

3

GTA WEST CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT UPDATE

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends:

- 1. Receipt of the presentation by Jin Wang, Project Coordinator, Ministry of Transportation and Neil Ahmed, Consultant Project Manager, McCormick Rankin Corporation; and**
- 2. Adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated April 14, 2011 from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services with the following additional recommendation:**
 - 2. Regional Council advise the Ministry of Transportation Ontario that York Region will continue with the planning of lands affected by the GTA West Corridor route planning area while ensuring appropriate secondary and official plan policies for those lands recognise and protect for the GTA West Corridor as it is being defined through the on-going Provincial environmental assessment process.**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council receive this report for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides an update on the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) and a summary of the draft Transportation Development Strategy Report released by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) in March 2011 for public review.

3. BACKGROUND

The system planning phase of the GTA West Corridor EA is complete

The Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe includes policies for managing growth and development over the next 30 years. The GTA West Corridor is identified in the Growth Plan as part of the required infrastructure to support Growth.

The Province initiated the GTA West Corridor EA in January 2007. The Terms of Reference for the Individual EA were approved by the Minister of the Environment in March of 2008. The study area is shown in *Council Attachment 1*.

The EA study purpose is to plan for future infrastructure needs by examining long-term transportation problems and opportunities in the area and to consider options that provide better linkages between Urban Growth Centres including the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, Downtown Brampton, Downtown Milton and Downtown Guelph.

The EA is being undertaken in two primary stages. Stage 1 includes the transportation system planning, followed by Stage 2 which will include detailed route planning and preliminary design. The work completed as part of Stage 1 includes the investigation of transportation problems and opportunities in the study area; development of a broad range of transportation system alternatives and evaluating their effectiveness in addressing the transportation needs; and identification of the recommended transportation development strategy for the GTA West Corridor.

The EA process has reached the completion of Stage 1 with the publication of the draft Transportation Development Strategy Report, released for public review from March 11 to June 10, 2011.

MTO undertook a comprehensive consultation program during the terms of reference development and transportation system planning stage of the EA

Four rounds of public consultation have been undertaken as part of the EA process completed to-date. The first round was held in April 2007 as part of the development of the EA terms of reference. Three rounds of public consultation were held as part of the transportation system planning stage of the EA, including in March 2009, December 2009 and June 2010.

In addition, a Technical Advisory Committee was formed to consult and seek technical input from municipalities and agencies, including staff from York Region and the City of Vaughan. Technical Advisory Committee meetings were held prior to each round of public meetings.

MTO has also made a number of presentations to Planning and Economic Development Committee at each key stage of the study

Staff previously reported to Planning and Economic Development Committee in May 2007 to inform Council that MTO had commenced the EA for the GTA West Transportation Corridor. MTO presented study updates to Committee in May 2007, March 2009, December 2009 and June 2010 to coincide with each round of public consultation.

In June 2010, the MTO presentation to Committee included details regarding the draft Transportation Development Strategy, which has now been documented in detail in the draft Transportation Development Strategy Report. The MTO presentation was received by Committee in June 2010.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Groups of transportation system elements were combined to reach the recommended Transportation Development Strategy

The draft Transportation Development Strategy Report documents the planning process followed in Stage 1 of the GTA West Corridor EA, including the development, assessment and evaluation of the transportation system alternatives and identification of the preferred alternative to be carried forward into Stage 2 of the EA, which will include the detailed route planning and preliminary design of the GTA West Corridor.

The process followed a two-phase approach that began with a comprehensive assessment of the individual transportation system alternatives to assess their ability to address the existing and future inter-regional transportation problems and opportunities. Based on this assessment, the alternatives considered capable of substantively contributing to addressing the transportation needs were carried forward to the second phase, which involved assembling the individual transportation system alternatives into multi-modal groups.

A “building block” approach was used to assemble the groups of alternatives, based on the principles of first optimizing the existing transportation network, and then incorporating non-roadway infrastructure improvements before considering the provision of new roads and highways. The groups of transportation alternatives that have been considered in the building block approach are described below.

