No.4). Based on the additional analysis, the resulting combination includes:

- New Transportation Corridor from Highway 400 westerly to Highway 401 west of Milton (GTA West Corridor)
- North-South link to Highway 401 at 407ETR

The new corridor (GTA West and North-South Link) will, in addition to all other recommended improvements, support goods movement and the regional economy through an improved inter-regional network connecting urban areas and employment centres in the GTA North, GTA West and Niagara to GTA. Each of the elements of the TDS will benefit the overall network in the area and support planned growth in the City, York Region and beyond. The most significant element in the corridor was identified as being the New Corridor link between Highway 400 and the future extension of Highway 427. This future link will ease transportation capacity constraints along Highway 401 and 407ETR between Highway 400 and 427.

The proposed transportation corridor will consist of both a highway and transitway and / or truck-only facilities (i.e. truckway). Future HOV lanes could be accommodated where warranted. The right-of-way will range between 110m (highway) / truckway without transitway, and 170m with transitway. This will be further considered and analyzed during Stage 2 of the GTA West EA.

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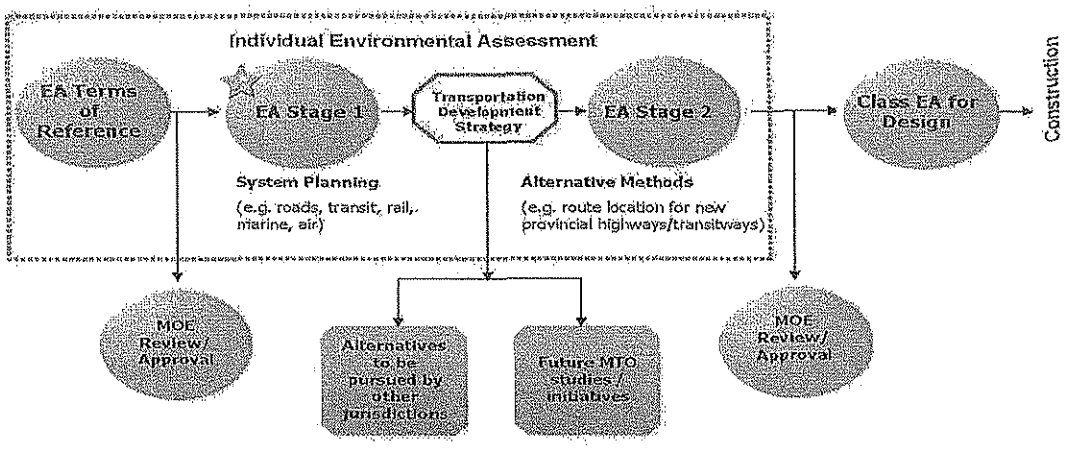
Two corridor options were used in the development of the Preliminary Route Planning Study Area illustrated in Attachment No.5. This area is defined as a geographic area within which a reasonable range of highway route alternatives can be generated. The preliminary route planning area is intended to be large enough to accommodate several route alternatives for the new highway / transitway facilities, including interchanges to connect freeways and major arterials, sideroad connections or alignments, transit stations, storm water management ponds, areas for environmental mitigation and transit station parking. The Route Planning Area will need to be refined during Stage 2 of the EA, particularly in urban areas to ensure minimal impacts to planned and existing developments and in the Greenbelt Area.

Next Steps in the EA Process

The draft Transportation Development Strategy Report (TDS) has been released by MTO for public and stakeholder review for a minimum of 90 days from March 11 to June 10, 2011. MTO will consider and respond to comments received during the public review period before finalizing the Transportation Development Strategy. A MAG meeting was held on April 20, 2011 to present and discuss the recommendations of the draft TDS Report.

Based on information that was presented at the MAG meeting, Staff understands that it will take between three and six months to finalize Stage 1 of the EA and the TDS. Once the TDS has been finalized it will be submitted to the Minister of Transportation for approval. Timing of the approval is uncertain at this time. Consideration may be affected by the proximity of the October 2011 provincial election. Stage 2 of the EA process will identify the route location and preliminary design for the new highway corridor. Before Stage 2 of the EA can commence, MTO will need to undertake a procurement process to retain the required consulting resources which may take between six to twelve months to complete. According to the GTA West project team, the Stage 2 process will take at least two years to complete.

