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427 TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROJECT UPDATE

The Transportation Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated March 11, 2010, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services and the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council endorse the 427 Transportation Corridor EA submitted by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) in January 2010 subject to a commitment by MTO to address municipal road access issues in the vicinity of the Major Mackenzie Drive interchange during the design phase of the project or during the adjacent development review process, to the satisfaction of the City of Vaughan and York Region.
2. The Regional Clerk forward a copy of this report to the Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of the Environment and City of Vaughan.

2. PURPOSE

The Ministry of Transportation has completed the 427 Transportation Corridor EA and submitted it to the Ministry of the Environment for review. This report seeks Council endorsement of the final EA subject to a commitment by MTO to address one outstanding issue during the post EA phase of the project.

3. BACKGROUND

MTO has completed the 427 Transportation Corridor EA

The Ministry of Transportation initiated the Individual EA for the 427 Transportation Corridor in June 2006. As an Individual EA, it was conducted in accordance with a Terms of Reference approved by the Ministry of the Environment in November 2005.

The EA has now been completed (final EA report dated January 29, 2010) and filed with the Ministry of the Environment for review. The initial public review period for the EA runs from January 29, 2010 to March 19, 2010. Following the public review of the EA, the Ministry of the Environment will publish their EA Review prior to the Minister making a final decision.

Purpose for the undertaking as identified in the EA

The purpose of the 427 Transportation Corridor EA is to:

- Address existing and short-term transportation issues related to the current Highway 427 terminus at Highway 7, provide for truck traffic to and from the CP Vaughan Intermodal Facility and address their impacts on the Regional road network in the York-Peel boundary area.
- Identify and protect required property for the 427 Transportation Corridor to allow planned development to proceed in the area.
- Ensure that the preferred undertaking will not preclude or predetermine planning for other transportation corridors such as the GTA West Corridor or a future extension of the 427 Transportation Corridor north of Major Mackenzie Drive.

The project includes an extension of Highway 427 and protection for a future transitway

The project as recommended in the EA includes a transportation corridor consisting of both a Highway 427 Extension and a new transitway as well as associated works and support facilities. The project includes:

- A 6.6 km extension of Highway 427 from Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive with six lanes proposed from Highway 7 to Rutherford Road and four lanes proposed from Rutherford Road to Major Mackenzie Drive.
- New interchanges at Langstaff Road, Rutherford Road and Major Mackenzie Drive.
- Protection for a dedicated Transitway along the west side of the highway corridor.
- Two arterial road overpasses, two arterial road underpasses and one rail overpass.
- Two freeway watercourse crossings and two watercourse crossings on Regional roads where they intersect the 427 Transportation Corridor (on Langstaff Road and Major Mackenzie Drive).
- Three local and Regional road realignments (Major Mackenzie Drive, Huntington Road and McGillivray Road).
- One carpool lot at Rutherford Road.
- Nine stormwater management ponds.
- Three Transitway stations (at Langstaff Road, Rutherford Road and Major Mackenzie Drive) with associated commuter parking at each station for transit riders.

A series of 5 maps showing the final recommended plan for the 427 Transportation Corridor is included as *Attachments 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 1(d) and 1(e)* and are included in the EA as Exhibit 6-3, plates 1 to 5.

MTO consulted the Region at key milestones during the EA

The EA included three rounds of public consultation in April 2007, May 2008 and April 2009. Staff attended Municipal Advisory Committee meetings at each of the key phases

of the EA, including prior to each round of public consultation to review and comment on the findings and draft recommendations. The MTO project team also presented results of the EA to the Transportation and Works Committee on April 30, 2008 and April 8, 2009.

In addition, the MTO project team also consulted the Transportation Services Department staff to ensure coordination between the 427 Transportation Corridor EA and the ongoing Western Vaughan Individual EA and the Langstaff Road detailed design.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The proposed terminus of the Highway 427 Extension is at Major Mackenzie Drive

In September 2006, Regional Council asked the Ministry of Transportation to take the terminus of the proposed Highway 427 Extension to at least Major Mackenzie Drive, or beyond in the vicinity of Mayfield Road. The proposed terminus of the Highway 427 Extension at Major Mackenzie Drive is consistent with the recommendations adopted by Council in September 2006 (Report No. 7 of the Planning and Economic Development Committee, Regional Council Meeting of September 21, 2006). The MTO indicated that a further extension north of Major Mackenzie Drive may preclude alternatives for a future connection to the GTA West Corridor, and therefore, the further extension to Mayfield Road was considered in the EA but not recommended.

