

January 30, 2014



Resolution Number 2014-45

Mr. Denis Kelly  
Regional Clerk  
Regional Municipality of York  
17250 Yonge Street, 4th Fl.  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

RECEIVED  
2014 FEB 11 10:52 AM  
P46

Dear Mr. Kelly:

Subject: **Provincial Transportation Initiatives Update**

I am writing to advise that Regional Council approved the following resolution at its meeting held on Thursday, January 23, 2014:

Resolution 2014-45

That the comments contained in the report of the Commissioner of Public Works, dated December 13, 2013 and titled "Provincial Transportation Initiatives Update" be endorsed and submitted to the Ministry of Transportation as such;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) 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 2017" section of the Southern Highways Program 2013-2017 to within the next five years, including Highways 401, 410, 427, Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW), 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 consider a full 12-lane core-distributor system on Highway 401 from the Credit River to Trafalgar Road;

And further, that the Minister of Transportation be requested to provide clarification on the MTO's approach to funding ramp and interchange improvements within their permit control area;

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, Metrolinx, 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 and resolution are provided for your information.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Jurrius  
Legislative Specialist

SJ:rc

Enclosure

Also Sent to: Peter Fay, Clerk, City of Brampton  
Crystal Greer, Clerk, City of Mississauga  
Ulli Watkiss, Clerk, City of Toronto  
Jeffrey Abrams, Clerk, City of Vaughan  
Carey deGorter, Clerk, Town of Caledon  
Karyn Bennett, Clerk, Regional Municipality of Halton  
Tija Dirks, Director of Transportation Planning, Ministry of Transportation  
Jason White, Head Central Region Planning and Design, Ministry of Transportation  
Lisa Salsberg, Manager, Strategic Policy and Systems Planning, Metrolinx

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**REPORT**  
Meeting Date: January 23, 2014  
Regional Council

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DATE: December 13, 2013

REPORT TITLE: **PROVINCIAL TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES UPDATE**

FROM: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Public Works

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the comments contained in the report of the Commissioner of Public Works, dated December 13, 2013 and titled "Provincial Transportation Initiatives Update" be endorsed and submitted to the Ministry of Transportation as such;**

**And further, that the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) 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 2017" section of the Southern Highways Program 2013-2017 to within the next five years, including Highways 401, 410, 427, Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW), 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;**

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**And further, that the Minister of Transportation be requested to provide clarification on the MTO's approach to funding ramp and interchange improvements within their permit control area;**

**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 Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx, the Regions of York and Halton, the Cities of Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto and Vaughan, and the Town of Caledon, for information.**

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- In November 2013, MTO published the Southern Highways Program (SHP) which outlines the highway improvements plan in Southern Ontario from 2013 to 2017, and beyond.
- The SHP contains 52 kilometres of new highway construction (including eight new bridges) and 432 kilometres of rehabilitation projects (including 112 bridge rehabilitations) within the next five years, including widening of Highway 401 between Highway 410/403 interchange and Hurontario Street in Mississauga.
- The SHP also provides a list of projects that are beyond 2017, including extension of Highway 427, and widening of Highways 401 and 410.
- MTO is requested to expedite the planning and construction of the highways in Peel to keep pace with anticipated traffic demand due to the development of residential and employment lands.
- The Minister of Transportation is requested to provide clarification on the MTO's 'new approach' to funding ramp and interchange improvements.
- The GTA West Stage 2 EA Request for Proposals closed in October 2013. The Stage 2 consultant team has been notified of their selection by the MTO and the legal paperwork is being finalized. Once the legal agreements have been signed by both parties, the MTO will notify Peel Region staff of the selected consultant team. The MTO is on schedule to start Stage 2 later this month. This EA will determine the alignment for the new facility and allows the phased release of lands that are no longer required to be protected.
- As part of the Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment (EA) Study, the MTO released the final Transportation Development Strategy (TDS) report. The TDS recommends highway expansions in Halton, Hamilton and Niagara regions, and identifies the need for a new transportation corridor connecting Highway 406/140 to the QEW.