Group 1 alternatives – optimize existing networks

This group of alternatives includes strategies from the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan, GO Transit’s 2020 Strategic Plan, MTO’s High Occupancy Vehicle Lane Network Plan and Carpool Lot Program, transportation system management measures, transportation demand management initiatives and municipal transportation plans.

This group of alternatives includes transportation initiatives that focus on improving the performance of the existing transportation system for all modes of travel and freight transport through strategies designed to reduce automobile and truck demand and improve system operating efficiency. The strategies include:

- Expanded use of ramp metering
- High occupancy vehicle / transit bypass at key locations
- Transit supportive highway corridors
- Enhanced incident / congestion management
- Provincial and employer led transportation demand management programs
- Long combination freight vehicles

Group 2 alternatives – new and expanded non-road infrastructure

This group of alternatives further builds on Group 1 and includes the transit initiatives in the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan and GO Transit's 2020 Strategic Plan. These include:

- 15 and 25-year plans from the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan
- Expanded inter-regional GO bus routes
- Inter-regional transit hubs where local transit and GO Transit connect
- Bus rapid transit links between Urban Growth Centres
- New transit connections beyond the GTA West study area
- Eliminating conflicts between passenger rail and freight rail services

Group 3 alternatives – widen / improve existing roadways

This group of alternatives includes widening of specific sections of the provincial freeway network, including Highways 401, 407 ETR, 410, 427 and 400.

Within York Region, the proposed expansion of the freeway network includes widening of 407 ETR to 10 lanes west of Highway 400; extension and widening of Highway 427 to 8 lanes south of Major Mackenzie Drive; widening of Highway 400 to 12 lanes between 407 ETR and Major Mackenzie Drive and to 10 lanes from Major Mackenzie Drive to Highway 9.

Recommended Alternative - Group 4 including a new GTA West Transportation Corridor

The final group of alternatives is the recommended transportation development strategy and includes elements of the first three groups plus a new GTA West transportation corridor between Highway 400 westerly and south to connect to Highway 401. A summary of the recommended Transportation Development Strategy is presented in *Council Attachment 2*. Included in the recommended alternative is an extension of Highway 427 from the planned terminus at Major Mackenzie Drive to connect to the GTA West Corridor at what would be a new freeway to freeway interchange.

The recommended Transportation Development Strategy includes a comprehensive suite of multi-modal initiatives and infrastructure to address travel demand and goods movement in the north-western area of the GTA. Each of the elements of the Transportation Development Strategy will benefit the overall network in the area and support planned growth in York Region and beyond, with the most significant element being a new GTA West freeway corridor linking Highway 400 to the Highway 427 Extension and Highway 401.

Recommended GTA West Corridor Strategy is consistent with York Region's Transportation Master Plan

The York Region Transportation Master Plan (adopted 2009) recommends the GTA West Corridor as a new freeway extending from Highway 400 westerly into Peel Region and beyond together with a connection to the Highway 427 Extension. The draft Transportation Development Strategy for the GTA West Corridor is consistent with the Transportation Master Plan. Also, other transportation studies in the area, including the Western Vaughan Individual EA, have included the GTA West corridor in their 2031 network analysis.

GTA West Corridor alignment options have been short listed and a study area for the detailed route planning has been identified

Five corridor alignment options for a new GTA West Corridor were developed during the EA, all of which extended from Highway 400 in the east to various terminus options in Peel and Halton Regions to the west. From the five corridor options, two were carried forward and used to develop the preliminary route planning study area.

The two corridor options carried forward are included in *Council Attachments 3 (a) and 3(b)*. The options include a new freeway corridor from Highway 400 westerly and south to connect to Highway 401 in the vicinity of the Peel / Halton Regional Boundary and a new freeway corridor from Highway 400 westerly and south to connect to Highway 401 just east of the Niagara Escarpment.

The two corridor options that were carried forward were used in the development of the preliminary route planning study area which is shown in *Council Attachment 4*. This study area will be used in Stage 2 of the EA for detailed route planning and includes a corridor from Highway 400 westerly from north of Kirby Road to south of King Road. In the vicinity of the York/Peel boundary area, the route planning study area swings to the south of Bolton and also includes a link to the Highway 427 extension.

