

# The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole  
Transportation Services  
January 16, 2020

Report of the Commissioner of Transportation Services and Chief Planner

## Greater Toronto Area West Transportation Corridor Update

### 1. Recommendations

1. The Province of Ontario be advised that York Region supports the decision to resume the Greater Toronto Area West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment and requests that the highway be constructed as soon as possible.
2. Council request that the Ministry of Transportation assess, as part of the Environmental Assessment, a highway alignment that reduces impacts to existing and approved community areas in the North Kleinburg-Nashville Secondary Plan area.
3. Council request that, as part of the Environmental Assessment, the Ministry of Transportation review the feasibility of additional Greater Toronto Area West highway connections within York Region, including at Highway 50 and Pine Valley Drive, and to Highway 400 at Kirby Road and King-Vaughan Road in the vicinity of the proposed freeway to freeway connection with the Greater Toronto Area West highway.
4. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Minister of Transportation, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Members of Provincial Parliament within York Region, the Regions of Peel and Halton and the local municipalities.

### 2. Summary

This report provides Council with an update on the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Greater Toronto Area (GTA) West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and summarizes York Region's concerns with the highway alignment in the vicinity of north Nashville and Kleinberg, and with the number of proposed interchanges within York Region.

Key Points:

- The Province of Ontario has resumed the GTA West Transportation Corridor EA.
- On November 7, 2019 Council directed staff to report back in January 2020 with additional details regarding the EA and issues of Regional interest further to the presentation from MTO on the GTA West Transportation Corridor EA.

- The EA project team presented the Technically Preferred Route at public consultation meetings in September and October 2019.
- The planned highway will provide significant benefits to the GTA, and York Region supports its construction as soon as possible.
- York Region will continue to work with MTO through the EA process to address issues related to the highway alignment and interchange locations.

### **3. Background**

#### **In June 2019, the Province of Ontario resumed the Greater Toronto Area West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment**

Staff reported to Council in [June 2019](#) advising that MTO was resuming the EA which had originally been suspended in December 2015.

The EA study area extends from Highway 400, between Kirby Road and King-Vaughan Road in the east, to the Highway 401 and 407 ETR interchange area, between Winston Churchill Boulevard and Trafalgar Road, in the west. The study area is shown in Attachment 1.

The undertaking being defined in the EA is proposed to include a new freeway in a 110m wide corridor, and an adjacent transitway in a 60m wide corridor.

A future electric transmission corridor which was included in a previous joint study to identify a multipurpose linear infrastructure corridor is now proceeding independently from the GTA West Transportation Corridor EA. In June 2019, the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and the Independent Electricity System Operator initiated the Northwest GTA Transmission Corridor Identification Study as a separate initiative.

#### **The Environmental Assessment is scheduled to be completed in 2022**

The GTA West Transportation Corridor EA is currently in the route planning phase. This work will be followed by preliminary design, preparation of a draft Environmental Study Report and submission of the final Environmental Study Report to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, scheduled for the end of 2022. The Study Schedule is presented in Attachment 2.

#### **The Preferred Route is scheduled to be confirmed by spring 2020**

MTO held public consultation meetings on September 19, 2019 in the City of Vaughan, on September 26, 2019 in the Town of Halton Hills, and on Thursday October 3, 2019 in the City of Brampton. MTO presented their Technically Preferred Route (Attachment 3) and the 2019 Focused Analysis Area (Attachment 4) at the public meetings.

MTO presented the Technically Preferred Route for the GTA West highway as part of the recent public consultation process. The EA study schedule includes confirming the Preferred Route by spring 2020. Municipalities, agencies, landowners and other stakeholders will have an opportunity to comment on the Technically Preferred Route before it is finalized.

On [November 7, 2019](#), MTO made a presentation to Council. Council directed staff to report back in January 2020 regarding the EA and issues of Regional interest.

