

ETP-E1-1

Ministry of
Transportation

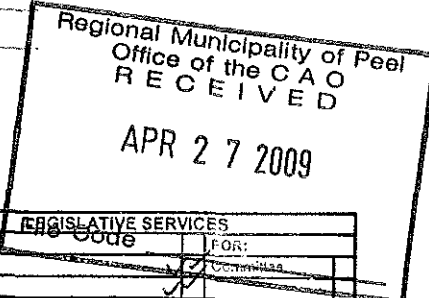
Ministère des
Transports



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REFERRAL TO _____
RECOMMENDED _____
DIRECTION REQUIRED _____
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED



April 15, 2009

Mr. Emil Kolb
Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer
The Regional Municipality of Peel
10 Peel Centre Drive
Brampton, Ontario
L6T 4B9

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES	
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Dear Chair Kolb:

Thank you for your letter of February 20, 2009 regarding the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA). The Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Transportation (MTO), has asked me to respond on his behalf. I apologize for the delay.

I am pleased to note the Region of Peel's recognition of the importance of the GTA West Corridor EA and the Regional Council's willingness to work in collaboration with MTO to move the study ahead as well as to address the challenge of corridor protection during the study process.

MTO and the GTA West Project Team have already initiated many aspects of the council resolution and I am glad to take this opportunity to share our progress with you.

With respect to making use of the Province's authority to protect the corridor while the EA is still underway to determine need, justification and options, MTO has worked with the other provincial ministries to review corridor protection and land use control tools under the current legislative framework. We had an initial discussion with municipal staff in April 2008. In July 2008, the Project Team identified a number of initial "Areas of Interest" (or "pinch points") and included them in the draft working paper *Overview of Environmental Conditions and Constraints*.

In August 2008, MTO made a presentation to the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario GTA Caucus Meeting, proposing an approach to address the corridor protection issue during the EA. The approach relies on provincial policies that obligate both the Province and municipalities to plan and protect transportation corridors through good planning. The approach is outlined below:

- The Province and municipalities work in collaboration to identify and refine strategic, critical locations – “areas of interest”;
- The Province requests early notification of development applications;
- The Province and municipalities work collaboratively to review applications and determine a strategy for applying various land use control tools on a case-by-case basis; and,
- The Province may request deferral of an application on a case-by-case basis.

This approach would provide significant opportunities for the Province and the municipalities to work together to protect corridor options through the Official Plan Review process, as suggested in the council resolution.

With respect to other aspects of the council resolution, I would like to provide the following responses respectively:

Working with municipalities on development pinch points

MTO and the project consulting staff met with representatives of Regional, County and lower tier municipalities in a series of workshops throughout February and March 2009. The project team has received good feedback from municipalities and as a result, some existing pinch points have been revised and new ones added.

Expediting the EA

We recognize the challenge of addressing development pressure while important technical work is being carried out in the EA with extensive public and stakeholder consultation. Our current schedule calls for the completion of a Multi-Modal Transportation Development Strategy as Stage 1 of the EA in spring 2010. MTO will consider initiating Stage 2 of the EA as early as possible if a new provincial facility (i.e. provincial highway, transitway, or both) is recommended as part of the strategy.

Apply a shortened EA process

The GTA West Corridor project is a multi-modal planning and EA study and must be carried out in accordance with the approved EA Terms of Reference under the current Environmental Assessment Act. The Minister of the Environment introduced a new environmental assessment process for transit projects in 2008, and there are on-going efforts among the provincial ministries to integrate EA with other planning processes.

Creation of Committee

I would suggest that MTO and municipal staff discuss the purpose, mandate and expected outcomes of the committee. I would be pleased to discuss this with your staff as a starting point.

If you have any further questions or comments regarding the GTA West Corridor EA, please do not hesitate to contact me at 416-585-7238 or Mr. Jin Wang, MTO Project Coordinator at 905-704-2117.

Thank you again for writing to the Minister and for the Region's support of the study.

Yours truly,



Patricia Boeckner
Director

cc: The Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Transportation