

December 15, 2009

Resolution Number 2009-1408

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

**REGION OF YORK
CLERK'S OFFICE**

FILE No. - *P43*

Subject: 427 Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment

I am writing to advise that Regional Council approved the following resolution at its meeting held on Thursday, December 10, 2009:

That the official comments of the Region of Peel as outlined in the report of the Commissioner of Public Works, dated November 2, 2009, titled "427 Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment", be endorsed;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to consider the comments in preparing the final Environmental Assessment Report;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to include the Highway 427 Extension from Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive in the Provincial Southern Highways Program 2010 to 2014;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to initiate a study to examine the need for a further extension of Highway 427 to meet longer-term needs;

And further, that a copy of the subject report be forwarded to the City of Brampton, the City of Mississauga, the Town of Caledon, Metrolinx, the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Region of York and the City of Vaughan for information.

The above resolution and a copy of the subject report are provided for your information.


Stephanie Jurrius
Legislative Specialist
SJ:rc

c: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Public Works

DATE: November 2, 2009

REPORT TITLE: **427 TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

FROM: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Public Works

RECOMMENDATION

That the official comments of the Region of Peel as outlined in the report of the Commissioner of Public Works, dated November 2, 2009, titled "427 Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment", be endorsed;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to consider the comments in preparing the final Environmental Assessment Report;

And further, that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to include the Highway 427 Extension from Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive in the Provincial Southern Highways Program 2010 to 2014;

And further, that Regional Council request that the Ministry of Transportation be requested to initiate a study to examine the need for a further extension of Highway 427 to meet longer-term needs;

And further, that a copy of the subject report be forwarded to the City of Brampton, the City of Mississauga, the Town of Caledon, Metrolinx, the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Region of York and the City of Vaughan for their information.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The 427 Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) is almost complete. The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has released a Draft EA Report for review prior to formal submission to the Minister of the Environment (MOE).
- The recommended Highway 427 Extension is from Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive.
- Regional staff welcome the completion of the EA, but note that steps need to be taken to ensure construction of the extension in the short-term (the first being that MTO include this project in the five-year construction program for Southern Ontario Highways).
- The 427 Transportation Corridor EA addressed existing and short-term transportation problems. A longer term plan will be needed to accommodate inter-regional traffic to and from the Highway 427 Extension, a plan which should include the extension of Highway 427 north to Highway 9.

November 2, 2009

427 TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

DISCUSSION

1. Background

Highway 427 was inaugurated in 1972 and incorporated two existing routes: the freeway portion of Highway 27 between the Queen Elizabeth Way and Highway 401 and the Airport Expressway between Highway 401 and Toronto Lester B. Pearson International Airport. Highway 427 was later extended, in stages, to its current terminus at Highway 7.

The MTO commenced the EA process for the GTA North Transportation Corridor between the existing terminus of Highway 427 and Simcoe County in June 2002. The EA was officially terminated in March 2005, following the release of the Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the extension of Highway 427 across and north of the Oak Ridges Moraine is not identified as an initiative in the Growth Plan).

In February 2005, MTO started preparing the 427 Transportation Corridor EA Terms of Reference to support the policies and planning vision of the Growth Plan. The Terms of Reference were approved by the Minister of the Environment in November 2005. MTO commenced the EA in April 2006.

In fall 2008, the Region of York opened the 427 Interim Arterial Extension – an 800 metre (0.5 mile) four-lane arterial road connecting the existing terminus of Highway 427 at Highway 7 and Zenway Boulevard. Funding for the project was provided by York Region, Peel Region and the Government of Ontario.

The purpose of the 427 Transportation Corridor EA is to:

- Address existing and short-term transportation problems related to the current Highway 427 terminus, truck traffic accessibility to and from the Canadian Pacific Vaughan Intermodal Facility, and their impact on inter-regional traffic in the Peel-York boundary area;
- Identify and protect the property required for any proposed transportation corridor and allow planned development to occur outside of the transportation corridor; and
- Ensure that alternatives/preferred solutions will not preclude or predetermine planning for other future transportation corridors such as the GTA West Corridor or a future northerly extension of Highway 427, if ever required.

The EA examined the need for the extension of Highway 427, alternative terminus points for the extension, alternative route alignments, and the number and location of interchanges with major arterial roads. The Draft EA Report identifies a Recommended Alternative, which would see Highway 427 extended to Major Mackenzie Drive (see Section 2 for details on the Recommended Alternative).