The final alignment north of Rutherford Road has been shifted to the west to address stakeholder issues

The recommendations of the Transportation and Works Committee on April 30, 2008 were endorsed by Council on May 15, 2008 and are included as *Attachment 2*. At that time, Council endorsed the technically preferred route for the Highway 427 Extension from Highway 7 to Rutherford Road and identified a preference for a westerly alignment for the route north of Rutherford Road to Major Mackenzie Drive.

Following the second round of Public Consultation Centres in May 2008, the MTO project team refined the initial alignment that had been identified as the Technically Preferred Route in the EA to include a westerly shift north of Rutherford Road, in consideration of comments received by various stakeholders including Regional Council, the City of Vaughan and area landowners.

Prior to the third round of Public Consultation Centres in April 2009, the MTO project team presented the final alignment (with a westerly shift north of Rutherford Road as noted above) to the Transportation and Works Committee on April 8, 2009. The presentation was received by Committee.

The Highway 427 Extension includes the reconstruction of Zenway Boulevard and removal of the interim arterial extension

The 2003 York / Peel Boundary Area Transportation study addressed the transportation needs in the rapidly growing area bounded by Steeles Avenue to the south, Mayfield Road and Nashville Road to the north, Airport Road to the west and Highway 27 to the east. It identified a long-term (2031) transportation network as well as short-term road improvements needed to address the growing transportation demand in the area. The study's short-term road network was developed to address interim traffic demand prior to the ultimate extension of Highway 427 by MTO. The key improvements included a four-lane east-west collector road (Zenway Boulevard) north of Highway 7 connecting Highway 50 to Highway 27, and a four-lane north-south arterial road from the existing terminus of Highway 427 at Highway 7 to Zenway Boulevard.

These improvements were implemented in 2007 and 2008 with cost sharing from York Region, Peel Region, MTO, the City of Vaughan and area landowners in the employment lands north of Highway 7. At the time that the interim arterial extension between Highway 427 and Zenway Boulevard was planned and implemented, it was made clear to all stakeholders that the interim arterial extension was temporary and will be closed when the ultimate Highway 427 Extension is constructed and there will be no direct access to the freeway from Zenway Boulevard. This has been confirmed in the 427 Transportation Corridor EA.

At the time that the 427 Interim Arterial Extension and Zenway Boulevard were being planned, the vertical profile of Zenway Boulevard was lowered to allow the future Highway 427 Extension to be constructed over Zenway Boulevard, limiting impact to traffic on the municipal road during construction of the Highway 427 Extension and maximizing the salvageable investment in Zenway Boulevard.

As part of the 427 Transportation Corridor EA, the MTO has determined that the preferred solution is to have Highway 427 cross under Zenway Boulevard, requiring a section of Zenway Boulevard to be reconstructed and grade separated. In January of 2010 following discussions on the draft EA report, MTO provided a detailed technical appendix which presented the justification for selection of the Hwy 427 under Zenway Boulevard option as being preferred. The key issue is cost with secondary technical design and effects mitigation issues. The cost savings, even with the reconstruction of Zenway Boulevard factored in, is \$15 million resulting from significantly less fill required for the Highway 427 profile along with lower cost for the crossing structures. The detailed justification provided by MTO was reviewed by York and Vaughan staff and there was general consensus that the rationale was sound.

York and Vaughan staff as well as the landowners of the Nashville Heights Development Area (Block 61) are working with MTO to resolve one outstanding issue

Comments were provided to MTO on the draft EA report by York staff and by Vaughan staff through their November 2009 report to the Committee of the Whole. These comments have been addressed in the final EA report with the exception of one issue related to the realignment of Huntington Road in the vicinity of the Major Mackenzie Drive interchange and connection of the municipal road network for the Nashville Heights Development Area to Major Mackenzie Drive.

