

Clause 3 in Report No. 4 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on March 24, 2016.

3

Ontario Ministry of Transportation's GTA West Transportation
Corridor Environmental Assessment

Committee of the Whole recommends:

1. Receipt of the communication from Paula Tenuta, Vice President, Policy & Government Relations, BILD, dated March 1, 2016.
2. Adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated February 17, 2016 from the Commissioner of Transportation Services:
 1. Council request that the Ministry of Transportation resume the GTA West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment and define the preferred alignment as soon as possible.
 2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Minister of Transportation, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Members of Provincial Parliament within York Region, Regions of Peel and Halton and the Clerks of local municipalities.

Report dated February 17, 2016 from the Commissioner of Transportation Services now follows:

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Council request that the Ministry of Transportation resume the GTA West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment and define the preferred alignment as soon as possible.
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Minister of Transportation, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Members of Provincial

Parliament within York Region, Regions of Peel and Halton and the Clerks
of local municipalities.

2. Purpose

This report provides Council with an update on the Ontario Ministry of Transportation's (MTO) GTA West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and recommends MTO resume the EA and define the preferred alignment of the corridor as soon as possible.

3. Background

MTO initiated the Terms of Reference phase of the EA in 2007, followed by an Individual EA scheduled for completion in 2018

MTO initiated the GTA West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment study (Study) in February 2007. As an Individual EA, a Terms of Reference was prepared for approval by the Ministry of the Environment. The Terms of Reference was approved in March 2008.

Following approval, the first stage of the Individual EA included preparing a transportation network strategy to address needs within the Study area. The transportation network strategy identified the GTA West Transportation Corridor (Corridor) preliminary route planning study area extending from Highway 401 in Halton Region to Highway 400 in the City of Vaughan.

The new Corridor will extend from Highway 400 between Kirby Road and King-Vaughan Road in the east to the Highway 401/407 ETR interchange area between Winston Churchill Boulevard and Trafalgar Road in the west. The Corridor is proposed to be a four to six lane freeway with connections at Highway 401/407ETR, Highway 410, Highway 427 and Highway 400. A separate adjacent transitway is also included in the scope of the EA, with proposed stations located at interchanges and connecting points.

The Study area within York Region is shown in Attachment 1.

Stage 1 of the EA was completed with publication of a Transportation Development Strategy Report in November 2012.

Stage 2 of the EA will identify the recommended route, determine interchange locations, complete the preliminary design for the new Corridor and ultimately secure EA approval to protect the Corridor while allowing development to proceed outside the affected lands. The Notice of Study Commencement for this phase of the Individual EA is shown in Attachment 2.

MTO project staff presented the Study to Committee of the Whole in March 2015

MTO project staff delivered a presentation to Committee of the Whole, providing an update on the project status and next steps.

Of specific interest to Committee of the Whole was the timing for identifying a preferred alternative and completing Stage 2 of the Individual EA process.

MTO, in March 2015, advised the preferred alternative would be identified by late 2015 and the Individual EA was on schedule for completion in 2018.

A short-list of corridor alignments and interchange locations were presented to municipal stakeholders in mid-2015

MTO has undertaken public, municipal and other stakeholder consultation throughout the Study. Staff acknowledge MTO's efforts to consult York Region and local municipalities throughout the Study and recommend MTO continue to engage York Region and local municipalities throughout the EA process.

The MTO recommended short-list of corridor alignments and interchange locations are presented in Attachment 3. Alignment alternatives start from Highway 400 between King-Vaughan Road and Kirby Road and extend westerly into Peel Region. Near the York/Peel boundary area, the alignment alternatives cross south of Bolton.

Freeway to freeway interchanges are proposed by MTO at Highway 427 and Highway 400. Interchanges at municipal arterial roads are proposed at Highway 27 (full) and at Weston Road (partial).

In December 2015, the Minister of Transportation announced the EA was being suspended pending review

In early December 2015, MTO provided a Study update indicating that Public Information Centre #2 for the EA was not taking place in December 2015 as had been planned. A copy of the MTO Study update is provided in Attachment 4.