The overall EA process for the GTA West Corridor is illustrated below:



Staff will continue to be actively involved in the GTA West EA and will provide updates to Council at key milestones in the process.

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 28, 2011

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Issues Resulting from the Draft Transportation Development Strategy Report

Referencing the GTA West Corridor - Preliminary Route Planning Study Area, there are three planned urban development areas and a significant greenbelt within the City that are directly affected by the preliminary highway route. The affected areas are the north portion of the West Vaughan Employment Area Secondary Plan, the Huntington Road Community in the North Kleinburg-Nashville Secondary Plan, the 400 North Employment Lands Secondary Plan (OPA 637) and the Humber River valley within the Greenbelt Plan area as shown on Attachment No.6.

On April 12, 2011, staff sent the GTA West Study team a letter expressing concerns about the conflict between the preliminary corridor route and the Huntington Road Community in the North Kleinburg-Nashville Secondary Plan. In addition, staff raised issues concerning all four affected areas at the subsequent MAG meeting held on April 20, 2011. A meeting was arranged with the GTA West Study team on April 29, 2011 to further discuss the details and rationale for the proposed alignment and limits of the Preliminary Route Planning Study Area. York Region Staff also attended this meeting.

West Vaughan Employment Area Secondary Plan & Huntington Road Community

At the April 29th meeting, MTO advised that a set of principles and evaluation criteria were developed in order to define the limits of the Preliminary Route Area across the corridor. These principles are intended to provide sufficient room to accommodate a reasonable range of alignment alternatives for evaluation during Stage 2 of the EA process. These principles are outlined in Attachment No. 7.

With respect to the limits of the Preliminary Route Area in the vicinity of the West Vaughan Employment Area Secondary Plan and the Huntington Road Community, MTO advised that the limits were established with consideration for the principles and the following:

- future freeway to freeway interchange for the Highway 427 extension connection to GTA West Corridor
- modifications to the future Major Mackenzie Drive interchange at Highway 427
- vertical and horizontal considerations associated with the crossing of the existing hydro transmission corridor
- CP Rail and Humber River crossings
- municipal road crossings/connections

Humber Valley Crossing and Greenbelt Plan Area

The Preliminary Route Planning Area has significant impacts on the Humber River valley within the Greenbelt Plan area north of Kirby Road. The MTO Study team has advised that Stage 2 of the GTA West EA will entail a full assessment of the affected Greenbelt area including a detailed assessment of the environmental features together with consultation with applicable environmental agencies. The Preliminary Route Planning Area is relatively wide across the greenbelt area in order to provide for a reasonable range of Humber River crossing alternatives for consideration during the route planning stage.

400 North Employment Lands Secondary Plan (OPA 637)

In 2006, Council approved the Highway 400 North Employment Lands Secondary Plan (OPA 637) which re-designated the lands bounded by Teston Road, Jane Street, King-Vaughan Road and Weston Road for employment uses. The area within OPA 637 that is affected by the Preliminary Route Planning Area is illustrated in Attachment No. 6. MTO advised that the north and south limits of the Preliminary Route Planning Area in OPA 637 were primarily established based on MTO's geometric design standards that require a minimum separation of 1,000 metre from the ramp terminus of both the existing King Road and Teston Road interchanges and a freeway to freeway interchange.

In 2007, the Region of York initiated an urban expansion (ROPA 52) to bring OPA 637 lands within the urban boundary. In December 2008, the Region adopted ROPA 52, which was subject to an appeal at the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Proceedings for the appeal of ROPA 52 resulted in Minutes of Settlement between the parties, which included the following commitment:

> *"The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) agrees it will proceed expeditiously with the environmental assessment process for the GTA West Area corridor (the EA Process) and will address the lands at the interchange with Highway 400 (east and west side) at the beginning of Stage 2 of the EA Process. "*

OPA 637 was appealed to the Board by the 400 North Landowners Group for non-decision. An OMB Prehearing Conference was held in March 2011 and mediation is ongoing.

