



Transportation and Works Department

*Roads Branch
Fax: (905) 836-4590*

December 22, 2006

The Honourable Laurel C. Broten
Minister of the Environment
Ministry of Environment
12th Floor, 135 St Clair Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario, M4V 1P5

Dear Minister:

**Re: Highway 404 Extension from Green Lane to Mount Albert Road
Notice of Study Completion – P.O. # 2005-A-000585**

York Region Council has consistently supported the Highway 404 Extension north of Green Lane to Glen Shields Avenue. Council has continually identified this as a vital transportation project that will provide long-overdue relief to traffic congestion resulting from through traffic converging on Highway 404 via municipal roads. To this end York staff and Town of East Gwillimbury staff continue to work cooperatively with Ministry of Transportation (MTO) staff to ensure that the planned construction start in 2007 is not delayed.

This letter is being submitted to comply with the requirement to document outstanding issues relative to the proposed project within the 30 day review period. York Region has been notified that this review period for the Transportation Environmental Study Report expires December 22, 2006. As a result of an impending deadline for comments, we need to document two significant issues remaining to be satisfactorily addressed prior to the start of construction. The first concern pertains to the adequacy of the proposed infrastructure, and the second concern relates to mitigation of traffic impacts during the construction of the project. These concerns are summarized below.

1. As outlined in a report adopted by York Region Council on May 25, 2006 (see attached), the grade-separated crossing proposed at Mount Albert Road must not preclude the Region's or Town's ability to implement future infrastructure that will be required to accommodate planned growth as directed in the provincial Places to Grow legislation. The proposed Highway 404 bridges should span a platform wide enough for four traffic lanes, two sidewalks and future utility requirements. This clear span is needed to address community needs in the vicinity of the Highway 404 crossing and future traffic resulting from foreseeable, planned growth, should be constructed at the time of highway construction to avoid a considerable additional public expenditure that would otherwise result in the foreseeable future. As per Recommendation 3 of the May 2006 Council Report, York Region considers these imminent requirements to be a provincial infrastructure responsibility and seeks MTO commitment in this regard.

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2. To save the cost of building a local detour, the Ministry of Transportation has proposed to close Mount Albert Road to traffic between Donlands Avenue and Woodbine Avenue for the duration of the construction of the new Highway 404 bridges over Mount Albert Road. The proposed 6 km long detour uses Woodbine Avenue, Green Lane East and Leslie Street. Although York Region staff agree that this detour route is appropriate for long distance traffic, the needs of the residents of the existing community of Sharon located immediately west of the proposed closure, can be better accommodated through the continued use of Farr Avenue located approximately 300 m north of Mount Albert Road. Farr Avenue, and potentially Donlands Road, would however require some temporary operational improvements and likely some restorative pavement work following the Mount Albert Road reopening.

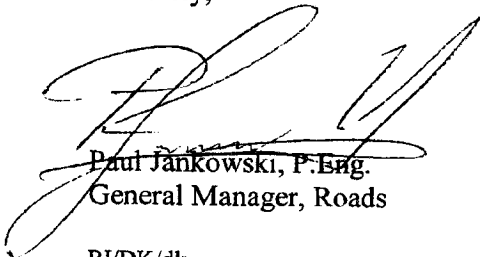
York Region staff are prepared to recommend that Regional Council permit a full road closure of Mount Albert Road to facilitate construction of the new bridges provided that:

- Farr Avenue between Woodbine Avenue and Donlands Avenue remain open during the period of the Mount Albert Road closure.
- MTO commit to mitigation of the construction period impacts by implementing road and operational improvements where required. These improvements may include, but are not limited to, temporary traffic signals at Woodbine Avenue at Farr Avenue and reconstruction/resurfacing of Farr Avenue and Donlands Avenue to the satisfaction of the Region of York and the Town of East Gwillimbury.

York Region staff remains committed to working closely with MTO staff to ensure that the above mentioned Regional and Town concerns are adequately addressed either by way of a “bump-up” or the imposition of conditions. Regretfully, in light of the December 22nd deadline for comments, York Region staff has no recourse but to formally request a “bump-up” of this portion of the project to an Individual Environmental Assessment. Hopefully, these concerns can be addressed through negotiation, with the expectation that MTO commitments to appropriately mitigate impacts will enable York to withdraw this request, with no resulting impact on the schedule of this vital project.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 905-764-6345, extension 5901.

Sincerely,



Paul Jankowski, P.Eng.
General Manager, Roads

PJ/DK/dk

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Attachment

Copy to: Bill Fisch, Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer
Mayor James Young, Town of East Gwillimbury
Lina Bigioni, Director, Government Relations
Michael Garrett, Chief Administrative Officer
Thomas Webster, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of East Gwillimbury
Bruce Macgregor, P.Eng., Commissioner of Transportation and Works
Bryan Tuckey, Commissioner of Planning and Development Services
Roger Hammer, MBA, P.Eng., Regional Director, Ministry of Transportation
John Klowak, Senior Project Engineer, Ministry of Transportation
Steve Jacobs, URS Canada Inc.
Mike Bricks, Ecoplans Ltd.

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