On December 16, 2015, the Minister of Transportation released a media bulletin indicating that work on the EA was being suspended pending review and that an update will be provided in spring 2016. The Minister's bulletin is provided in Attachment 5.

4. Analysis and Options

An expanded freeway network is identified as an essential component in York Region's Transportation Master Plan

York Region recognizes the importance of aligning transportation network plans at all levels of government. Ensuring alignment of the integrated transportation network maximizes the effectiveness and efficiency of infrastructure in meeting transportation demands associated with managing congestion and accommodating growth. An expanded freeway network is an essential component for the Region's growth. The Corridor provides a critical east-west link connecting Highway 400 to Highway 401 which accommodates goods movement and servicing of future employment lands in the City of Vaughan.

Staff provided written comments on the Study to MTO in July 2015 (see Attachment 6) and have continuously supported a new freeway Corridor. Detailed comments highlight York Region's position regarding interchange locations, transit connections, active transportation crossings as well as other corridor planning and design considerations. MTO's written response to staff comments is provided in Attachment 7.

The Region's Transportation Master Plan is being closely coordinated with the Municipal Comprehensive Review. Comments provided as input to MTO for this Study are based on infrastructure needs to accommodate population and employment growth mandated by the Growth Plan to 2041.

York Region and its local municipalities are doing their part to implement needed municipal infrastructure for growth and are relying on the Province to assist with connecting provincially-designated growth centres for all modes of travel, including freeway auto and bus service, provide better connections to residential and employment lands and address needs for goods movement.

The Corridor is needed for growth in the GTA

The GTA West is an important transportation corridor for the GTA. The Corridor will alleviate existing congestion on major sections of Highways 400 and 401 and

provide freeway capacity for a significant amount of growth in York, Peel and Halton Regions. The Corridor will provide capacity for goods movement and impact the Province's ability to attract and retain employment in the GTA.

Land use in the Study area is shown in Attachment 8. The Study area impacts a number of development areas in Vaughan, including Vaughan 400 North Employment Area Secondary Plan, Kleinburg-Nashville Secondary Plan and West Vaughan Employment Area Secondary Plan. Suspension of the EA will have an impact on land use planning in the area, including development of designated employment lands.

Given suspension of the GTA West study, the amount of Vaughan lands "frozen" by the Province remains as shown on Attachment 1. This not only hampers land use planning efforts for already designated employment lands as noted above, but it frustrates the current Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review process and York Region's ability to review and finalize future employment land opportunities.

Link to key Council-approved plans

This report links to the following Council-approved plans and policies:

Regional Official Plan

- To work with the Province and local municipalities to plan for and protect for transportation corridors and facilities, including the GTA West Corridor
- To support an interconnected and efficient system for goods movement through the completion of the 400-series highway network, including the GTA West Transportation Corridor and Highway 427 extension
- To plan and coordinate cross-boundary transportation needs with adjacent municipalities and appropriate agencies

2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan

- Manage Environmentally Sustainable Growth – Managing traffic congestion - increasing capacity of road network
- Strengthen the Region's Economy – Focusing on networks and systems that connect people, goods and services – Complete and implement the Transportation Master Plan

5. Financial Implications

Provincial investment in a new freeway system, and specifically connectivity with the arterial road system, is important to accommodate future travel demand and strategic goods movement for planned growth.

Tolls for the Corridor have not been confirmed by MTO at this stage. Tolls, even partial tolling of selective lanes, would provide a potential additional funding source to construct the Corridor, including elements such as additional interchanges required to align and integrate MTO's plans with municipal plans.

MTO's decision to suspend the EA will likely delay completion of the EA and future implementation of the highway. This will affect network capacity in this area of York Region, which will place increasing burden on Regional and Municipal infrastructure.

6. Local Municipal Impact

Local municipalities were contacted by the EA project team and representatives have attended Municipal Advisory meetings. Local municipalities will continue to be consulted throughout this EA.