OPA 637 Highway 400 Interchange(s)

The transportation policies of OPA 637 identify the need for at least one new interchange on Highway 400 to support the full development of the Highway 400 North Employment Area. It was anticipated that this new interchange would be located at King-Vaughan Road and Highway 400.

York Region has identified an arterial road requirement in the Council endorsed Regional Transportation Master Plan that would provide for eastbound traffic travelling on the GTA West Corridor to continue eastbound to Bathurst Street. This is founded on policy statements in both the current Regional Official Plan and the 2010 Regional Official Plan. These policies are being further advanced through the Mid-York East-West Transportation Feasibility and Preliminary Engineering Study authorized by Regional Council in December of 2010 which is now underway.

Given the technical complexity of planning and integrating these three facilities, it is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to integrate the provisions for at least one full interchange with Highway 400 to service the 400 North Employment Area Secondary Plan (OPA 637) area together with a Regional arterial connection in conjunction with Stage 2 of the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment Study.

MTO Consultation Outcome

Following detailed discussion on each of the affected areas at the April 29, 2011 meeting, MTO staff advised that they were not in a position to recommend changes to the preliminary route planning area at this time due to the need to provide sufficient room to accommodate a reasonable range of alignment alternatives for evaluation during Stage 2 of the EA process.

Staff urged MTO to finalize the GTA West Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Stage 1 Study in an expeditious manner and then proceed immediately to initiate Stage 2 of the Environmental Assessment Study for the new corridor. Staff requested MTO to work with the City and York Region during the Stage 2 process to expedite the determination of the routing for the GTA West Corridor. This would permit those areas within the GTA West Corridor Study Area which are not required for the new highway to be released for development as soon as possible in accordance with the City's Official Plan.

Regional Implications

The 2009 York Region Transportation Master Plan recommends that the GTA West Corridor be planned as a new freeway extending from Highway 400 westerly into Peel Region and beyond together with a connection to the Highway 427 Extension. The recommended draft TDS for the GTA West Corridor is consistent with the objectives of the York Region Transportation Master Plan. In addition, other transportation studies in the area, including the Western Vaughan Individual EA, have included the GTA West Corridor in their 2031 network analysis.

Regional staff reported on the Draft TDS Report to the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee on May 4, 2011. The three development areas in Vaughan affected by the preliminary planning study area for the GTA West Corridor were discussed in the York Region report.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council Vaughan Vision 2020 strategic initiatives:

- To enhance and ensure community safety, health and wellness;
- To pursue excellence in service delivery; and
- To plan and manage growth and economic vitality.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council.

Conclusion

On March 11, 2011, MTO released Stage 1 of the GTA West Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study and draft Transportation Development Strategy for a 90-day public and stakeholder review. The report explains the planning process followed in developing the draft Transportation Development Strategy including the assessment and evaluation of the area transportation system alternatives and a recommendation for the preferred alternatives to be carried forward. Following public and stakeholder input, the report will conclude Stage 1 of the EA Study and establish the start of Stage 2 of the EA. The limits of the Preliminary Route Study Area will be revisited and refined during Stage 2 of the EA process.

Within Vaughan, there are four areas that are affected by the Preliminary Route Planning Study Area for the GTA West Corridor. Staff in their meeting with MTO on April 29, 2011 urged MTO to expedite Stage 2 of the EA process and finalize the routing for the GTA West Corridor. This would permit those areas within the GTA West Corridor Study Area which are not required for the new highway to be released for development as soon as possible in accordance with the City's Official Plan. Staff also requested that MTO provide for at least one full interchange with Highway 400 to service the 400 North Employment Area Secondary Plan (OPA 637) together with a Regional arterial connection in conjunction with Stage 2 of the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment Study.

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A schedule for Stage 2 of the GTA West EA has not yet been identified by MTO; however, it will likely be at least three years before a preliminary recommended alignment is selected. Staff will continue to be actively involved in the GTA West EA and will provide updates to Council at key milestones in the process.

Attachments

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7. Principles for Defining the GTA West Preliminary Route Planning Study Area

Report prepared by:

Selma Hubjer, Transportation Engineer, Ext 8674
Andrew Pearce, Director of Development /Transportation Engineering, Ext 8255

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)