

TO: Mr. Neil Ahmed
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Via email: project_team@gta-west.com

FROM : Peter Miasek

June 22, 2011

Comments on GTA-West Corridor Draft Transportation Development Strategy Report

Thank you for advising us that this draft report was released in March, 2011 and that comments are being received. As you know, **Transport Action Ontario (TAO)** has been actively following and commenting on this project. Our last commentary was August 14, 2010. We also note that the report "GTA-West Transportation Model Technical Background" was released in February, 2011. We intend to review this report in detail and comment at a future time.

Although I am currently the president of TAO, the comments and questions below reflect only my personal views. However, I believe that my colleagues likely share my views.

Group 1 and Group 2 alternatives

1. We support the building block approach and focusing first on Group 1 (Optimize Existing Transportation Network) and Group 2 (New/Expanded Non-Road Infrastructure) during years 0 to 5. Because congestion is a major issue today, we would like to see work on these started asap.
2. As part of Group 1, we note that MTO and Metrolinx will explore opportunities to improve currently operating provincial/employer-led TDM programs. The report indicates a need for "legislative changes to address current jurisdictional policy barriers". We would appreciate more details on exactly what barriers exist.
3. As part of Group 2, we support a "feasibility review of potential future initiatives aimed at removing freight rail/passenger rail conflicts and providing grade separations at road/rail issues". The report states that this involves MTO/CN/CP/GO Transit/Municipalities. We believe that VIA Rail should be part of this group. We encourage MTO to take the leadership role to get this diverse group assembled and working together.

Highway Alternatives

4. The social impacts, environmental impacts (eg salt, barriers), agricultural impacts (eg loss of prime land) and costs of a new highway corridor are substantial. A new highway corridor should be a last resort. Therefore we support widening of existing highways (401, 407, 410, 427, 400) prior to developing and constructing a new corridor.
5. There have been requests from individuals in York Region to extend the corridor eastward. We support the Province in excluding this from the study area, for the reasons given in Sec 6.1.6.
6. We also support limiting the north and west borders of the study area to those actually selected, for the reasons given in Sec 6.1.6.
7. We also support eliminating Alternatives 4-4 and 4-5 for reasons cited in Section 6.1.6.

8. We support the evaluation of the need for a transitway. While it might be expected that an NGO like ours advocating for sustainable transportation would automatically support a transitway, this is not necessarily so. Transitways consume land and cost money and are only justified if transit demand is high and travel time objectives cannot be met in mixed traffic. For example, toll roads typically have low enough congestion that travel times are good between interchanges, even in mixed traffic.

9. We are pleased that our suggestion of a truck-only highway was evaluated and appears to have significant benefits to both truck and auto traffic. We encourage further work.

10. A study on financial incentives for industry to use more TDM, transit and rail should be initiated.

11. The Table in Section 6.1.6 indicates that the travel demand analysis incorporated higher fuel prices. Our brief review of the Modeling Report was unable to find any details on this point. Can you please provide more details?

12. A sensitivity analysis on the effect of tolling this new highway should be conducted. It is quite likely that in 20 or so years, many if not all 400 series highways in the GTA will be tolled.

13. We note that this project will likely trigger a Comprehensive Study under CEAA. We would appreciate being notified when this study is initiated.

We look forward to continued dialogue on this project.