The alignment alternatives have potential impacts to a number of development areas in Vaughan, including Vaughan 400 North Employment Area Secondary Plan, Kleinburg-Nashville Secondary Plan and West Vaughan Employment Area Secondary Plan. MTO is working with City of Vaughan to ensure that the Corridor alignment alternatives are protected within development plans.

MTO's recent decision to suspend the EA will have a significant impact on land use planning in the vicinity of the Study area. Continued uncertainty on the location of the preferred alignment means significant areas of land may be frozen from development, and community planning in northern Vaughan will be challenged.

7. Conclusion

MTO work on the GTA West Transportation Corridor EA is currently suspended pending review and an update is anticipated in spring 2016. This is an important

Ontario Ministry of Transportation's
GTA West Transportation Corridor
Environmental Assessment

transportation corridor for the GTA. York Region encourages the Ministry of Transportation to restart and complete the EA as soon as possible.

Suspension of the EA will have a significant impact on land use planning in the Study area, including development of designated employment lands.

For more information on this report, please contact Stephen Collins, Director of Infrastructure Management and PMO, at ext. 75949.

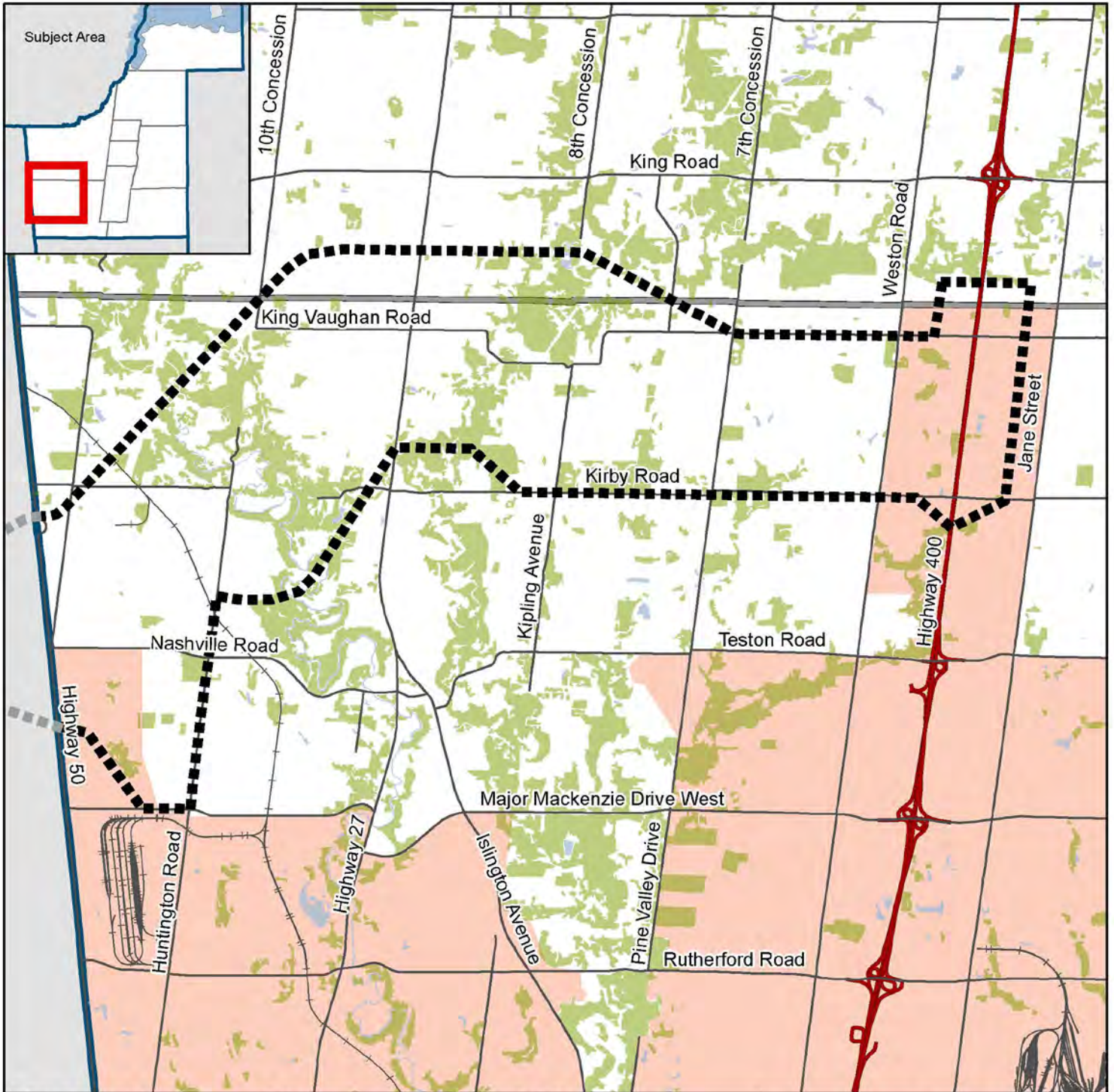
The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

