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July 17, 2006

Denis Kelly
Regional Clerk
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1

Dear Mr. Kelly:

Thank you for your May 30, 2006 letter and the attached Clause No. 3 in Report No. 6 of the Transportation and Works Committee, as adopted by Council on May 25, 2006. The Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Donna Cansfield, has asked that I respond on her behalf.

The Highway 404 Extension is an important expansion project as part of the Five-Year Plan for Southern Ontario Highways and I would like to address a number of the issues in your report.

3.1 Potential Regional Assistance to Facilitate Highway 404 Construction

Council's direction that staff assists the ministry in acquisition of lands required for the extension of Highway 404 is appreciated. The ministry is anxious to obtain more details of the staff assistance you have proposed and I would request that the appropriate staff member contact me to initiate discussions.

3.2 Interim Terminus of Highway 404 at Woodbine Avenue and Ravenshoe Road

The current preliminary design study for the Highway 404 Extension includes an assessment of the operational problems at the Woodbine Avenue/ Ravenshoe Road intersection. The objective of this assessment is to ensure that the Highway 404 Extension does not severely impact the traffic operation of the Woodbine/ Ravenshoe intersection. If the traffic operations are adversely affected, a direct connection to Ravenshoe Road is recognized as an alternative that could ease the intersection congestion by distributing future traffic at the Highway 404 terminus.

You requested that consideration be given to extending Highway 404 to Glenwoods Avenue as part of the initial construction. The ministry is working within the principles of the report *"Places to Grow - Better Choices. Brighter Future. - Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe - 2006"*, released in June 2006. This report sets out a vision for managing growth and urban sprawl to the year 2031. It recognizes the Highway 404 Extension from Green Lane to Ravenshoe Road, but not beyond.

In keeping with these principles, the current project incorporates all preliminary design and environmental studies within these limits.

3.3 Mount Albert Road Crossing

You have advised that the construction of the Highway 404 crossing of Mount Albert Road must accommodate a future four lane cross-section and sidewalks on both sides. The ministry is prepared to pay the premium cost of providing Highway 404 bridges that accommodate a 2 lane cross-section of Mount Albert Road, with provisions for future expansion. These provisions would allow York Region to expand the bridges in future to 4 lanes, with sidewalk on one side. The ministry has now started detail design of these bridges.

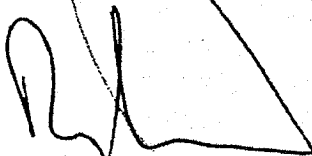
3.4 Doane Road Crossing

You have advised that the Highway 404 crossing of Doane Road must be constructed on the alignment approved as part of the Queensville Secondary Plan and that York Region is prepared to contribute financially to this construction. In order to avoid delays to design initiation and potentially save taxpayers dollars, the ministry is assessing whether construction of the Doane Road crossing of Highway 404 could be constructed on/ near existing Doane Road and still fit in with the Queensville Secondary Plan. This work is being undertaken with advice from York Region staff and MTO will continue to involve your staff accordingly. It is important to resolve the Doane Road issues as soon as possible.

The ministry has just started consultant acquisition to retain a consultant for the detail design of the Doane Road crossing of Highway 404.

If you would like to discuss these matters further, please contact Mr. John Klowak, Senior Project Engineer, Central Region, at (416) 235-5533. Thank you again for bringing your Council's comments to my attention, and I look forward to York actively participating in the acquisition of property.

Sincerely,



Roger Hanmer, MBA, P.Eng.
Regional Director