**DISCUSSION**

**1. Background**

On November 6, 2013, MTO released the latest SHP for the period between 2013 and 2017, and a general program for beyond 2017. Since 2006, MTO has released its annual SHP, which is a five-year highway improvement plan for construction widening (expansion), and rehabilitation of provincial highways and bridges in Southern Ontario. Each year, the Ministry plans for and re-examines its highway program and project priorities across Ontario. The SHP for 2013-2017 contains 52 kilometres of new highway construction (including eight new bridges) and 432 kilometres of rehabilitation projects (including 112 bridge rehabilitations). The SHP notes that in 2013/2014, the Ontario government will be investing \$2.2 billion to repair and expand provincial highways and bridges, with \$1.72 billion for Southern Ontario, creating or sustaining more than 17,000 direct and indirect jobs. The SHP report is available online at:

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/pubs/highway-construction/southern-highway-2013/southern-highway-en-2013.pdf>

The Province's investment for highway improvement complements Peel's investment on Regional road improvements. Peel's Term of Council Priorities support a good transportation system by updating the Long Range Transportation Plan, improves the efficiency of goods movement in Peel (highway improvements that are critical for truck movement) and influencing other levels of government to ensure the needs for the Peel community are considered and reflected in policy decisions of upper tier governments. It is important that Peel's interests are protected in the SHP.

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In addition to the SHP, there is another transportation planning initiative that is underway within the Region of Peel. The purpose of this report is to provide a brief synopsis for that project as well.

**2. Provincial Highway Improvements in Peel Region**

As outlined in the SHP for period between 2013 and 2017, MTO proposes six highway rehabilitations and only one highway widening (expansion) project in Peel. The focus on maintaining the state of good repair is necessary, but not adequate to address the growth and intensification as directed by the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Timely highway expansion will be critical to accommodate the residential and employment growth targets of the province.

**a) Projects between 2013 and 2017**

**i) Highway 401 (widening, resurfacing and bridge rehabilitations)**

Highway 401 is the major east-west connector in Peel. Improvements to Highway 401 are progressing at different stages for various sections of the highway. The construction between Highway 410/403 interchange and Hurontario Street will result in the expansion of the current 6-lane highway into a 12-lane core-distributor system. The work is anticipated to be completed by 2014. In addition to the widening, there are several rehabilitation projects planned, including resurfacing between Renforth Drive and Highway 410 (project completion Fall 2014), and bridge rehabilitation of the Highway 403 ramp, Dixie Road bridge (project has commenced), and eastbound ramp over Heart Lake Road.

**ii) QEW (resurfacing and bridge rehabilitations)**

Being one of the oldest freeways in Ontario, the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) requires significant rehabilitation. The rehabilitation of the Credit Valley Bridge is underway and will be completed late 2013/early 2014. Resurfacing of the QEW between Winston Churchill Boulevard and Mississauga Road will also be completed. As well, several structures along the QEW will be rehabilitated within this timeframe.

**iii) Highway 403 (resurfacing and bridge rehabilitations)**

MTO has initiated a resurfacing project for the Highway 403 eastbound collector lanes between the Central Parkway overpass and Highway 401 (project completion Fall 2013), and between Winston Churchill Boulevard and Ford Drive (project completion Fall 2014). In addition, bridges along Highway 403 at Burnhamthorpe Road, Eglinton Avenue and Mississauga Road are currently undergoing rehabilitation and expected to be completed sometime in 2014.

**iv) Highway 410 (resurfacing)**

Highway 410 between Bovaird Drive and Queen Street was resurfaced in the Fall 2013 and works are substantially complete.

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### v) Highways 9 and 10

The SHP identifies Highway 9 (west of Tottenham Road to 2.4 km west of Regional Road 50) and Highway 10 (1 km south of Forks of the Credit Road to 1 km south of Charleston Sideroad) for resurfacing.

### vi) Miscellaneous Projects

The MTO is installing new overhead sign support and structures along the QEW, and Highways 401 and 403 with a project completion timing of next year. In addition, there are various culvert replacements/repairs along the QEW and Highways 9, 401 and 403 with a project completion timing of next summer.

### b) Projects beyond 2017

Planning for long term transportation needs is important to accommodate growth. Also, it is essential to our economy and the quality of life for Ontarians. The SHP includes a section of "Planning for the Future Beyond 2017" with no specific implementation timeframe. Projects in this category that are within and surrounding Peel Region include:

- Highway 401 widening from Mississauga to Milton,
- Highway 410 widening between Highway 401 and Bovaird Drive,
- Highway 427 widening (HOV expansion) between Highway 409 and Highway 407,
- Highway 427 extension (new highway) between north of Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive,
- QEW rehabilitation and widening between Highway 403 and Highway 427
- GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment Study – Stage 2
- Niagara to GTA Corridor and Environmental Study – Phase 2
- Simcoe Area Multi-modal Transportation Strategy

Project timing is subject to change based on funding, planning, design, environmental approval, property acquisition and construction requirements.