## 4. Analysis

### **MTO should assess an alignment that reduces impacts on existing and planned community areas in the Kleinburg and Nashville area**

Staff acknowledges the Technically Preferred Route minimizes impact on the Greenbelt Plan Area and the natural features of the Humber River Valley and surrounding area. Staff do, however, suggest that the natural impacts have to be balanced with other factors, including land use planning and economic development. The identified route currently bisects an area that has been planned and approved as a residential community since 2001. This is identified as the Huntington Road Community in the North Kleinburg-Nashville Secondary Plan area (shown on Attachment 5) and is a northerly extension of the existing Village of Nashville. The Technically Preferred Route impacts the viability of the Huntington Road Community area. Another route would allow this area to be built out as planned, contributing to housing supply and capitalizing on adjacent services and infrastructure investments that have already been made.

The City of Vaughan has similar concerns and is recommending the most northerly alignment for the Province's consideration, as outlined in their November 25, 2019 correspondence, included as Attachment 6.

### **Additional interchanges are required in York Region to provide access to and from the highway**

In July 2015, staff first commented on preliminary study findings, including interchanges that were being proposed by MTO. Interchange locations proposed in York Region provide only two connections to the Regional road network, including a partial interchange at Weston Road and a full interchange at Highway 27. To improve connectivity to and from the arterial and concession road network, staff requested additional GTA West highway interchanges be considered at Highway 50 and Pine Valley Drive, and to Highway 400 at Kirby Road and King-Vaughan Road in the vicinity of the proposed freeway to freeway connection with the GTA West highway. These additional interchange connections are necessary to facilitate economic development and goods movement within the City of Vaughan and beyond. New highways can be a barrier to economic growth if they do not provide strong connections to the arterial road network.

MTO has indicated the additional interchanges are not being considered at this stage of the EA due to technical challenges, including interchange spacing, traffic needs and issues related to engineering complexity in the vicinity of freeway to freeway interchanges. Staff has

repeatedly requested reconsideration of inclusion of additional GTA West highway connections at Highway 50 and Pine Valley Drive, and to Highway 400 at Kirby Road and King-Vaughan Road in the vicinity of the freeway to freeway interchange to the GTA West highway, in order to protect for economic prosperity and goods movement reasons.

### **The Greater Toronto Area West highway will support goals of York Region's Vision 2051 and Official Plan**

An expanded freeway network in the GTA directly supports York Region's Vision 2051 goal related to an "Interconnected Systems for Mobility" and land use planning objectives, as reflected in the Regional Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan.

## **5. Financial**

Should the final highway alignment impact approved areas for development, thereby reducing overall development lands, this could affect the Regional and municipal collection of development charges and tax levy. As a final highway alignment has not been confirmed, the potential impact cannot be quantified at this time.

## **6. Local Impact**

The Region and local Municipalities would benefit significantly from a new GTA West highway, including support for population and employment growth, improved goods movement, improved mobility and reduced traffic on roads such as King Road, Major Mackenzie Drive and Nashville Road.

On November 19, 2019, City of Vaughan Council endorsed a motion that calls on MTO to build the GTA West highway in the northern part of the city to mitigate impacts to existing residential neighbourhoods, planned employment lands and future residential areas. The proposed GTA West highway does not pass through the Township of King and municipal staff has indicated there are no concerns with the Technically Preferred Route.

## **7. Conclusion**

The Province of Ontario has resumed the GTA West Transportation Corridor EA. York Region has repeatedly pursued commitments to construction of the GTA West highway as soon as possible. Staff will continue to work with the Ministry of Transportation through the EA process to address issues related to the highway alignment and interchange locations.

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For more information on this report, please contact Brian Titherington, Director of Transportation and Infrastructure Planning at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75901, or Sandra Malcic, Director of Long Range Planning at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75274. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Recommended by: **Paul Jankowski**  
Commissioner of Transportation Services

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Chief Planner

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Chief Administrative Officer

December 13, 2019  
Attachments (6)  
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