February 17, 2016

Attachments (8)

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request





**Ontario Ministry of Transportation's GTA West
Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment
EA Study, Stage 2
March 3, 2016**

Produced by:
The Regional Municipality of York
Infrastructure Management and Project Management Office, Transportation Services
November, 2015

Data Sources:
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County of Simcoe, City of Toronto
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See York.ca for disclaimer information.



- Legend**
-  Study Area
 -  Greenbelt
Urban Areas



0 1 2 Kilometers

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT NOTICE

Notice of Commencement – GTA West Transportation Corridor Route Planning and Environmental Assessment Study, Stage 2

www.gta-west.com

THE STUDY

The Ontario **Ministry of Transportation (MTO)** has initiated Stage 2 of the Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for the GTA West Transportation Corridor. Building on the recommendations from Stage 1, the EA Study continues with a focus on identifying the route and developing the preliminary design for a new transportation corridor within the previously identified Route Planning Study Area. The new transportation corridor will include a 400-series highway, a transitway and potential goods movement priority features. As part of the study, a preferred route and interchange locations will be selected and developed.

The GTA West transportation corridor is vital towards providing the transportation infrastructure to meet the projected growth in both population and employment identified in the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (2006) and will deliver multiple benefits, including:

- Greater connectivity between urban growth centres;
- Enhanced people and goods movement;
- Improved commuting; and
- Greater economic vitality.

The GTA West Transportation Corridor Route Planning and EA Study is being undertaken as an Individual EA in accordance with the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act* (EA Act) and the *GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference*, which was approved by the Ontario Minister of the Environment on March 4, 2008.

This new transportation corridor is only one component of the full suite of multi-modal recommendations that are included in the Transportation Development Strategy (TDS) developed as part of Stage 1. These recommendations also included transit improvements, transportation demand management measures, opportunities to optimize the existing transportation system as well as widening of several key provincial facilities in the western GTA. These recommendations are being pursued as separate initiatives.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is encouraged and Public Information Centers (PICs) and Community Workshops will be held throughout the study. Notices advising of the time and location of the PICs will be published in local and regional newspapers and advertised on the study website.

If you are interested in the study and would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact the Project Team via the contact information outlined below. Study information will be posted and updated on the project website: www.gta-west.com.

