

Meeting Minutes

Project Name: GTA West Transportation Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study, Stage 2 Meeting: CAG Meeting #1

Assignment No. 2013-E-008 Date: October 28, 2014

Time: 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Location: Courtyard Marriott, 90 Biscayne Crescent, Brampton, ON L6W 4S1

Independent Facilitator: Glenn Pothier GLPi

Project Team Attendees:

Natalie Rouskov	MTO
Chris Barber	MTO
Neil Ahmed	MMM
Sandy Nairn	MMM
Patrick Puccini	URS
Benjamin Loucks	URS
Britta Patkowski	URS

CAG Members: Removed in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

Legend: Q: Question
R: Response
C: Comment

1. Opening Remarks and Introductions

G. Pothier welcomed the meeting attendees, reviewed the meeting agenda, and facilitated introductions of attendees around the room. G. Pothier highlighted three objectives of the meeting:

- Affirm the role of the CAG and its relationship to the project
- Provide an overview of the study and work completed to date
- Seek feedback on potential route alternatives and potential interchange locations

G. Pothier noted that, in the interest of transparency and openness, general members of the public are permitted to attend CAG meetings as observers.

N. Rouskov thanked members for attending. She emphasized the role of the CAG as a sounding board for the project team to get early preview input of interim outcomes prior to the more formal consultation as scheduled.

2. About the Community Advisory Group (CAG)

G. Pothier highlighted key features about the CAG:

- The CAG is not a decision making body, but will provide advice to the project team.

- Membership in the CAG is fluid. Some people may leave as their interest in the project is diminished, and new people may join. However, members are encouraged to stay involved for the duration of the study.
- The project team attends meetings to listen, consider member ideas, observe and inform members, and clarify issues.
- The CAG has been formed to help the project team address challenges and realize opportunities; act as a conduit between constituents with whom members may have relationships and the project team; and facilitate a high quality outcome.

The CAG agreed that meetings should be held at the same location over the course of the project, although the location will not be the same as the one for this meeting since it will no longer be available.

G. Pothier presented the expectations for CAG members and guidelines for the meeting. Highlights included:

- Respect the confidentiality of material that is presented, since it is in progress and subject to change prior to public release.
- Sending substitutes is acceptable, although the substitute is expected to be familiar with the project and issues.
- There is no designated spokesperson for the CAG.
- Come to meetings prepared to discuss the issues constructively.
- Declare any conflicts of interest for the subject being discussed.
- Names of attendees will be made public to facilitate openness and transparency.

All CAG members present agreed to abide by the guidelines highlighted by G. Pothier.

Questions regarding the structure of the CAG and meeting procedures:

Q: How does confidentiality work?

R: CAG members will not be inhibited and are encouraged to speak freely regarding the project outside of the meeting. However, members are asked to not share identified confidential information until it is publicly available.

Q: How can we contact the project team?

R: Contact information will be provided

Stakeholders can contact the project team via the project website (www.gta-west.com), the project Twitter site (@GTAWestStudy), and the project toll-free telephone line (1-877-522-6916).

3. Study Overview and Status Update

P. Puccini provided an overview of the recommendations from Stage 1 of the study and the focus of Stage 2 of the study, the project schedule, the Stage 2 planning process, what the new corridor will look like, how potential interchange locations were developed and screened, and what goods movement priority features are being considered.

4. Overview of the Development and Screening of the Long List of Route Alternatives and Potential Interchange Locations

N. Ahmed provided an overview of how route alternatives were developed and screened, described the long list of route alternatives, provided an overview of the key reasons why route alternatives were

screened out in the west, central and east sections of the study area, and described the short list of route alternatives.

Q: Can the route transition from one colour depicting a potential route to another?

R: Yes. The corridor was divided into 10 sections to assess and evaluate each alternative in greater detail, and colours were randomly assigned to route alternatives in each section. The project team does not have to follow a single colour throughout the study area, and can link one coloured route alternative to a different coloured route alternative in an adjacent section.

Q: Will the new corridor be a toll road?

R: No decision has been made at this time. Tolling is an implementation issue that will likely be determined at a late stage of this study or subsequent studies. The traffic forecasting being done as part of Stage 2 of this study reflects a non-tolled roadway.

Q: Different posted speed limits are used in other jurisdictions, such as 110 km/h in Nova Scotia. Does that affect the design of the corridor?