The route planning study area will need to be refined as the EA progresses, particularly in emerging urban areas to ensure that development can proceed while still protecting for possible GTA West Corridor alignments

There are three development areas within Vaughan that are affected by the preliminary route planning study area for the GTA West Corridor. These areas are shown in *Council Attachment 5* and include the West Vaughan Employment Area Secondary Plan, Kleinburg-Nashville Secondary Plan and the Vaughan 400 North Employment Area Secondary Plan (Vaughan OPA 637).

Each of these areas is in various stages of the development approval process. Staff will continue to work with Vaughan and MTO to ensure that development applications are reviewed expeditiously and that they protect for reasonable GTA West alignment

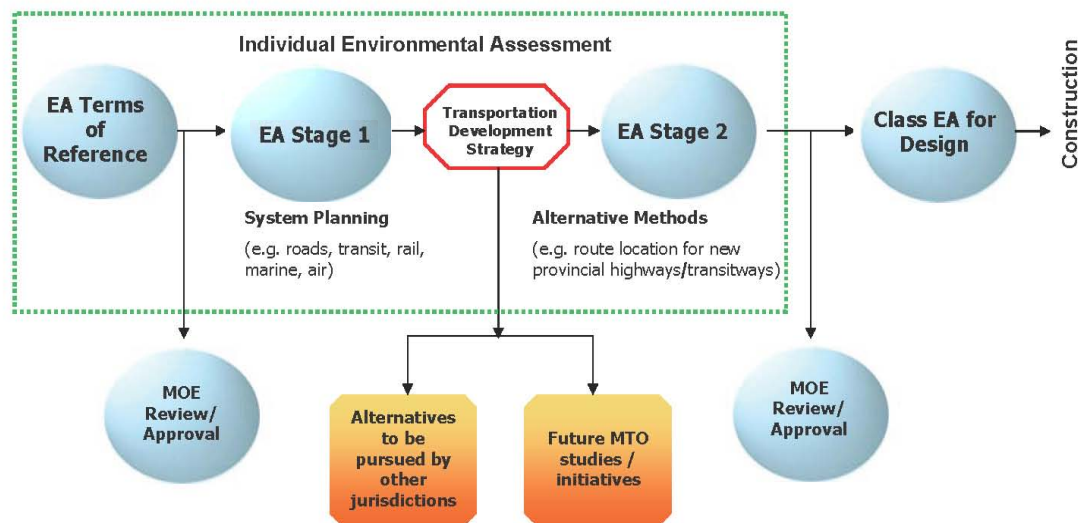
alternatives (including the link to the Highway 427 Extension). The objective is to ensure that MTO proceeds as quickly as possible with detailed route planning in the development areas and that the land identified for protection is minimized where feasible.

Next steps in the project

The draft Transportation Development Strategy Report has been released by MTO for public review from March 11 to June 10, 2011. MTO will consider the comments received during public review before finalizing the Transportation Development Strategy.

Once the Transportation Development Strategy has been finalized, Stage 2 of the EA can proceed, including the detailed route planning and preliminary design of the GTA West Corridor. MTO has not identified a schedule for Stage 2 of the EA, however, it is estimated to be a minimum of 2 years before a preliminary recommended alignment is selected. Staff will continue to be involved and will provide updates to Regional Council at key milestones during the next stages of this project.

The overall EA process is shown on the following figure:



5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The City of Vaughan has been involved during the EA as members of the Technical Advisory Committee. York Region and Vaughan staff will continue to be involved during Stage 2 of the EA which will include the route planning and preliminary design of the GTA West Corridor.

As discussed in Section 4, there are three development areas within Vaughan that are affected by the preliminary route planning study area for the GTA West Corridor. These areas are shown in *Council Attachment 5* and include the West Vaughan Employment Area Secondary Plan, Kleinburg-Nashville Secondary Plan and the Vaughan 400 North Employment Area Secondary Plan. Staff will continue to work with Vaughan and MTO to ensure that detailed route planning proceeds as quickly as possible in the development areas and that the land identified for protection is minimized where feasible.