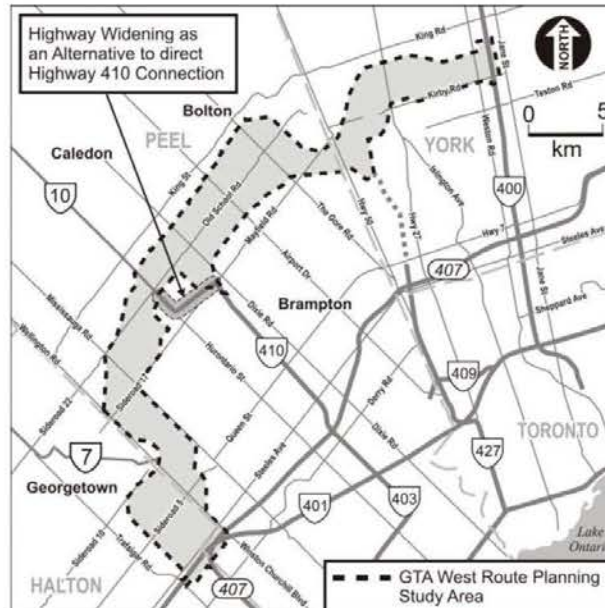
COMMENTS

Comments and input regarding this study are encouraged and will be collected to assist the Project Team. This material will be maintained on file for use during the project and may be included in project documentation to meet the requirements of the EA Act. Information collected will be used in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Access to Information Act*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record. For further information, please visit our project website at the address provided above. To contact the Project Team directly, please send an email to: project_team@gta-west.com or contact:

Ms. Natalie Rouskov, P.Eng., MTO Project Manager
Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Central Region
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Des renseignements sont disponibles en français en composant 905 823-8500, poste 1471 (Yannick Garnier).



EAST SECTION

**GTA West EA
MTO Recommended short list
of route options and
interchange locations**

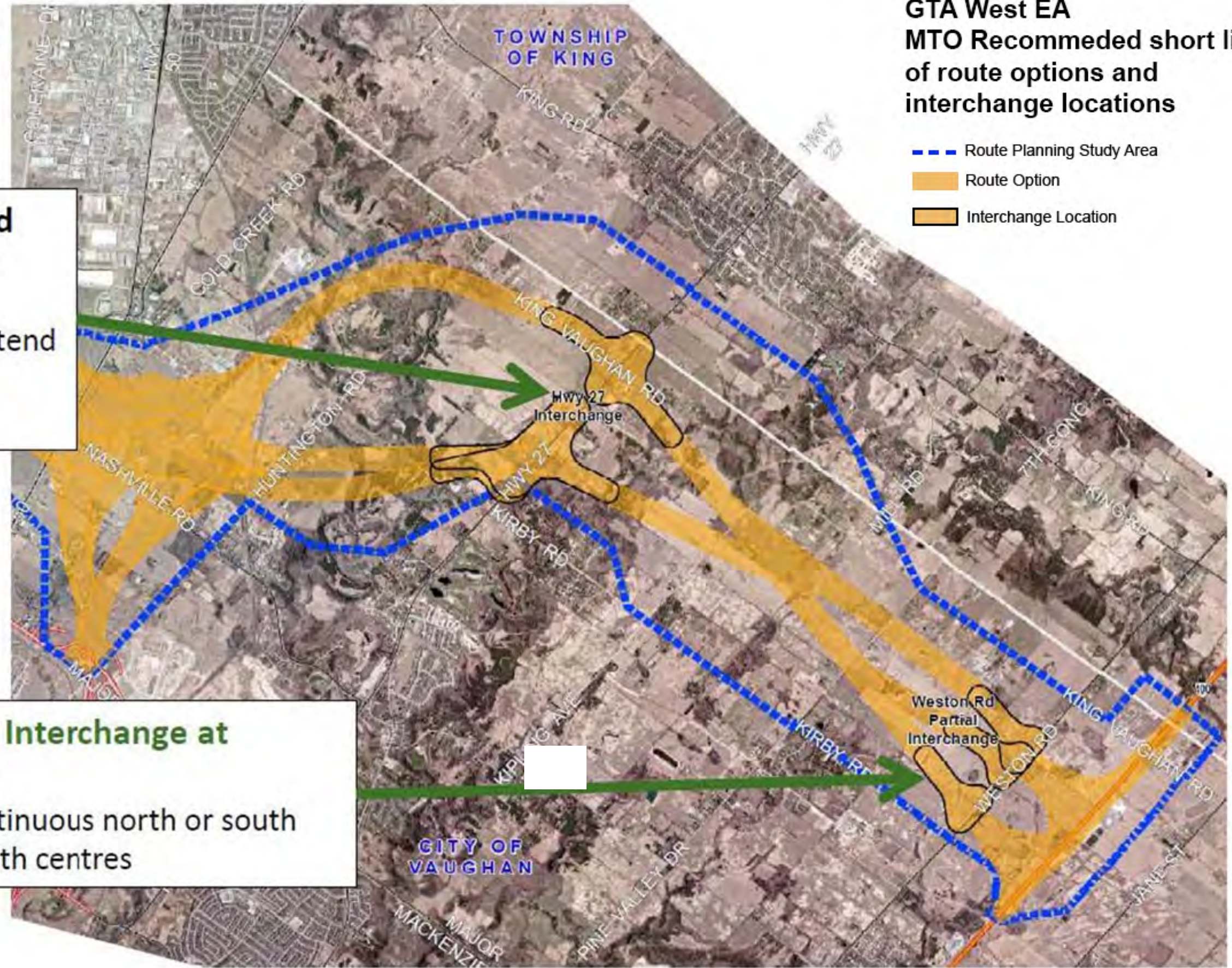
- - - Route Planning Study Area
- Route Option
- Interchange Location