The Nashville heights Development Area (shown in *Attachment 3*) is bounded by Major Mackenzie Drive to the south, Nashville Road to the north, Huntington Road to the west and the CP Mactier Rail Line to the east. Approval of Vaughan's OPA 699 for these lands was dealt with in a report to Planning and Economic Development Committee in November 2009. The Province has confirmed that the approval of OPA 699 will not preclude any future alignments of both the Highway 427 extension and the GTA West Corridor. It should also be noted that OPA 699 does not require the extension of Highway 427 nor does it impede any further extension of Highway 427 north of Major Mackenzie Drive.

Since providing comments on the draft EA report, York staff have met with City of Vaughan staff, the MTO EA project team and landowners for the Nashville Heights Development Area to work towards resolving the outstanding issue. The issue results from the proposed Highway 427 interchange being located at the current Major Mackenzie Drive and Huntington Road intersection. As a result, Huntington Road is proposed to be terminated south of Major Mackenzie Drive and realigned north of Major Mackenzie Drive (as shown on *Attachment 1 (d)*). The EA proposes to realign Huntington Road to intersect Major Mackenzie Drive approximately 650 m east of its current alignment, making it the only intersection to Major Mackenzie Drive between the Highway 427 Extension and the CP Rail Line.

Vaughan and York staff together with the Nashville Heights Development Area landowners expressed concerns with the provision of only one access to the development area from Major Mackenzie Drive. The Nashville Heights Development Area landowners prepared a traffic report that identifies the need for two municipal road connections to Major Mackenzie Drive, with the second access directly opposite the proposed Highway 427 NB off-ramp. The MTO have indicated that a road connection opposite the proposed Highway 427 NB off-ramp is inconsistent with their standard policy and is considered only in cases where there are no other reasonable alternatives.

Based on the traffic study prepared by the Nashville Heights Development Area landowners, it appears feasible that Huntington Road north of Major Mackenzie Drive could be realigned to intersect the Highway 427 NB off-ramp, similar to what is being planned at various locations along Highway 404 in Markham. Both the proposed

municipal road accesses are identified in the City's approved OPA 669 for the Nashville Heights Development Area.

York and Vaughan staff are working with the MTO EA project team and the MTO Corridor Management Office to resolve this outstanding issue without delaying approval of the 427 Transportation Corridor EA and without having the approved EA encumber the implementation of the municipal road network within the development area through the plan of subdivision approval process. MTO staff have indicated that they are prepared to review a specific request from the City of Vaughan for an additional access opposite the proposed Highway 427 NB off-ramp at Major Mackenzie Drive, pending detailed review of the traffic impact study. In addition, MTO will ensure flexibility in the design of the Major Mackenzie Drive interchange to not preclude an additional access opposite the off-ramp and have confirmed that the 427 Transportation Corridor EA would not require an amendment if MTO, through a different process, approves changes to the ramp terminal intersection in the future.

The Ministry of the Environment is reviewing the EA

As noted previously, York and Vaughan staff are working with the MTO EA project team to resolve the one outstanding issue without delaying approval of the 427 Transportation Corridor EA. The public review period for the EA ran from January 29, 2010 to March 19, 2010. Following the public review of the EA, the Ministry of the Environment will publish their EA Review prior to the Minister making a final decision.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The City of Vaughan has been actively involved in the EA as a member of the Municipal Advisory Committee and have had an opportunity to provide input to the project at key milestones.

As noted previously, York and Vaughan staff are working with the MTO EA project team and the MTO Corridor Management Office to resolve the one outstanding issue without delaying approval of the 427 Transportation Corridor EA and without having the approved EA encumber the implementation of the municipal road network in the development area through the plans of subdivision.

Construction of the Highway 427 Extension will provide much needed road capacity in this boundary area of York and Peel. In the interim before the freeway is constructed, the

completion of the EA will allow development outside the 427 Transportation Corridor to proceed.

7. CONCLUSION

The Ministry of Transportation has completed the 427 Transportation Corridor EA and filed it with the Ministry of the Environment for review. The initial public review period for the EA ran from January 29, 2010 to March 19, 2010. Following the public review of the EA, the Ministry of the Environment will publish their EA Review prior to the Minister making a final decision, likely by the end of 2010.

There is one outstanding issue related to municipal road access at the Major Mackenzie Drive interchange. Staff from the Ministry of Transportation, York Region, City of Vaughan and Nashville Heights Development Area landowners are working together to find a resolution without delaying the approval of the EA. A commitment by MTO to address the municipal road access issues during the design phase of the project or during the adjacent development review and approval process is being sought.