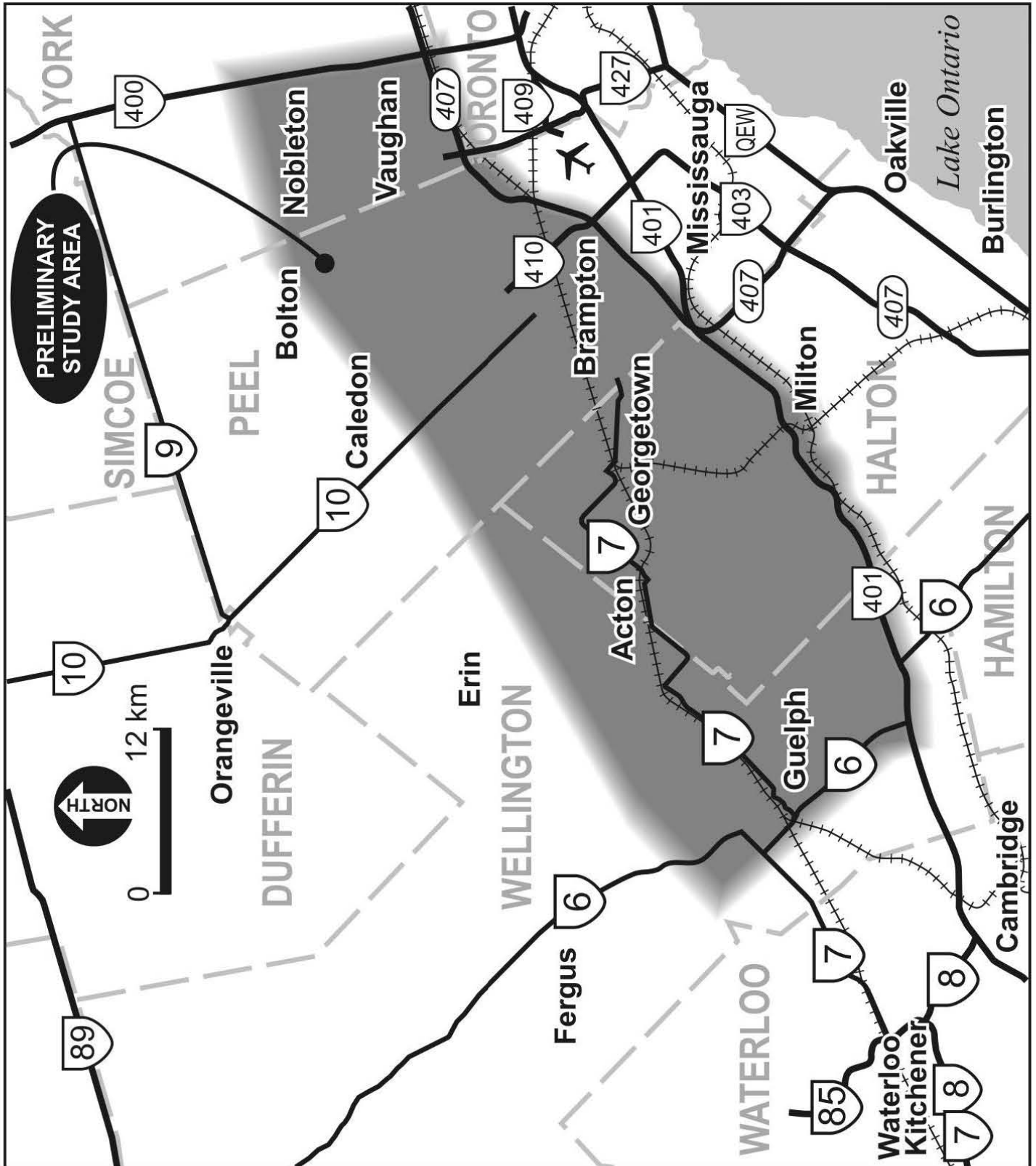
7. CONCLUSION

The GTA West EA process has reached the completion of Stage 1 with the publication of the draft Transportation Development Strategy Report, released by the Ministry of Transportation in February 2011. Staff will continue to be involved through Stage 2 of the EA and will report at key milestones during the route planning and preliminary design of the GTA West Corridor.