Highway 27 carried forward

- Challenging geometry may require some of the interchange footprint to extend beyond the study area for some alternatives

Pine Valley Drive or Partial Interchange at Weston Road

- Pine Valley Drive is not continuous north or south
- Better connections to growth centres





STUDY UPDATE

Public Information Centre (PIC) #2 for Stage 2 of the GTA West Transportation Corridor Route Planning and Environmental Assessment (EA) Study is not taking place this December as planned. The ministry needs more time as this is a complex study. The ministry will provide more information as soon as it becomes available.

The EA Study

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is undertaking Stage 2 of the Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for the GTA West Transportation Corridor. Building on the recommendations from Stage 1, the EA Study will identify the route, determine interchange locations and complete the preliminary design for a new transportation corridor within the Route Planning Study Area. The new transportation corridor will include: a 400-series highway, transitway and potential goods movement priority features.

The GTA West Transportation Corridor is vital transportation infrastructure that will help meet the projected growth in both population and employment identified in the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006)*, and will deliver multiple benefits including:

- Greater connectivity between urban growth centres;
- Enhanced people and goods movement;
- Improved commuting; and,
- Greater economic vitality.

The GTA West Transportation Corridor Planning and EA Study is being undertaken as an Individual EA in accordance with the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (EA Act)* and the *GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference*, which was approved by the Ontario Minister of the Environment on March 4, 2008.

Consultation and Contact Information

Comments and input regarding the study are encouraged and will continue to be collected to assist the GTA West Project Team. This material will be maintained on file for use during the project and may be included in project documentation to meet the requirements of the *Ontario EA Act*. Information collected will be used in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Access to Information Act*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

For more information, please contact the GTA West Project Team:



Website: www.gta-west.com
 Email: project_team@gta-west.com
 Toll-Free: 1-877-522-6916
 Twitter: @GTAWestStudy

Des renseignements sont disponibles en français en composant (905) 823-8500 Poste 1471 (Yannick Garnier)



Bulletin

Ontario to Review Greater Toronto Area West Corridor Project

December 16, 2015 10:00 A.M. | [Ministry of Transportation](#)

The Ministry of Transportation has suspended its work on the environmental assessment of the Greater Toronto Area West Highway Corridor (GTA West). The project will be reviewed and an update will be provided in spring 2016.

Ontario is making unprecedented investments in public transit and transportation infrastructure to help manage congestion, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the province's economy. With new emerging technologies and a steadfast commitment to protect our natural heritage in Ontario, including the Greenbelt, it is essential to have a forward looking plan when it comes to relieving congestion.

The Ministry of Transportation would like to thank those who have participated in previously held public information centres as part of the environmental assessment process. No further public information centres will be scheduled at this time.

Quotes



"Having the right transportation network in place that builds on our climate change commitments, our ability to embrace new and emerging technologies and the sharing economy, will help us plan for a flexible transportation system that adapts to our quickly changing landscape and positions our province for success for generations to come."