For more information on this report, please contact Steve Mota, Program Manager-Transportation Engineering, Infrastructure Planning Branch at 905-830-4444 Ext. 5056 or Loy Cheah, Director Infrastructure Planning at Ext. 5024.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The three attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)

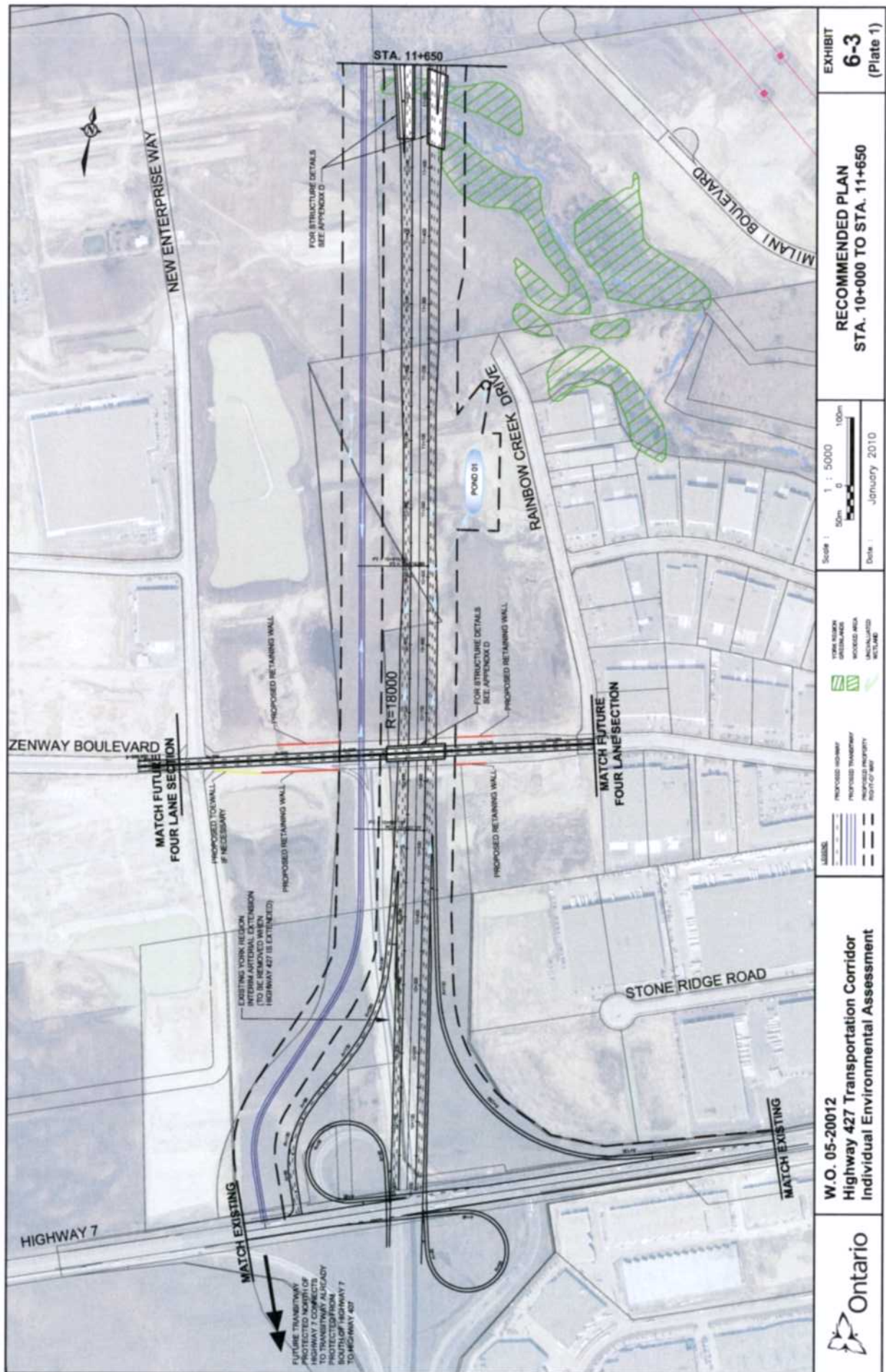


EXHIBIT
6-3
(Plate 1)