R: We typically use a design speed of 120 km/hr. for new freeways, assuming a posted speed limit of 100 km/h. Design speeds vary from province to province, and it does influence the design of the freeway. Starting with a design speed greater than the posted speed provides an improved level of comfort/speed and the opportunity to tighten curves if needed.

Q: What is happening with Highway 427?

R: Highway 427 will be extended to Major Mackenzie Drive as part of a separate project. This study includes extending it further to terminate at the GTA West transportation corridor.

Q: Can the short list be changed?

R: Yes, the short list is preliminary and may be subject to change, even after the PIC. The lines shown here are based on what we know today, and may need to be changed if new information arises based on input received.

Q: Why are two crossings of the Credit River being carried forward?

R: More than one alternative is needed throughout the length of the study in case new information revealed through consultation, fieldwork, or design result in one of the alternatives becoming infeasible.

Q: What is the property acquisition process?

R: MTO has a property acquisition process in place that will be initiated at study approval and continue until construction. Staff from MTO's Property Section will be present at the PIC.

Q: Why did the impacted features (such as a gold course) shown in the presentation result in screening out alternatives?

R: The features identified in the presentation were samples of some of the features that were impacted. The decision to screen out alternatives resulted from an assessment of all the trade-offs for each alternative. The complete assessment table will be available at the PIC.

- Q: Do route alternatives have to stay within blue study area line? Why not consider moving it further north?
- R: Yes, route alternatives must stay within the Route Planning Study Area. The Route Planning Study Area was established during Stage 1 based on opportunities, known constraints and sensitive areas.
- Q: What is meant by the transitway?
- R: The transitway will be a separate roadway exclusively used by buses. It will be grade separated so buses won't stop at crossing roads. There will likely be stations at interchanges with parking lots and kiss and rides.
- Q: Is the Halton Peel Boundary Area Transportation Study (HPBATS) reflected in the land use map?
- R: The HPBATS recommended road network included a Halton-Peel Freeway from the Highway 401/407 ETR interchange west of Ninth Line to Mayfield Road. The ministry has taken over the responsibility of this study, and some of the potential GTA West route alternatives reflect the essence of the HPBATS recommended road network.
- Q: Do the different colours used to identify the route alternatives have any meaning?
- R: No, the colours are arbitrary and were used to easily identify different routes visually.
- Q: Have municipalities provided feedback on the short list route alternatives?
- R: No, municipalities have not yet seen the short list of route alternatives. They will see the preliminary route alternatives at the Municipal Advisory Group meeting, being held the week of November 3.
- Q: Will the transitway be similar to the BRT on Highway 7 or bus bypass lanes on Highway 403?
- R: Similar, but it will be fully grade separated (unlike Highway 7), meaning no stopping at intersections, and on its own right-of-way (unlike the lanes on Highway 403).
- Q: Which route has the fewest interchanges?
- R: All the interchanges shown are potential interchange locations so the number of interchange that will be implemented is not yet known, regardless of route alternative. Some interchange alternatives preclude adjacent interchanges.
- Q: What are the gray lines shown on the short list of route alternatives map?
- R: The gray lines represent long list alternatives that have been screened out.
- Q: Is it possible that the project team would go back to a long list alternative that had been screened out?
- R: Yes, if the project team is made aware of new information that affects the screening process.
- Q: Bovaird Drive near the Credit River is a very deep valley. Would you just build a bridge? Do you understand the depth of the valley?
- R: We have done some investigations but still need to do more fieldwork. We have a general understanding of topography within the Route Planning Study Area based on initial site visits, secondary source reviews, and information provided by the conservation authorities and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Local stakeholders such as CAG members often know more about local issues, so as potential issues or challenging areas arise such as this one, we will seek your feedback and input to identify solutions.

Q: Is there a need to have three different options crossing the Credit Valley for the purpose of the study, even if the alternative closest to Norval is not desirable from an environmental stand point?

R: We need to have a multiple options, especially at critical sections like the Credit River. If we find something that would eliminate one of the alternatives (such as a First Nations burial ground) we need to have alternatives.

Q: Have the conservation authorities provided input on the short list of route alternatives?

R: We have met with the conservation authorities and have received secondary source information from them. They have provided input into the route generation process but have not identified a preferred crossing alternative.