For more information on this report, please contact Loy Cheah, Director Infrastructure Planning at Ext. 5024.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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



GTA West Transportation Development Strategy Summary

Transportation Development Strategy – Short Term Elements (0-5 Years)		
Element	Description	Jurisdiction
Expanded Use of Ramp Metering	Active Traffic Management Study to identify areas where ramp metering can be installed at interchanges along existing and planned provincial facilities.	MTO
High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) / Transit Bypass at Key Locations	Active Traffic Management Study to identify locations where bus bypass ramp provisions should be provided along existing and planned provincial facilities.	MTO
Transit Supportive Highway Corridors	Active Traffic Management Study to identify locations where transit supportive highway corridors should be provided along existing and planned provincial facilities.	MTO
Enhanced Incident / Congestion Management	Active Traffic Management Study to assess the potential for further expansion of the COMPASS system beyond the current service area.	MTO
Expanded Use of Speed Harmonization	Active Traffic Management Study and monitoring experience elsewhere to determine viability of speed harmonization in the study area.	MTO
Provincial / Employer Led TDM Programs	MTO and Metrolinx will explore opportunities to provide additional support as well as the potential for legislative changes to address jurisdictional policy barriers.	MTO / Metrolinx
Long Combination Vehicles	MTO to determine the next stage of the LCV program based on the review of experience.	MTO
Mobility Hubs	Initiate study to explore potential for inter-regional transit service improvements west of the GTA.	MTO / Metrolinx / municipalities
Goods Movement and Freight	Feasibility review of potential future initiatives aimed at removing freight rail / passenger rail conflicts and providing grade separations at road / rail crossings.	MTO / CN / CP / GO Transit / municipalities
Route Planning and Preliminary Design of New Transportation Corridor and Connecting Links (Stage 2 of EA Study) and Protection of Required Lands	Route Planning and Preliminary Design, as well as protection of required lands: between Highway 400 and the Highway 427 Extension, and between Highway 427 Extension and its connection with Highway 401 west Milton, with possible transitway and / or truckway facilities. In addition, North-South Link between GTA West corridor and Highway 401 / 407 ETR near the Halton / Peel boundary.	MTO

GTA West Transportation Development Strategy Summary

Transportation Development Strategy – Medium Term Elements (5-15 Years)		
Element	Description	Jurisdiction
Widening of Highways	MTO to undertake Class Environmental Assessment studies (as required) to investigate and confirm the need, timing and the lane requirement for widening of the following provincial facilities within the GTA West study area (timing and lane requirement also subject to availability of funding):	
* Includes HOV lanes		
Note: The number of lanes proposed as shown reflects the Transportation Development Strategy per the GTA West Study and may differ from current MTO programs	- Highway 401 - Highway 6 to Regional Road 25 – widen to 10 lanes - Regional Road 25 to James Snow Parkway – widen to 10 lanes* - James Snow Parkway to 407 ETR – widen to 12 lanes* 407 ETR to Winston Churchill Boulevard – widen to 10 lanes* - Winston Churchill Boulevard to Highway 410 – widen to 12 lanes* 407 ETR (no EA required – previously approved) - Highway 401 to Highway 410 – widen to 10 lanes - Highway 410 to Highway 427 – widen to 10 lanes - Highway 427 to Highway 400 – widen to 10 lanes - Highway 410 - Highway 401 to 407 ETR – widen to 9 lanes* 407 ETR to Steeles Avenue – widen to 8 lanes* - Steeles Avenue to Queen Street – widen to 10 lanes* - Queen Street to Mayfield Road – widen to 8 lanes - Highway 427 407 ETR to Highway 7 – widen to 8 lanes - Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive – 8 lanes (EA approved) - Highway 400 407 ETR to Major Mackenzie Drive – widen to 12 lanes - Major Mackenzie Drive to King Road – widen to 10 lanes * - King Road to Highway 9 – widen to 10 lanes*	MTO 407 ETR MTO MTO MTO

Transportation Development Strategy – Long Term Elements (15-25 Years)		
Element	Description	Jurisdiction
Design and Construction of New Transportation Corridor	- New corridor Highway 400 to Highway 427 Extension - New corridor Highway 427 Extension to Highway 401 west of proposed Tremaine Road interchange - Extension of Highway 427 to new corridor - Highway 410 connection to new corridor - New North-South Link from GTA West corridor to Highway 401/ 407 ETR	MTO