RECOMMENDED PLAN
STA. 10+000 TO STA. 11+650

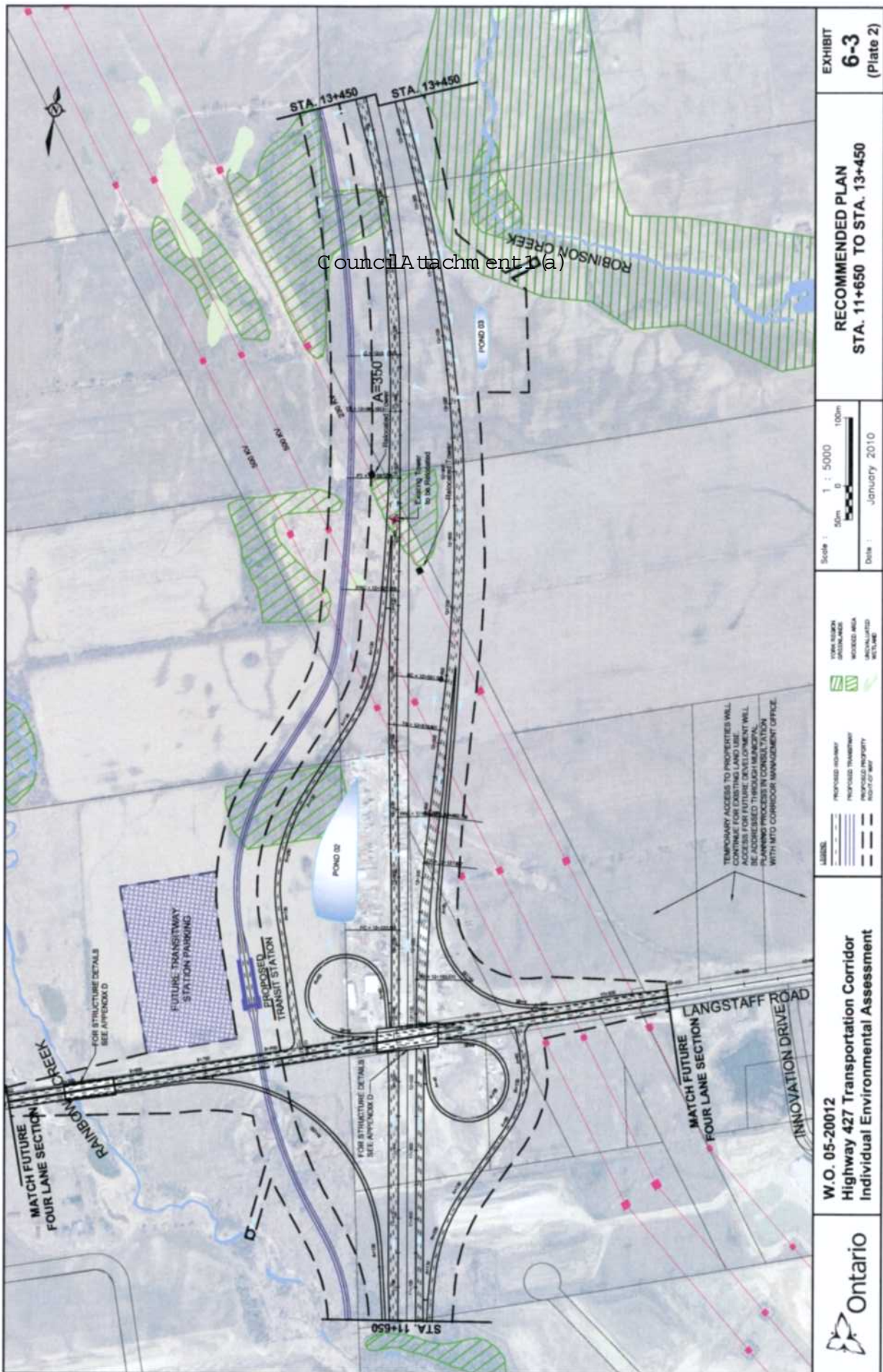
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