### 3. Future Direction/Projects

Congestion is the top transportation issue in Peel. Peel is expecting a population increase from approximately 1.3 million today to 1.6 million in 20 years as directed by the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The five-year plan as stipulated in the SHP focuses primarily on rehabilitation projects, and is not sufficient to provide capacity to handle growth. Staff recommends that the projects in the "Planning for the Future Beyond 2017" section be advanced and expanded to address current needs and accommodate projected growth.

#### Highway 401

The widening of Highway 401 between Milton and Mississauga continues to be shown in the "beyond 2017" 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

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between the Credit River to Trafalgar Road. In November 2012, the City of Mississauga recommended the same.

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

MTO is in the detailed design stage for one High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane and one General Purpose Lane, in each direction, from south of Highway 401 to Queen Street. The MTO intends to tender this project in March 2014. 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 project falls in the 'beyond 2017' category. These widenings are needed now. Staff recommends that MTO expedite these projects.

### Highway 427

The SHP includes the widening of Highway 427 for HOV lanes from Highway 409 to Highway 407. The SHP has identified the section between Highway 407 to Highway 7 as a project that is currently 'approved for construction beyond 2017'. In early November 2013, the MTO filed the Transportation Environmental Study Report with the Ministry of the Environment.

As for the extension of Highway 427 from north of Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive, the EA was approved by the Ministry of the Environment in 2011, however, this construction funding is not included in the 2013-2017 projects of the SHP. That said, in May 2013, Premier Wynne announced, as part of the 2014 Provincial Budget, the extension of Highway 427 to Major Mackenzie Drive. While specific details of the extension have yet to be released, construction is expected to begin in 2017 and completed by 2020. It is anticipated that the extension will be included when the SHP is updated for the 2014-2018 time horizon. 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.

Related to the Highway 427 extension corridor, the MTO continues to work on its Needs Assessment as part of a new Simcoe Area Multi-modal Transportation Strategy. MTO has engaged its municipal partners throughout this work and anticipate additional consultation in 2014. Once complete, this work will inform the MTO's long-range planning strategy, including the need for follow-up EAs.

### 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 currently 'approved for construction beyond 2017'. QEW is one of the key east-west corridors to link the residential area from the western GTA regions to the employment areas in downtown Toronto. The advancement of the improvements will benefit the economy and quality of life.

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### **GTA West Corridor Stage 2 Environmental Assessment**

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. Regional Council, through Resolution 2012-923, formally requested the MTO to expedite Stage 2 of the EA process.

In August 2013, the MTO released the Request for Proposals (RFP) Terms of Reference to undertake Stage 2 of the EA study with a closing date in late October. The MTO has indicated that a Stage 2 consultant team has been notified of their selection and the legal paperwork is being finalized. Once the legal agreements have been signed by both parties, the MTO will notify Peel Region staff of the selected consultant team. The MTO is on schedule to start Stage 2 later this month. The Stage 2 EA work will consist of 'route planning' for a new corridor where an ultimate alignment will be determined. Environmental monitoring data for the corridor will be undertaken in 2014 and it is anticipated that alignment options will be developed by mid 2015.

The MTO is proactively working with the Ministry of the Environment and other agencies to get up-front buy-in on the phased release of lands. The MTO recognize the importance of this step to the area municipalities and development community, and thus, any lands that are not required for the ultimate design and future construction will be subsequently released in a timely matter.

Consultation activities during this stage of the EA are expected to be structured around obtaining input at key study steps as noted within the approved Individual EA Terms of Reference.

Staff will provide updates to Regional Council on the EA study as it progresses. Staff will continue to work with MTO to help ensure that the project is completed expeditiously.

### **Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment 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 Niagara to GTA Corridor is an important corridor for commuters and promotes better economic activities for goods movement at the Niagara-Buffalo border crossings.

