

April 24, 2015

Mr. Denis Kelly  
Regional Clerk  
Regional Municipality of York  
17250 Yonge Street  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

Resolution Number 2015-268

Dear Mr. Kelly:

Subject: **Ministry of Transportation Southern Highways Program 2014-2018**

I am writing to advise that Regional Council approved the following resolution at its meeting held on Thursday, April 16, 2015:

Resolution 2015-268

That the comments outlined in the report of the Commissioner of Public Works titled 'Ministry of Transportation Southern Highways Program 2014-2018' be endorsed;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to advance the planning, design and construction of highway improvements in and surrounding Peel Region listed in the "Planning for the Future Beyond 2018" section of the Southern Highways Program 2014-2018 to within the next five years, including Highways 401, 410, 427, Queen Elizabeth Way, Simcoe Area, GTA West Corridor and Niagara to GTA Corridor;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to plan for a further extension of Highway 427 to Highway 9;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to publish a long range sustainable transportation plan for Southern Ontario highways;

And further, that a copy of the subject report be forwarded to the Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, the Regions of York and Halton, the Cities of Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto and Vaughan, and the Town of Caledon, for information.

A copy of the subject report is provided for your information.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Jurrius  
Legislative Specialist

SJ:rn

cc: Damian Albanese, Director, Transportation, Public Works, Region of Peel

encl.

Also Sent to: Steve Del Duca, Minister of Transportation  
Scott Pegg, Director (Acting), Inter-Governmental Policy Branch, Ministry  
of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure  
Karyn Bennett, Regional Clerk, Halton Region  
Peter Fay, City Clerk, City of Brampton  
Crystal Greer, City Clerk, City of Mississauga  
Ulli S. Watkiss, City Clerk, City of Toronto  
Jeffrey A. Abrams, City Clerk, City of Vaughan  
Carey deGorter, Clerk, Town of Caledon  
Tija Dirks, Director, Transportation Planning Branch, Ministry of  
Transportation  
Jason White, Acting Manager, Central Region Engineering Office,  
Ministry of Transportation

DATE: April 8, 2015

REPORT TITLE: **MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION SOUTHERN HIGHWAYS PROGRAM 2014-2018**

FROM: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Public Works

### RECOMMENDATION

That the comments outlined in the report of the Commissioner of Public Works titled 'Ministry of Transportation Southern Highways Program 2014-2018' be endorsed and forwarded to the Ministry of Transportation as such;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to advance the planning, design and construction of highway improvements in and surrounding Peel Region listed in the "Planning for the Future Beyond 2018" section of the Southern Highways Program 2014-2018 to within the next five years, including Highways 401, 410, 427, Queen Elizabeth Way, Simcoe Area, GTA West Corridor and Niagara to GTA Corridor;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to plan for a further extension of Highway 427 to Highway 9;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to publish a long range sustainable transportation plan for Southern Ontario highways;

And further, that a copy of the subject report be forwarded to the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, the Regions of York and Halton, the Cities of Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto and Vaughan, and the Town of Caledon, for information.

### REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- On March 6, 2015, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) published the Southern Highways Program (SHP) which outlines the highway improvements plan in Southern Ontario from 2014 to 2018, and beyond.
- The SHP contains 107 kilometers of new highway construction (including 10 new bridges) and 578 centerline kilometers of rehabilitation projects (including 142 bridge rehabilitations) within the next five years. Projects include widening of Highway 401, and the expansion of Highway 401 from the Highway 401/403/410 interchange to Credit River Bridge to include High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes is also underway.

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### **Highway 401**

The widening of Highway 401 between Milton and Mississauga continues to be shown in the "beyond 2018" category. It is recommended that MTO be requested to advance the construction of the widening within the next five years. To maintain Peel's and Ontario's economic competitiveness, it is critical that the widening to Highway 401 through Mississauga support the movement of goods. Staff recommends that Council continue to request MTO to further consider a full 12-lane core-distributor system on Highway 401 between the Credit River to Trafalgar Road.

Transportation staff at Peel Region and City of Mississauga continue to discuss with MTO a new ramp for Highway 401 near Dixie Road and the future Creekbank Road extension. This work would improve connectivity and network efficiency, and relieve some pressure on local and regional roads.

### **Highway 410**

For the section of Highway 410 between Queen Street and Bovaird Drive, the MTO will be undertaking an HOV lane Planning Study. However, this widening projects falls in the 'beyond 2018' category. This further widening is needed now. Staff recommends that MTO expedite this project.