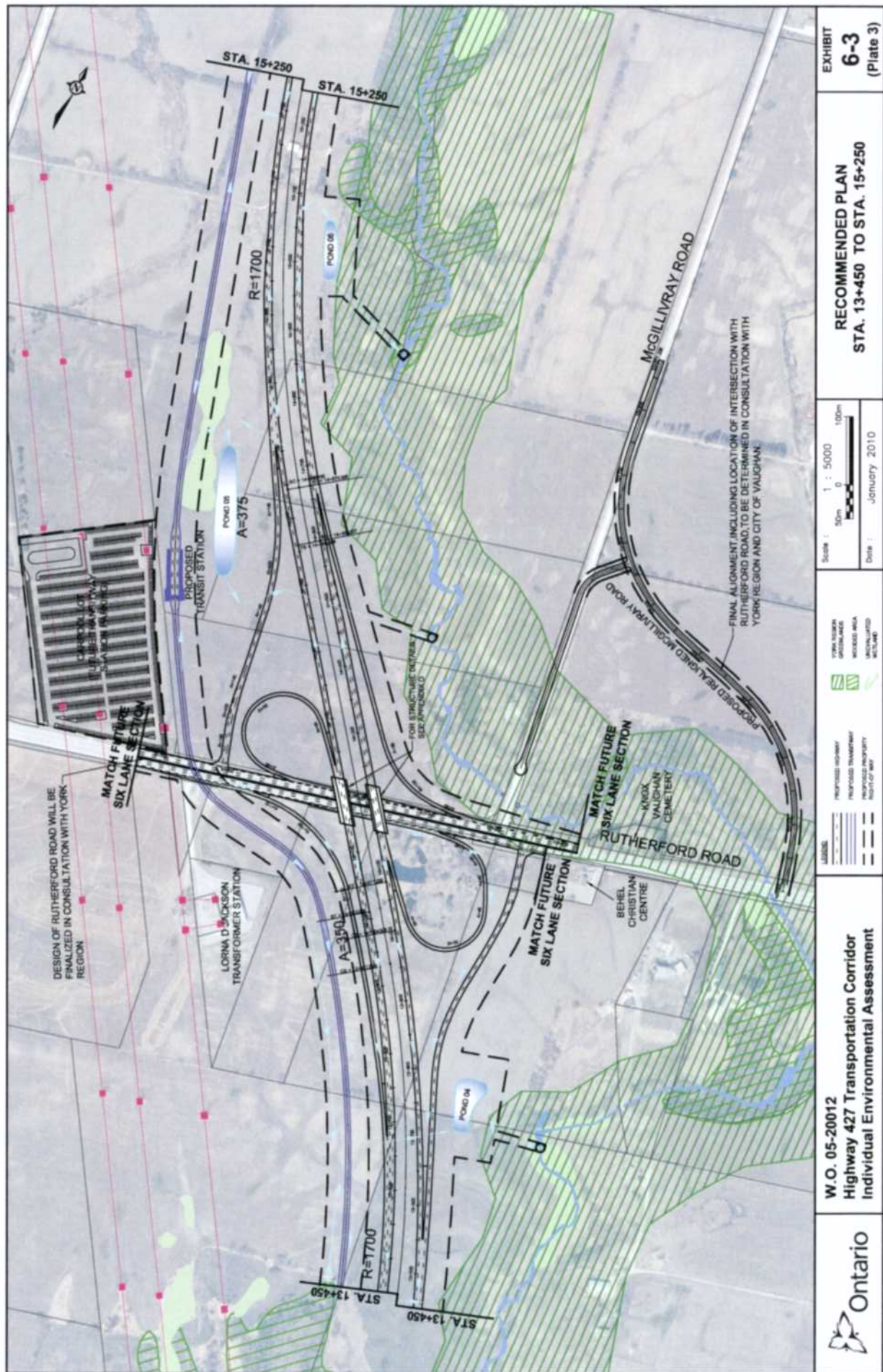
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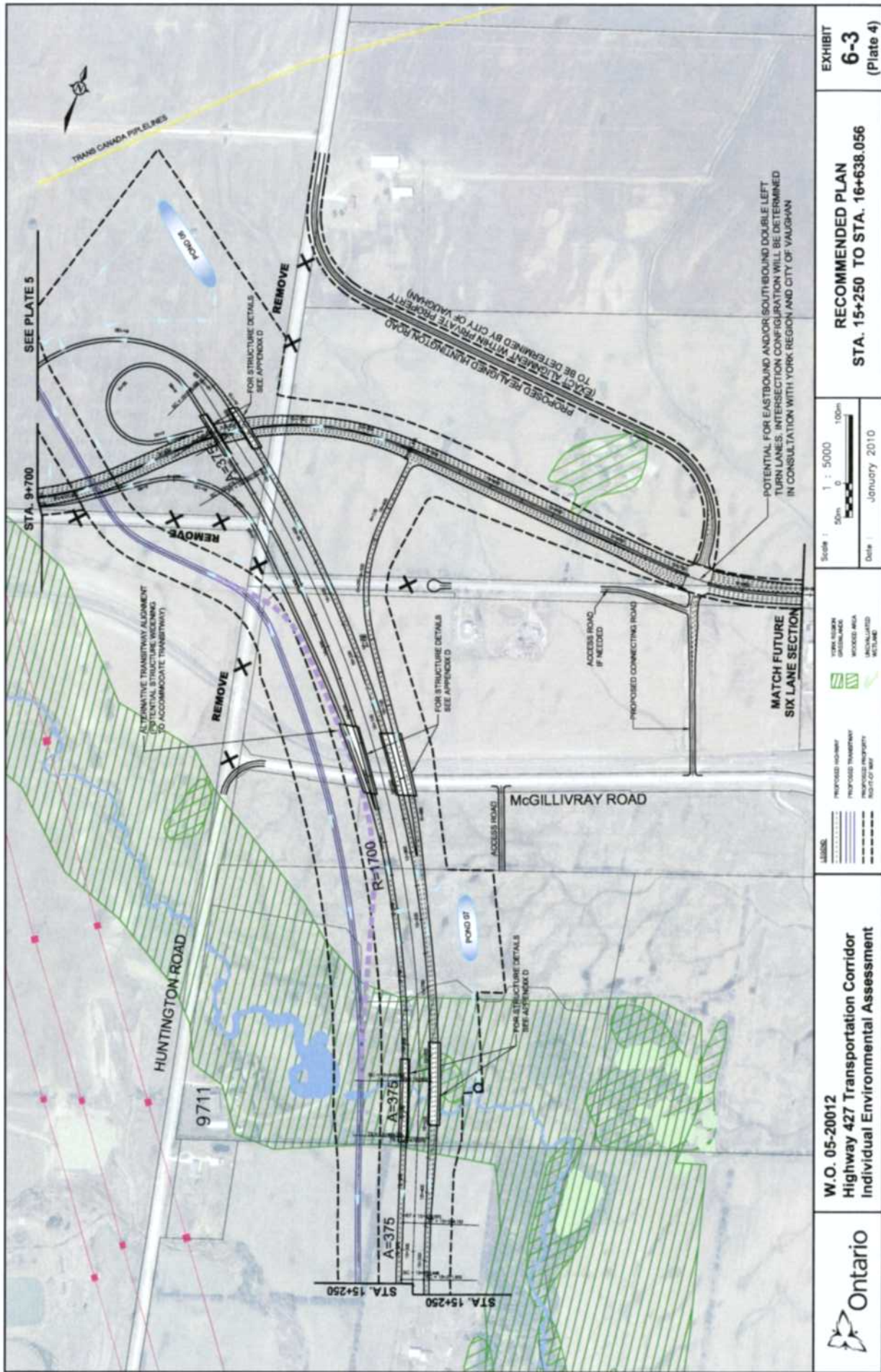
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W.O. 05-20012
Highway 427 Transportation Corridor
Individual Environmental Assessment