The MTO released the final Transportation Development Strategy (TDS) in September 2013, as approved by the Minister of Transportation, for a sixty (60) day public review and comment period that ended November 4, 2013. It should be noted that comments received after this date will still be accepted and will assist the MTO with Phase 2 of the NGTA Study. Regional staff provided detailed comments to the MTO project team, and a copy of the letter is attached as Appendix I. The TDS release signals the end of Phase 1 of the EA as per the approved Individual EA Terms of Reference. 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)



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- 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 three 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 eight 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. Appendix II shows the Highway Expansion Recommendations as noted in the final TDS Executive Summary September 2013.

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 GTA to the US border. The future study should investigate long range area planning principles (ie/ Provincial 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. Funding of Development and Growth-related Improvements**

Within the MTO's permit control area of up to 800 metres (2625 feet) from a Provincial Highway, MTO has the legal authority to issue permits for the purpose of controlling and regulating buildings, land use, etc. This authority is granted under the *Public Highways and Transportation Improvement Act*.

As part of the permit approval process, a developer is required to submit a traffic impact study (TIS). The current approach has been that each developer submit a TIS to show the impacts of their individual development on traffic in the vicinity.

Recently, Regional staff have become aware of developments in the Highway 410 and Mayfield Road area where permits are being withheld as MTO claims that specific

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developments are triggering the need for improvements to MTO ramps, and the affected developers are responsible for the entire cost of these improvements.

In staff level discussions, MTO has acknowledged that the current approach is perhaps not the most equitable or effective and has asked that Regional staff coordinate a comprehensive traffic impact study from Sandalwood Parkway to Mayfield Road which would assess the cumulative impacts of development within the permit control area and assign a percentage of costs to each of the affected developers, with the Region paying these costs up front and being responsible for collecting funds from developers. Regional staff have indicated to MTO that while it supports a more equitable approach to funding of improvements, it would be more appropriate for MTO to coordinate this comprehensive study and collect funds. This approach could necessitate revisions to the *Development Charges Act*. MTO should also explore the most appropriate time in the process to inform developers of financial requirements (i.e., Secondary Plans vs. during building construction). Staff recommend that MTO initiate discussions with the appropriate Ministries to explore these options.

Similarly, Regional Council has long recognized the need for a full moves interchange on Highway 410 at Courtneypark Drive (Regional Official Plan Policy 5.9.3.2.7d) to support goods movement and overall traffic flow throughout the Region. MTO, however, has not identified these improvements in their own studies. The City of Mississauga, in partnership with the Region of Peel, is currently undertaking an Environmental Assessment study of Courtneypark Drive (from Kennedy Road to Dixie Road) which may confirm the need for a full moves interchange. Preliminary discussions with MTO indicate that, should the City's EA for Courtneypark Drive confirm the need for a full moves interchange, that a developer or municipal funded arrangement may also be necessary in this area.

Staff felt it appropriate to make Council aware of this new approach by MTO as it could have potential implications on further development in Peel and throughout the Province.

Regional staff are seeking clarification from MTO on this issue but have received no response to date. Staff will continue to pursue a response from MTO and will report back to Regional Council once further information is available.

**CONCLUSION**

MTO has released the SHP for 2013-2017 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 not only maximize the MTO investments already made in Peel, but also complement Peel's investment for regional transportation infrastructure improvements as per the 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. Peels' 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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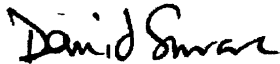
**PROVINCIAL TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES UPDATE**

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:**



D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

*For further information regarding this report, please contact Eric L. Flora at extension 4694 or via email at [eric.flora@peelregion.ca](mailto:eric.flora@peelregion.ca)*

*Authored By:* Eric L. Flora

c. Legislative Services

December 13, 2013  
PROVINCIAL TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES UPDATE

APPENDIX I



*The Region of Peel is the proud recipient of the National Quality Institute Order of Excellence, Quality, the National Quality Institute Canada Award of Excellence Gold Award, Healthy Workplace, and a 2008 IPAC/Deloitte Public Sector Leadership Gold Award.*

November 1, 2013

**VIA E-MAIL**

Mr. John Siobodzian  
Project Coordinator  
Ontario Ministry of Transportation  
Provincial Planning Office  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 301 St. Paul Street  
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 7R4

Dear Mr. Siobodzian:

**Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study –  
Phase 1 Final Transportation Development Strategy**

The Region of Peel has received and reviewed the Niagara to GTA (NGTA) Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study, Phase 1 final Transportation Development Strategy (TDS). It is our understanding that the TDS release signals the end of Phase 1 of the Individual EA as per the approved Individual EA Terms of Reference. The MTO is currently undertaking this EA in order to examine the multi-modal transportation system connecting Niagara Region and the GTA. The NGTA Corridor is an important corridor for all commuters and promotes better economic activities for goods movement at the Niagara-Buffalo border crossings.