5. Feedback on the Preliminary Short List of Route Alternatives

G. Pothier led a P.O.W.E.R. exercise for the preliminary short list of route alternatives for the west, central and east sections of the study area. For each section, attendees were asked to comment/share about the P – Positives, O – Objections, W – What Else Do You Want To Share?, E – Enhancements, R – Remedies of the preliminary short list of route alternatives.

WEST SECTION (*Highway 401/407 ETR Interchange to Mississauga Road*)

- Minimal intrusion on Halton Hills employment lands.
- Two of the alternatives cross the Credit River adjacent to the pipeline.
- The red alternative provides greater opportunities and keeps future development lands in Halton Hills intact.
- There is potential to alleviate congestion at the Highway 401/407 ETR interchange, especially for trucks.
- Alternative 1C has fewer interchanges which would save the Province of Ontario money. It also has the smallest impact on woodlots.
- *General Comment:* Highway 401 through Milton is also planned to be widened, which will further change traffic patterns.
- Employment lands often straddle 400-series highways. There are designated employment lands from 10th Line to Winston Churchill Boulevard. Moving Alternative 1E further south and aligning it with Winston Churchill Boulevard will promote better interaction between the transportation network and land use.
- There is still a bottleneck on Highway 401 west of the 407 ETR interchange towards Milton. The project team should move the whole corridor further west.
- The southernmost part of Alternative 1E connecting the Highway 401/407 ETR interchange may be problematic.
- Is the retail factory outlet mall at Highway 401 and Trafalgar Road impacted by one of the alternatives?
 - *The project team noted that it is west of the Route Planning Study Area.*
- Alternative 2A1 has extensive impacts at Bovaird Drive. In 2014 The Town of Halton Hills approved a hamlet area tourism initiative for the village of Norval. It took two years to complete the study to protect the village.
- Norval is an integral part of Halton Hills. Alternative 1C will prevent development south of Halton Hills and draw employment lands towards the GTA West corridor.
- There is no need for a GTA West connection to the Highway 401/407 ETR interchange further west. A freeway-to-freeway interchange can be constructed directly tying into the existing interchange.

- Alternative 1C/2A1 cuts Norval in half and impacts water reservoirs that are used for agriculture.
- The curve in Alternative 2A1 north of the Credit River looks sharp.
 - *The project team noted that all geometry conforms to a 120 km/h design speed.*
- Moving the GTA West/Highway 401 interchange further west will reduce the draw of traffic from 401/407 ETR east to GTA West and may encourage traffic to use local roads instead. Consider keeping the interchange further east.

CENTRAL SECTION (*Mississauga Road to Highway 50*)

- The potential interchange locations are reasonable.
- Alternative 10C is preferred as a more direct connection between Highway 410 and the GTA West transportation corridor.
- Alternative 10C provides development opportunities, such as flanking it with prestige industrial lands. It would also reduce noise and light impacts to existing residential communities, provide a more direct route, provide a better grid pattern, and provide opportunities to improve emergency services access to the Valleywood community.
- There are too many interchanges.
- Alternative 10B does not improve existing issues regarding access to the Valleywood community for emergency services in the event of an accident at the Valleywood Drive interchange.
- The northern most route alternative impacts more agricultural lands and divides farms. It does not follow lot lines.
- The option to use and upgrade the existing Highway 410/Hurontario Road option won't have enough room for the transitway.
 - *The project team noted that they may consider alternatives for that section such as using shoulder bus bypass lanes or an HOV lane.*
- Consider what will happen to the existing Highway 410/Hurontario Street around Valleywood if Alternative 10B is not carried forward.
- The project team should consider locating the corridor on abandoned (or planned-to-be-abandoned) quarries.
- Crossing roads will be needed for farm vehicles to cross the corridor.

EAST SECTION (*Highway 50 to Highway 400*)

- Alternative 7F is adjacent to the hydro corridor and the conservation authority has indicated that it would have the least impacts to their concerns. It also extends Highway 427 further north which would improve employment land opportunities.
- Alternative 427B provides better opportunities for future extension of Highway 427.
- Alternatives 7D and 7E impact future development areas. Consider revisiting alternative 7F.
- Consider moving the Pine Valley Drive interchange to Weston Road. Pine Valley Drive is in a sensitive area and does not extend very far north or south.
- It would be helpful to have cemeteries and other features on maps so we can comment on them specifically.
- There are existing traffic issues at the Highway 400/Highway 401 interchange. The GTA West/Highway 400 interchange will create similar issues, and exacerbate issues at the Highway 400/Highway 401 interchange.
 - *The project team noted that extensive traffic modeling is being completed as part of this study. This includes assessment of the entire transportation network in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The findings of this analysis are expected to be presented in*

2015/2016. Furthermore, the GTA West transportation corridor may result in diversion of some traffic away from the Highway 400/Highway 401 interchange.