The EA process is nearing completion; it is currently at the pre-submission review stage, and MTO is seeking comments from agencies and the public prior to formal submission to the MOE. Regional staff have provided comments on the Draft EA Report to MTO.

Further information on the 427 Transportation Corridor EA can be obtained at: www.427corridor.com.

The recently completed Peel-Highway 427 Extension Area Transportation Master Plan identified road network improvements in Peel (a combination of road widenings and the

November 2, 2009

427 TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

provision of a new arterial road connecting Highway 50 at Major Mackenzie Drive to Mayfield Road) to accommodate transportation demands and to provide a logical connection to the Highway 427 Extension.

2. Recommended Alternative

The Draft EA Report identifies a technically preferred route for the Highway 427 extension (see Appendix I). The key features of the recommended Highway 427 extension include:

- Terminus at Major Mackenzie Drive (chosen because it fulfills all of the EA study objectives without added environmental impacts);
- Three interchanges (at Langstaff Road, Rutherford Road and Major Mackenzie Drive);
- Six lanes from Highway 7 to Rutherford Road;
- Four lanes from Rutherford Road to Major Mackenzie Drive;
- Provision of a median High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction (from Highway 7 to Rutherford Road);
- Identification and protection of a 60 metre (200 feet) transit right-of-way and transit stations to be located along the west side of the 110 metre (360 feet) freeway right-of-way (moving forward on this would require a separate EA study); and
- Identification of transitway stations at the interchanges at Langstaff Road, Rutherford Road and Major Mackenzie Drive.

In addition to the proposed new roadway, the recommended alternative includes travel demand management measures, transportation systems management measures and new or improved transit services. The recommended alternative was seen as best able to provide the transportation network required to support planned development and achieve the objectives identified in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

3. Regional Staff Comments

Regional staff support the conclusions of the 427 Transportation Corridor EA. Construction of the extension of Highway 427 to Major Mackenzie Drive will help to address current and projected short-term transportation needs in eastern Peel Region (by, for example, relieving traffic congestion on Highway 50 and the queuing occurring at the intersection of Highway 50 and Highway 7). The highway extension will also ease and facilitate the movement of goods in the areas adjacent to it.

The completion of the EA is welcome, but in order for construction of the highway extension to occur in the short-term it needs to be included in the Province's five-year investment plan for highway construction in Southern Ontario. Staff recommend, therefore, that Regional Council request that MTO include this project in the Southern Highways Program 2010 to 2014.

The Highway 427 Extension to Major Mackenzie Drive will provide short-term relief. Previous Provincial and Regional studies (e.g., the Caledon Transportation Needs Study Update), however, have identified the need for an extension of Highway 427 to Highway 9 and beyond over the longer-term. Staff recommend, therefore, that Regional Council request that MTO initiate a study to examine the need for a further extension of Highway 427 to meet longer-term needs (i.e., 2031 and beyond).

November 2, 2009

427 TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

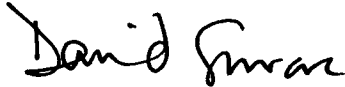
The issue of corridor protection was raised during the development of the EA. Regional staff welcome that this issue was addressed in the EA (as noted above, one of the purposes of the EA was to ensure that alternatives/preferred solutions will not preclude or predetermine planning for other future transportation corridors such as the GTA West Corridor or a future northerly extension of Highway 427, if ever required). The possible connection to a future GTA West Corridor will be examined as part of the ongoing EA for that corridor.

4. Next Steps

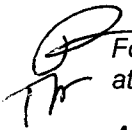
Following the pre-submission review period, the MTO will finalize the EA Report and file it with the MOE. MOE will then initiate the formal review and approval process. Once the EA Report is approved MTO can proceed with detailed design and property acquisition. In the best case scenario, construction of the Highway 427 Extension would be completed in 2014.



Dan Labrecque
Commissioner of Public Works

Approved for Submission:

D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer



For further information regarding this report, please contact Tom AppaRao at extension 4100 or via email at tom.apparao@peelregion.ca

Authored By: Brian Lakeman

c. Legislative Services

P-09-46

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APPENDIX I
November 2, 2009
427 TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