**Recommended Transportation Improvements**

The Region of Peel supports the recommended staged 'building block' approach, including the MTO's 'optimization first' principle, as that is in line with Peel's focus on sustainability and the development of healthy communities. Peel also supports the following 'group' recommendations:

- Group 1 - Optimize Existing Networks – through enhanced/expanded transit (ie/ Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan and GO 2020 Strategic Plan), transportation demand/system management projects and an Active Traffic Management Study.
- Group 2 – New/Improved Non-Road Infrastructure – through additional transit (ie/ Hamilton-focussed Inter-regional transit study), rail, marine and air initiatives.
- Group 3 – Widen/Improve Existing Roads - widening of Highways 6, 403, 407 and the QEW

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**Public Works**

10 Peel Centre Dr., Suite 8, Brampton, ON L6T 4B9  
Tel: 905-791-7800 www.peelregion.ca

## PROVINCIAL TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES UPDATE

- Group 4 – New Transportation Corridors – new corridor connecting Highway 406/140 in Welland to the QEW in Fort Erie.

Staff recommends that the MTO undertake an EA as soon as possible that looks at a central corridor connection between southern Niagara Region and the southerly portion of the City of Hamilton. This new corridor would provide relief to the daily congestion on the QEW within the Hamilton-Niagara area, and provide reliability and redundancy in the overall transportation network. This central corridor, together with the GTA West Corridor, will form an integrated by-pass network to serve the long term need.

In regards to the group 4 recommendation, the Region of Peel supports the expeditious undertaking of Phase 2 (route planning) of the EA study for the new corridor in the Welland/Fort Erie area. For this work, and going forward on a permanent basis, staff recommends that the MTO investigate and develop progressive design, engineering and routing solutions that least impact key environmental features (Greenbelt, Niagara Escarpment) within the western greater golden horseshoe area.

The TDS further recommends a future study to determine how to meet longer-term (beyond 2031) infrastructure needs. The timing and scope of this future study will be determined through consultation with affected municipalities, stakeholders and the public. In order to ensure adequate transportation capacity through Peel, the expeditious widening of Highway 401 through Peel and Halton Regions will be necessary, along with the construction of the GTA West corridor. Peel continues to identify the need to advance and coordinate planning for the NGTA Corridor with the GTA West study, so as to provide commuters and commercial vehicles with an alternative connection from the GTA to the US border. The future study should investigate long range area planning principles (ie/ Provincial Transportation Plan) and examine options north of Highway 401. Therefore, Peel formally requests that the MTO work with Regional staff in the development of this separate future study scope of work and its associated terms of reference.

### **Need for Expediting the Corridor Protection Process**

Currently, there exists a policy gap in the Provincial Policy Statement which does not provide sufficient protection for planning transportation facilities prior to completion of the EA. Municipalities, and the MTO, need to protect these corridors in the earliest stages of planning in order to ensure key transportation corridors are available and not precluded by development pressures. As such, the MTO should undertake Phase 2 of the EA as soon as possible in order to identify those corridor lands/rights-of-way which need be protected/designated by the Province for current and future transportation needs.

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#### **Public Works**

10 Peel Centre Dr., Suite B, Brampton, ON L6T 4B9  
Tel: 905-791-7800 [www.peelregion.ca](http://www.peelregion.ca)

## PROVINCIAL TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES UPDATE

### Municipal Caucus

As your team is aware, the Region of Peel is part of an alliance (Regions of Halton, Niagara and Waterloo, and City of Hamilton) known as the Municipal Caucus. This municipal caucus has participated in discussions with the MTO and Southern Ontario Gateway Council regarding strategic transportation planning that supports economic development. This group will be developing a Project Charter (set of guiding principles) and Governance Structure, and its vision is for the establishment of a Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation and Trade corridor; a strategic economic link to markets and an effective route for goods movement traffic.