### **Highway 427**

The SHP has identified the section between Highway 407 to Queen Street East/Highway 7 as a project that is 'currently approved for construction beyond 2018'. HOV lanes will be included as part of the widening. The MTO also recently filed a 427 Transitway Transportation Environmental Study Report (TESR). The key features of the recommended plan within the TESR include a new dedicated 2-lane transitway along the west side of Highway 427, two transitway stations (located south of Queen Street East/Highway 7 and south of Highway 407), a new overpass structure at Highway 407 and a new underpass structure at Queen Street East/Highway 7.

As for the extension of Highway 427 from north of Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive, the extension was included in the 2013 Provincial budget and Infrastructure Ontario is currently undertaking a value-for-money exercise and reviewing which Alternative Finance and Procurement model could be used to deliver this project. The MTO is proceeding with property acquisition (owners of expropriated lands have all been contacted), utility relocations and preparing for the next design phase. Construction could commence in 2016 or 2017 and take three to four years to complete. The highway connection to the GTA West Corridor is not part of this extension work. Regional Council has previously requested MTO to expedite this highway extension. It is recommended by staff that Peel Region should continue to request MTO to expedite the Highway 427 extension to serve communities and businesses in east Peel. In addition, staff will continue to request MTO to examine the longer term transportation needs of the Highway 427 extension corridor north to Highway 9 and beyond.

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Related to the Highway 427 extension corridor, the MTO initiated a Multi-modal Transportation Strategy in January 2012 to create a new long-term planning strategy for Simcoe County and the surrounding area that could address the region's transportation needs up to the year 2041. Over the past two years, the MTO assessed the state of the area's transportation infrastructure and network capacity, and identified existing and future system deficiencies and potential multi-modal solutions for further study. This 'Needs Assessment' work was completed in 2014 and will be used to develop a transportation strategy for the Simcoe area, including the need for follow-up EAs. The timelines are still being assessed.

### **QEW**

MTO is currently undertaking several EAs that will examine the rehabilitation and widening of the QEW between Highway 403 and Highway 427. The Dixie Road interchange reconfiguration project is part of a larger EA that is currently programmed for construction in 2018. The QEW is the key east-west corridors to link the residential area from the western GT regions to the employment areas in downtown Toronto. The advancement of the improvements will benefit the economy and quality of life.

### **GTA West Transportation Corridor Route Planning and EA Study, Stage 2**

The GTA West Corridor is an important east-west corridor to serve the growth in Peel and other regions. It will be needed to provide east-west connectivity for the developing residential and employment lands in north Brampton and Caledon.

Stage 1 of the EA concluded with the release of the Transportation Development Strategy (TDS) in November 2012. Building on the TDS recommendations, Stage 2 of the EA study commenced in February 2014 and this stage will identify the preferred route, determine interchanges locations and complete the preliminary design for the new transportation corridor within the route planning study area. The new corridor will include a 400-series highway, transitway and potential goods movement priority features. The EA is expected to be completed before the end of 2018.

A separate staff report was provided to Regional Council at its March 26, 2015 Regional Council meeting. At that meeting, the GTA West Project Team provided an update on the GTA West Transportation Corridor Route Planning and Environmental Study, Stage 2. Council requested the Commissioner of Public Works to work with Mayor Thompson to host a meeting with staff from the Region, area municipalities and community representatives to discuss issues related to the transportation corridor affecting the Town of Caledon. Council also approved Resolution 2015-164 that stated the Region of Peel recognizes and respects the extended Environmental Assessment and consultation process for this complex project, but encourages the province and the project team to expedite the determination of preferred route alternatives, so that the Region can move forward with its comprehensive planning in those areas impacted by the GTA-W study area.

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### Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and EA Study – Phase 1

MTO is currently undertaking an Individual EA to examine the multi-modal transportation system connecting Niagara Region and the GTA (NGTA). The NGTA Corridor is an important corridor for commuters and promotes better economic activities for goods movement at the Niagara-Buffalo border crossings.

The MTO completed Phase 1 of the EA, as per the approved Terms of Reference, with the September 2013 release of the final Transportation Development Strategy (TDS). The TDS recommendations will assist the MTO with Phase 2 of the NGTA Study. The TDS recommends a staged 'building block' approach for its recommended improvements and assumes (and supports) the full implementation of the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan and GO 2020 Strategic Plan projects.