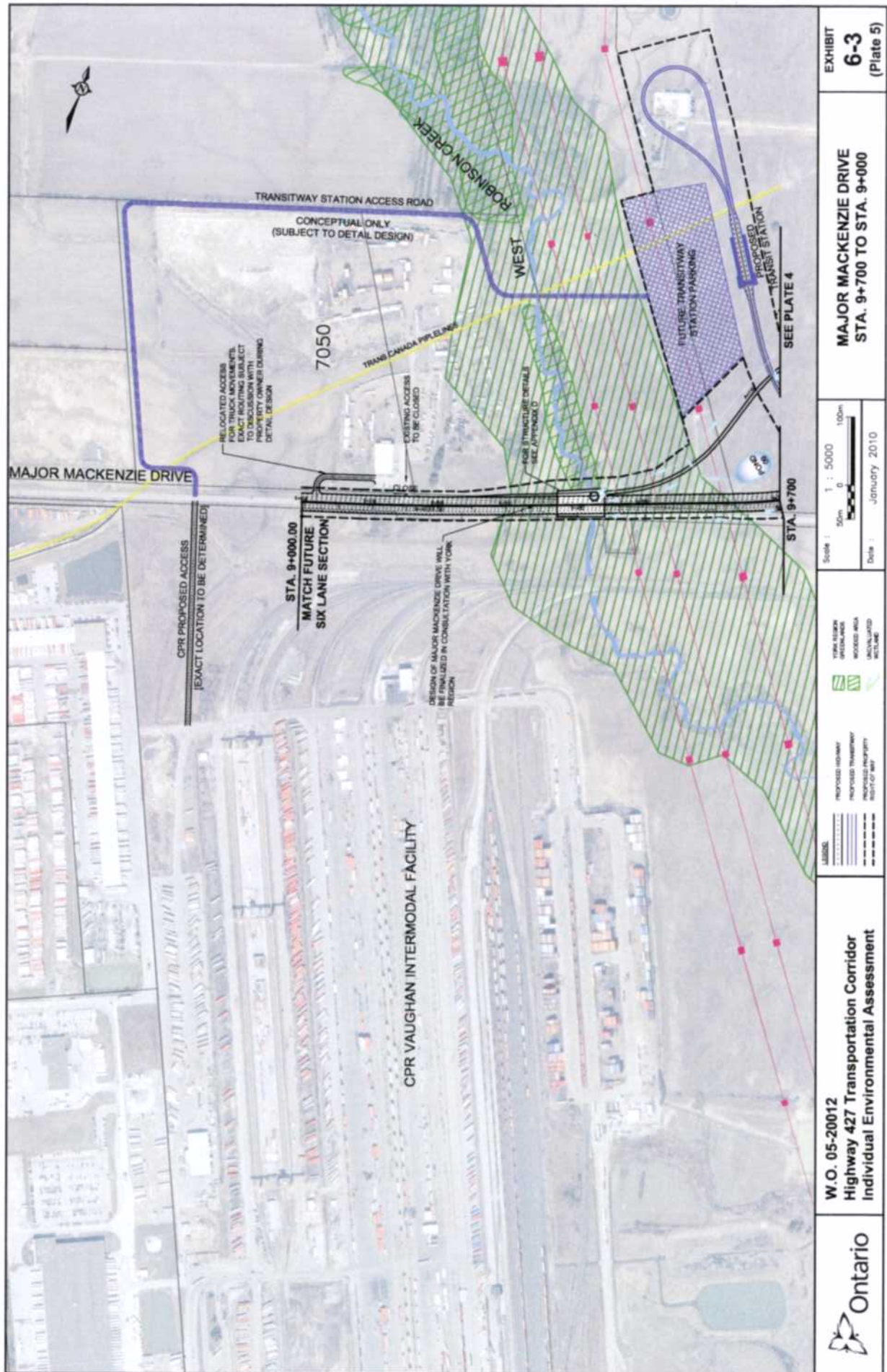
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	W.O. 05-20012 Highway 427 Transportation Corridor Individual Environmental Assessment		Scale : 1 : 5000 50m 100m Date : January 2010	RECOMMENDED PLAN STA. 15+250 TO STA. 16+638.056	EXHIBIT 6-3 (Plate 4)



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HIGHWAY 427 EXTENSION ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The presentation by Dean Kemper, Senior Project Engineer, Ministry of Transportation Ontario and Michael Chiu, Deputy Manager, Planning & Transportation, McCormick Rankin Corporation, be received with thanks;**
- 2. Regional Council endorse the technically preferred route for the Highway 427 Extension (from Highway 7 to Rutherford Road);**
- 3. Regional Council support the westerly alignment for the route north of Rutherford Road (to Major Mackenzie Drive);**
- 4. In the event that the westerly route cannot be approved, that an alignment as far west of the central route be recommended; and**
- 5. Staff be directed to consult with Ministry staff and relevant stakeholders and report back to the Transportation and Works Committee on the final recommended route.**