The alliance's ultimate goal is an integrated multi-modal goods movement network that:

- Addresses existing highway capacity issues;
- Maximizes the potential of air, rail and marine modes;
- Provides efficient connections to hubs, employment lands and local and bi-national markets;
- Provides redundancy to reduce impacts of collisions or maintenance construction work;
- Addresses sensitive natural heritage, social, cultural and environmental areas; and
- Is planned and implemented in partnership with municipalities, the Provincial and Federal governments and the private sector.

The Region will continue to actively participate in this alliance and keep the Province informed as this initiative progresses.

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

Congestion is the top transportation issue in Peel. The MTO's five-year Southern Highways Program plan 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.

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#### Public Works

10 Peel Centre Dr., Suite B, Brampton, ON L6T 4B9  
Tel: 905-791-7800 [www.peelregion.ca](http://www.peelregion.ca)

## PROVINCIAL TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES UPDATE

### **Need to Extend Planning Horizon for NGTA EA Study**

The highway recommendations listed in the group 3 activities do not address the longer term needs of the overall NGTA study area. The current MTO process for highway planning does not factor in the draft 2041 future growth projections released by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The draft Provincial Planning Policy Statement states that infrastructure can indeed be planned beyond the 20 year horizon; however to staff's knowledge, this has not been done in the past. It is clear that the ability to protect lands based on a relatively short 2031 planning horizon is challenging as the lands in the potential corridors can be well advanced in the planning and development process. Therefore, it would be prudent to consider planning for transportation needs well beyond the 2031 horizon (to 2041 or 2051). Regional staff previously provided this comment to the Province as it relates to the GTA West EA Study and the development of their proposed Corridor Protection guidelines (intended to provide guidance and tools to municipalities)

### **Streamlining of the EA Process**

Related to several of the aforementioned issues, there is the continuing need for the Province to consider streamlining the EA process for highway/transportation network planning. The Region is cognizant of the issues and risks associated with the Province introducing an EA reform package. However, current EA process inefficiencies must be addressed in order to maximize economic opportunities for the area municipalities and businesses to meet development pressures. The status quo is unlikely to ensure the 'betterment' of Ontarians or to secure long-term environmental protection and sustainability. While there may be a risk associated with subjecting the Environmental Assessment Act to renewed legislative debate, there appears to be a far greater risk in refusing to do so in a timely manner.

### **Goods Movement Strategic Plan Action Plan**

In 2009, Peel Regional Council approved the establishment of the Peel Goods Movement Task Force, a joint public-private forum for goods movement in the Region. The Goods Movement Program will (i) support and influence sustainable transportation systems to ensure that goods are transported in an efficient and timely manner, and (ii) optimize the use of existing infrastructure and capacity, and minimize adverse environmental, social and economic impacts caused by goods movement transportation.

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#### **Public Works**

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**PROVINCIAL TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES UPDATE**

Attaining efficiency in goods movement is a Regional priority.

In April 2012, Regional Council adopted the *Strategic Plan 2012 to 2016*. Under four (4) Strategic Directions, twenty three (23) action items have been identified by the Task Force to champion over the course of the next five (5) years in order to help move goods more efficiently, manage congestion and mitigate its effects on health and the environment.

Border crossings is one of the key issues faced by Peel businesses, and advocating for border crossing improvements for the benefit of goods movement and the overall economy is one of the 23 action items.

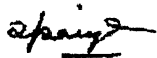
Regional staff would like to extend an invitation to NGTA study team member in order to provide them with further details on the Goods Movement Strategic Plan and its 23 action items. For more information please visit [www.peelregion.ca/pw/roads/goodsmovement](http://www.peelregion.ca/pw/roads/goodsmovement)

**Conclusion**

Regional staff would like to commend the NGTA study team on the significant amount of work that your team has accomplished in developing this TDS and its recommendations, including the extensive consultation program conducted during Phase 1 of the Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment study. We look forward to similar consultation and our active involvement as the study progresses in the next phase of work.

Should you wish to discuss these comments, please contact Eric Flora, P. Eng., CET, Principal Planner. Eric can be reached by email at [eric.flora@peelregion.ca](mailto:eric.flora@peelregion.ca) or by telephone at 905-791-7800 ext.4694.

Sincerely,



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Manager, Transportation System Planning  
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E & O.E.

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