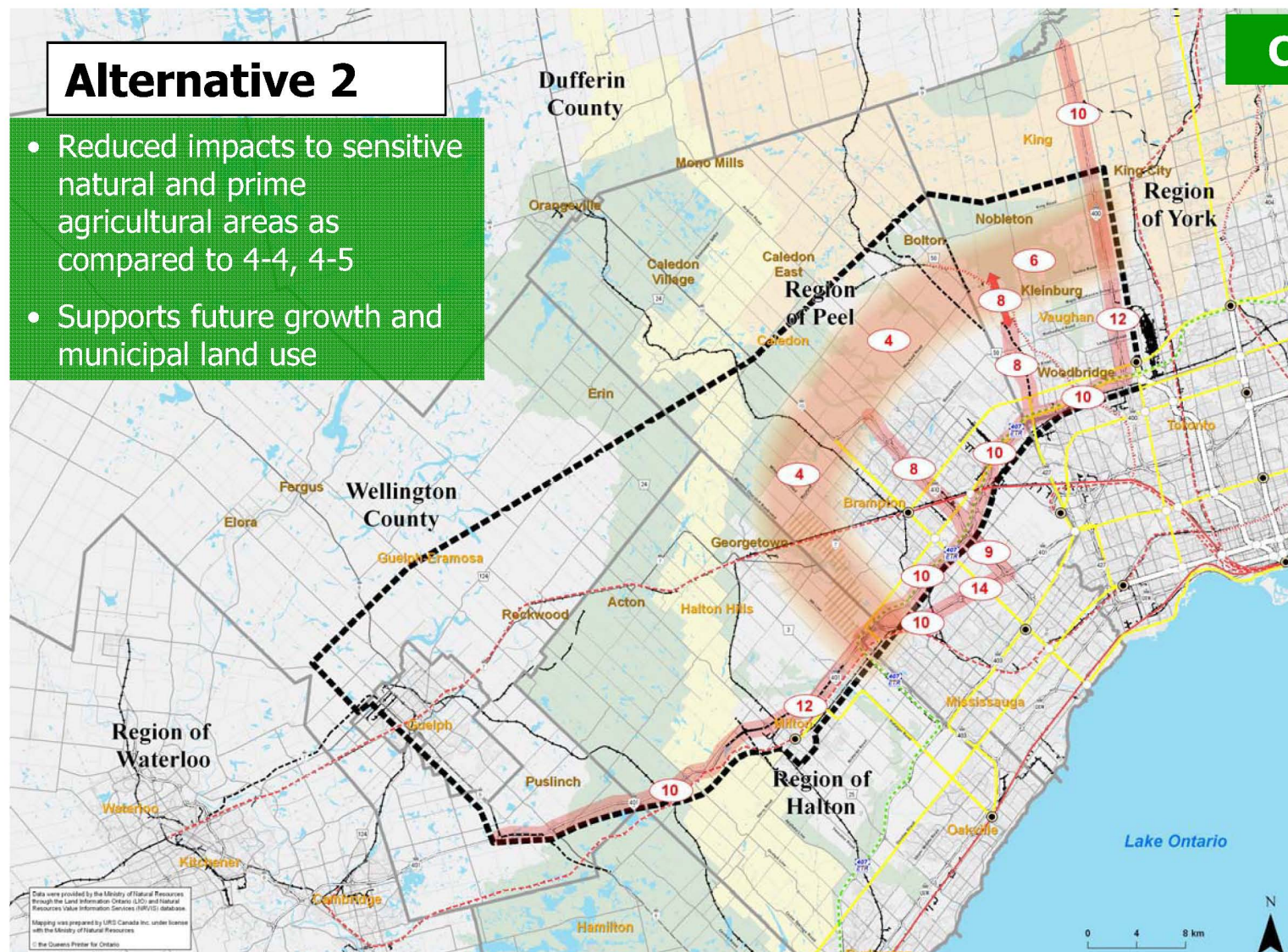


GTA West – New Transportation Corridor Alternatives

Alternative 2

- Reduced impacts to sensitive natural and prime agricultural areas as compared to 4-4, 4-5
- Supports future growth and municipal land use

