

# The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole  
Transportation Services  
May 14, 2020

Report of the Commissioner of Transportation Services and Chief Planner

## Greater Toronto Area West Transportation Corridor Update

### 1. Recommendations

1. Council reiterate its position that the Ministry of Transportation develop, 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.
2. Council request, as part of the Environmental Assessment, the Ministry of Transportation not preclude a future interchange at Pine Valley Drive and continue to explore an additional interchange north of the Teston Road interchange, to accommodate development of lands within Regional Official Plan Amendment 2, which are key planned future City of Vaughan communities.
3. 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 an update based on recent communication received from the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) in response to the [January 16, 2020](#) Greater Toronto Area (GTA) West Transportation Corridor Update report to Council.

Key Points:

In January 2020, Council advised the Province that York Region supports the decision to resume the GTA West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and requested the highway be constructed as soon as possible. In addition, Council requested:

- MTO assess a highway alignment that reduces impacts to existing and approved community areas in the North Kleinburg-Nashville Secondary Plan area
- MTO review the feasibility of additional GTA West highway interchanges within York Region.

On April 6, 2020, MTO's GTA West EA Project Team responded to York Region's issues by email, agreeing to assess new alignment options in west Vaughan further to concerns identified by numerous stakeholders, and to not preclude an additional interchange at Pine Valley Drive as a future municipal initiative. An update on the new alignments is expected by the end of May and MTO anticipates identifying a preferred alignment by the end of June 2020.

The Province has also initiated the Northwest GTA Transmission Corridor Identification Study to protect for future electricity infrastructure. The Transmission Corridor study area is generally aligned with the GTA West Transportation Corridor. Staff comments on the corridor reflect the transportation alignment recommendations in this report to ensure the hydro transmission alignment also reduces impacts to existing and approved community areas.

### **3. Background**

#### **In January 2020, staff reported the Province of Ontario was resuming the Greater Toronto Area West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment**

In January 2020, Council resolved the following:

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.

Additional background information on the EA progress and Regional issues related to alignment development and interchange locations is provided in the [January 2020](#) report to Council.

## 4. Analysis

### **Ministry of Transportation agreed to assess new alignment options in west Vaughan in response to concerns identified by numerous stakeholders**

MTO acknowledged they received numerous comments regarding their draft Technically Preferred Route, Section 8 from Huntington Road to west of Pine Valley Drive, including concerns raised by York Region and the City of Vaughan regarding impacts to the North Kleinburg-Nashville Secondary Plan area. MTO agreed to assess new alternative alignments in this section to address issues identified by stakeholders and is expected to share these as well as their evaluation at the end of May. Attachment 1 shows the section of the alignment being reassessed.

MTO anticipates this additional assessment of alignment alternatives will be completed in time to confirm the preferred GTA West Transportation Corridor alignment in June 2020.

### **The Ministry of Transportation agreed to not preclude an additional interchange at Pine Valley Drive**

MTO reviewed the Region's request for additional GTA West interchange connections at Highway 50, Pine Valley Drive, and to Highway 400 at Kirby Road and King-Vaughan Road, and noted the following for each potential interchange location:

- **An interchange at Highway 50 is not proceeding** - MTO recognizes an interchange at Highway 50 would provide good overall road network connectivity, but close proximity to the Highway 427 freeway to freeway interchange precludes an interchange at Highway 50.
- **A future interchange at Pine Valley Drive is not included, but will not be precluded as a future municipally-led initiative** - MTO considered a GTA West interchange at Pine Valley Drive and concluded an interchange is not recommended at this location at this time. Rationale includes the discontinuity of Pine Valley Drive, overall interchange spacing, geometric design and highway traffic operational considerations. MTO acknowledged their EA findings did not preclude a separate municipal initiative to explore an interchange at Pine Valley Drive outside the scope of the EA study.
- **Additional Highway 400 Interchanges will not be included** - Interchanges to Highway 400 at Kirby Road and King-Vaughan Road in the vicinity of the GTA West freeway to freeway connection were identified as not required for the GTA West highway, and outside the scope of the current EA study.

Within York Region, GTA West interchanges are proposed by MTO at Highway 427, Highway 27, Weston Road (partial to and from the west) and at Highway 400.

Staff agrees with not precluding a future interchange at Pine Valley Drive as part of the Environmental Assessment; however, it is unnecessary to specify its future construction as a municipal initiative, which is only one option as to how a future interchange could be built.

Regarding future interchanges with Highway 400 at either Kirby Road or King-Vaughan Road, significant development is planned both east and west of Highway 400 between Teston Road and Kirby Road. These lands were designated within the Region's urban area as part of Regional Official Plan Amendment 2 to accommodate Provincially-allocated growth. Staff believes providing access for these lands with an additional interchange to Highway 400 to north of the Teston Road interchange is important. The awkward interchange at Teston Road makes the need for an additional interchange to the north even greater.

Insufficient information has been provided by MTO as to why an additional interchange at either Kirby Road or King-Vaughan Road is identified as not required and therefore, the Region should continue to advocate for an additional Highway 400 interchange to the north of the Teston Road interchange.

### **The Province has initiated the Northwest GTA Transmission Corridor Identification Study to protect for future electricity infrastructure**

The Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines is seeking initial comments on the North West GTA Transmission Corridor Study project area and principles through the Environmental Registry (ERO # 019 – 1503). The Transmission Corridor study area is generally aligned with the Ministry of Transportation's GTA – West Environmental Assessment study area to facilitate co-location of provincial infrastructure. While supportive of early identification of an electricity corridor to service future electricity demand, as well as co-location of provincial infrastructure, staff comments on the transmission corridor reflect Council's position that the transmission corridor alignment should reduce impacts to existing and approved communities. .

### **The Ministry of Transportation is committed to continuing consultation with local and regional municipalities throughout the Environmental Assessment**

Staff will continue to work with MTO and coordinate with the City of Vaughan throughout the EA study and the Northwest GTA Transmission Corridor Study.

## **5. Financial**

As noted in the January 2020 staff report, 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. Since a final highway alignment has not been confirmed, the potential impact cannot be quantified at this time.

## **6. Local Impact**

York Region and the City of Vaughan have acknowledged the significant benefit from a new GTA West highway, including support for population and employment growth, improved goods movement and improved mobility.

## 7. Conclusion

Staff will continue to monitor, through the EA process, issues of importance to York Region and report to Council at key milestones. Staff will also continue to report on any additional issues that may arise from the Northwest GTA Transmission Corridor Identification Study.

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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

Recommended by: **Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP**  
Chief Planner

Approved for Submission: **Bruce Macgregor**  
Chief Administrative Officer

April 30, 2020  
Attachment (1)  
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