6. Upcoming Public Information Centre: Anticipating Public and Stakeholder Reaction

G. Pothier noted that the project team is aiming to hold a Public Information Centre later this year and asked attendees to provide insight on the following issues - with a view to assisting the project team to best address the concerns and information needs of the public:

1. How will stakeholders react to the short list of route alternatives and interchange locations presented at Public Information Centre #1?
 2. Are there “hot spots” or “hot topics” you foresee?
 3. What strategies/responses can we provide to address the “hot spots” or “hot topics”?
- Provide more information on maps so the public can see what features are impacted by the different route alternatives.
 - Consider how the transitway will connect to other local and regional transit systems, and show potential transit connection locations.
 - Consider showing construction timelines.
 - Is there an opportunity to further screen alternatives before the end of 2015?
 - Norval has extensive sensitivities in the area, and town council will be interested in the findings of this study.
 - Consider features to make the GTA West transportation corridor more attractive for trucks such as truck parking. There currently is nowhere for trucks to stop on Highway 401.
 - If the GTA West transportation corridor is a tolled facility, how will trucks be encouraged to use the corridor?
 - Trucks use local roads to bypass weigh stations, the MTO should consider strategies to make trucks use the corridor.
 - The screening identifies avoiding a small rural church, but one of the short list route alternatives impacts a major religious institution (Sant Nirankari Mission).
 - Northwest Brampton will be a sensitive area with few options. Consider reinstating another alternative near Bramalea between Dixie Road and Torbram Road.
 - Consider opportunities to integrate the transitway with the GO Transit Union Pearson Express expansion.
 - Show where carpool lots may be considered.
 - Consider showing cost estimates for the different route alternatives.
 - Consider including service centres on the corridor.
 - The project team should show more information on other Highway 401 projects, such as through Milton.
 - Airport Road has extensive truck trip generators nearby. Consider a truck rest area near Airport Road. Also consider the use of truck priority features in the interchange in this area.
 - The project team should consider the traffic impacts to other freeways, such as Highway 410.
 - *The project team noted that the traffic modelling work being completed as part of this assignment considers impacts to the entire transportation network.*

7. Next Steps and 8. Open Forum

N. Ahmed provided an overview of next steps in the study and G. Pothier invited final questions and comments.

Q: Will the project team need to enter private properties?

R: Yes. Fieldwork will begin in spring 2015, and potentially affected property owners will be contacted earlier to seek permission to enter their land.

Q: Will trucks use the transitway?

R: It is not the intention of the transitway, but it is being considered as a goods movement priority feature alternative.

Q: Since the short list of route alternatives can be tweaked, why not access lands and complete field work before identifying the short list?

R: Given the large geographical area, it would be very expensive and time consuming to undertake field investigations for the entire Route Planning Study Area. By using secondary source information to identify the short list before proceeding with field investigations, the project team is able to identify the preferred route alternative more efficiently.

C: City of Brampton Council recently declined a quarry application in Norval. It was a 6 year process and one of the route alternatives (Alternative 1C/2A1) borders that application. Environmental issues identified in that study may arise if the project team proceeds with that route alternative.

C: Thank you for considering goods movement and goods movement priority features.

C: Local aggregates will be important for building the GTA West transportation corridor, as they are for building infrastructure in the rest of the GTA. Aggregate trucks comprise a large percentage of local truck traffic. Safe movement of these trucks to and from the corridor will be important during the construction of the GTA West transportation corridor and after it is in service.

C: Consider how to alleviate fears about where the route will be located, given the duration of this study.

There were no questions or comments from observers that attended.

9. Closing Remarks

G. Pothier and N. Rouskov provided closing remarks, and thanked all participants for taking the time to provide their input.

Submitted by: B. Patkowski, URS

Distribution: Attendees, Regrets