The groups are as follows:

- Group 1 - Optimize Existing Networks (transit, transportation demand/system management, Active Traffic Management Study).
- Group 2 – New/Improved Non-Road Infrastructure (transit, rail, marine, air).
- Group 3 – Widen/Improve Existing Roads.
- Group 4 – New Transportation Corridors.

The highway expansion recommendations (Groups 3 and 4) were based on 3 distinct areas within the overall study area; East (St. Catharines to Fort Erie), Central (Hamilton to St. Catharines) and West (Hamilton/Halton). The recommendations are:

- East Area – new corridor connecting Highway 406/140 to the QEW;
- Central Area – widening of the QEW to 8 lanes (includes High Occupancy Vehicle lanes);
- West Area – widening of Highways 6, 403, 407 and QEW (addresses medium-term needs only).

The TDS identifies medium-term highway expansion improvements and further recommends a future study to determine how to meet longer-term (beyond 2031) needs. The timing and scope of this future study will be determined through consultation with affected municipalities, stakeholders and the public.

The MTO has not initiated Phase 2. However, MTO staff is currently working with Niagara Region as they develop some corridor protection guidelines for their Official Plan, which will help to protect the corridor for the new highway recommended in the southern tier.

Peel continues to identify the need to advance and coordinate planning for the Niagara to GTA Corridor, so as to provide commuters and commercial vehicles with an alternative connection from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to the US border. The future study should investigate long range area planning principles (i.e. Provincial Multi-Modal Transportation Plan) and examine options north of Highway 401.

### **Continued need for a Provincial Long Range Transportation Plan**

The SHP focuses primarily on operating and maintaining current highway infrastructure. It inadequately addresses current and future demand through new highway construction expansion programs. From a long term perspective, building new highways and maintaining existing ones are both equally critical to support the anticipated growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Delays in highway expansion will result in major transportation impacts, and higher property and construction costs. The need for a province-wide long range transportation plan is important to address the growth and economic competitiveness in Southern Ontario. Also, there are advantages to have a predictable program such as better enabling municipalities to plan development and integrate with the expanded highway network.

#### **4. Courtneypark Drive / Highway 410 Interchange**

The Region of Peel and City of Mississauga are close to completing an Environmental Assessment study for Courtneypark Drive (from Kennedy Road to Dixie Road). The EA is scheduled to be filed with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change in April 2015.

Findings conclude that a full moves interchange would improve traffic/level of service, goods movement, emergency response times, and balance the network. While not identified in the SHP, there is an opportunity to include a full interchange in the current Highway 410 widening project from south of Highway 401 to Queen Street.

The Region of Peel and City of Mississauga will be meeting with MTO in the upcoming months to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to cost-share as part of the current project in 2018. Staff will report back to Regional Council subsequent to this meeting.

### **CONCLUSION**

MTO has released the SHP for 2014-2018 to improve its highway network to better accommodate the growth anticipated in and around Peel Region. Although MTO is making progress on highway expansions and rehabilitations within the next five years, the projects do not adequately address the current and future needs in Peel. Highway improvement efforts should not only maximize the MTO investments already made in Peel, but also complement Peel's investment for regional transportation infrastructure improvements as per the former Term of Council Priority #14 for a Long Range Transportation Plan. From a goods movement perspective, highway improvements are necessary to maintain Peel's attractiveness as a goods movement hub. Peel's Goods Movement Strategic Plan (2012-2016) identifies a priority action to advocate for additional federal and provincial funding sources for the 400 series highway improvements. All in all, it is a collective effort from all levels of government to provide an overall transportation network that can handle existing and future needs.

The MTO is requested to advance several projects that are critical to accommodate the residential and employment growth that the Province has targeted for Peel Region, and that help to improve the economic competitiveness of not only the Region, but the Province as a whole.

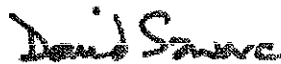
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Regional staff continues to work collaboratively with their Provincial colleagues in advancing related projects and addressing issues of concern to Peel Region. Staff will continue to report to Regional Council on the various Provincial initiatives at key milestones.



Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Public Works

Approved for Submission:



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D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

*For further information regarding this report, please contact Eric Flora, Principal Planner, extension 4694, [eric.flora@peelregion.ca](mailto:eric.flora@peelregion.ca).*

*Authored By: Eric Flora*