Steven Del Duca
Minister of Transportation

Media Contacts

Patrick Searle
Minister's Office
Patrick.Searle@ontario.ca

July 27, 2015

Ms. Natalie Rouskov, P. Eng.
MTO Project Manager
Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Central Region
1201 Wilson Ave, Building D, 4th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M3M 1J8

Dear Ms. Rouskov:

Re: GTA West Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment Study

Thank you for inviting York Region staff to a workshop on June 29, 2015 at the City of Vaughan's Municipal Offices to discuss the GTA West Corridor EA Study. York Region recognizes the importance of the GTA West transportation corridor and we strongly support this Provincial initiative.

We wish to take this opportunity to document York Region's position regarding interchange locations as well as other corridor planning and design issues as follows:

Proposed interchanges

- In order to provide sufficient connectivity to/from the arterial and concession road network, GTA West interchanges should be located at Highway 50, Highway 27, Pine Valley Drive and Weston Road.
- In addition, interchange connectivity for both King-Vaughan Road and Kirby Road in the area of the GTA West/Highway 400 freeway to freeway interchange should be included to ensure traffic to/from the east of Highway 400 has access to both freeways.

Transit and Carpool lots

- A carpool lot should be included at each proposed interchange.
- Carpool lots should include provision for transit service such as a bus loop, station platform, pedestrian shelter, bike storage as well as selective location with lockers and changing facilities.
- The GTA West should incorporate shoulder width and pavement design to ultimately accommodate bus service running on the shoulders of the freeway.

Active transportation

- In support of the strategic directions identified in #CycleON Ontario's Cycling Strategy, all interchanges should incorporate active transportation facilities to provide for safe crossing of Controlled Access Highway limits. York Region will work with MTO to coordinate walking and cycling linkages beyond the CAH limits.

Widened crossing roads

- Crossing road structures should accommodate planned road widening, cycle lanes and sidewalks.

Preferred alignment

- Please continue to consult York Region, the City of Vaughan and the Township of King on the evaluation of corridor alternatives and selection of the preferred alignment.

We look forward to continuing to work with MTO on this important initiative. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 905-830-4444 extension 75056 or steve.mota@york.ca.

Sincerely,



Steve Mota, P.Eng.
Program Manager, Transportation Planning

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September 9, 2015

Steve Mota
Program Manager – Transportation Planning
Infrastructure Management and PMO Branch, Transportation Services
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
Steve.Mota@york.ca

Dear Mr. Mota:

RE: Stage 2 of the GTA West Transportation Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study

We appreciate York Region's continued participation in the GTA West Transportation Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study and for attending the York-King-Vaughan Working Group Meeting on June 29, 2015 and for your correspondence dated July 27, 2015.

We note the Region's preference for interchanges at Highway 50, Highway 27, Pine Valley Drive and Weston Road. The Region's input will be considered as we engage in the assessment and evaluation of the short listed route and interchange location alternatives this year. With respect to connectivity to both King-Vaughan Road and Kirby Road in the area of the GTA West/Highway 400 freeway-to-freeway interchange, we are currently exploring the feasibility of providing both of these connections and will keep you updated on the status.

The project team is considering incorporating carpool lots at all interchange locations. The final locations will be determined during the preliminary design phase of the study as well as the amenities to be provided at each location (e.g. bus loop, station platform, pedestrian shelter, bike storage, lockers, changing facilities, etc.).

Regarding transit service on the highway shoulders, we expect that transit needs will be addressed within the transitway portion of the GTA West transportation corridor.

The project team is considering localized active transportation opportunities which coordinate with municipal plans. These issues will be further investigated during the preliminary design phase of the study.

We note your request for crossing structure features (including planned lanes and active transportation infrastructure) and will continue to consult with York Region and other municipalities to provide infrastructure that addresses your needs.





The GTA West Project Team will continue to engage York Region, City of Vaughan and the Township of King as the study continues. The project team's preferred route will be presented at Public Information Centre #2 in Fall/Winter 2015. For further details and updates on the study, please visit our study website: www.gta-west.com.

Sincerely,

The GTA West Project Team

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. Rouskov".



Ms. Natalie Rouskov, P. Eng.
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