CARRIED FORWARD





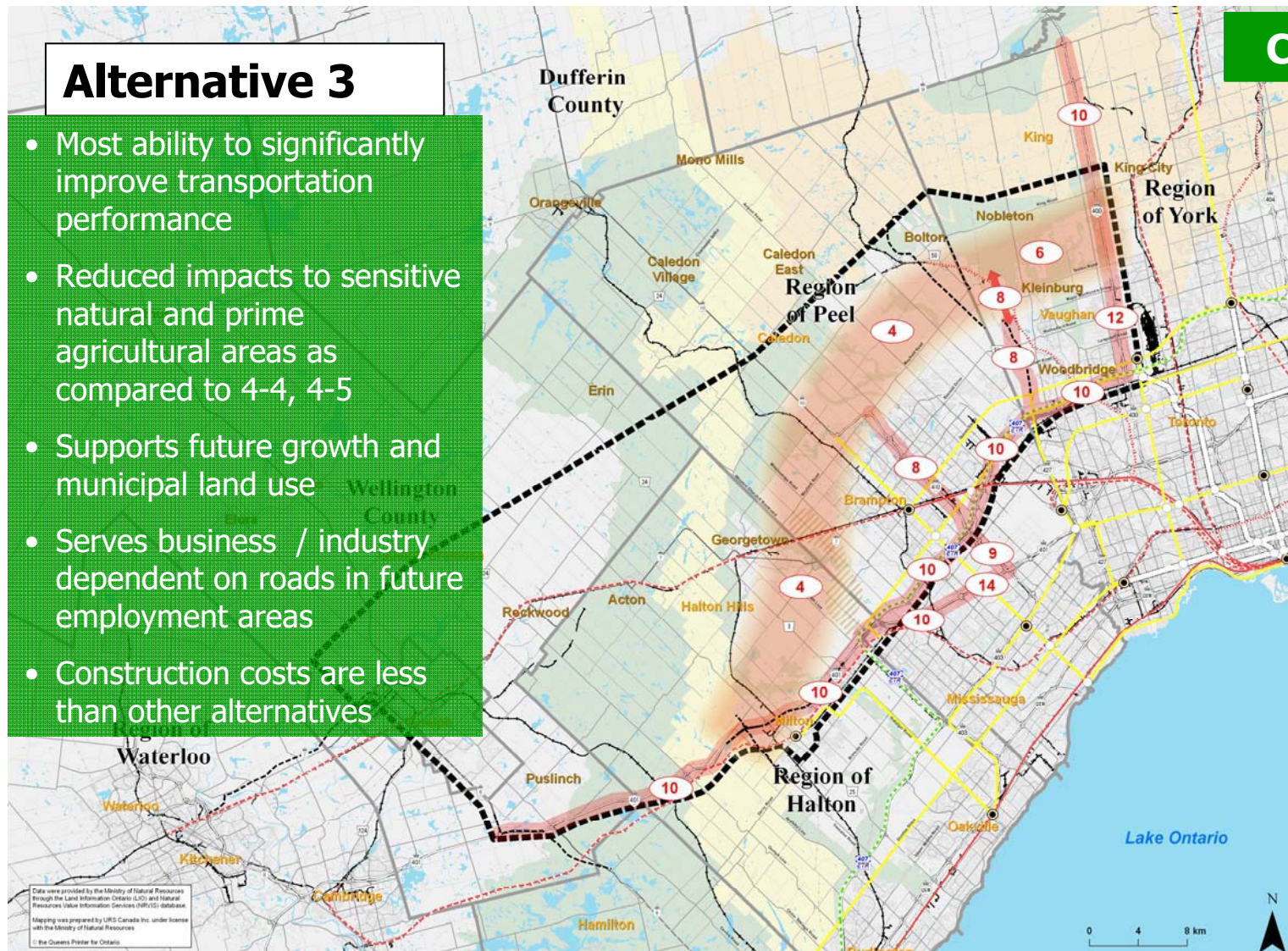
GTA West

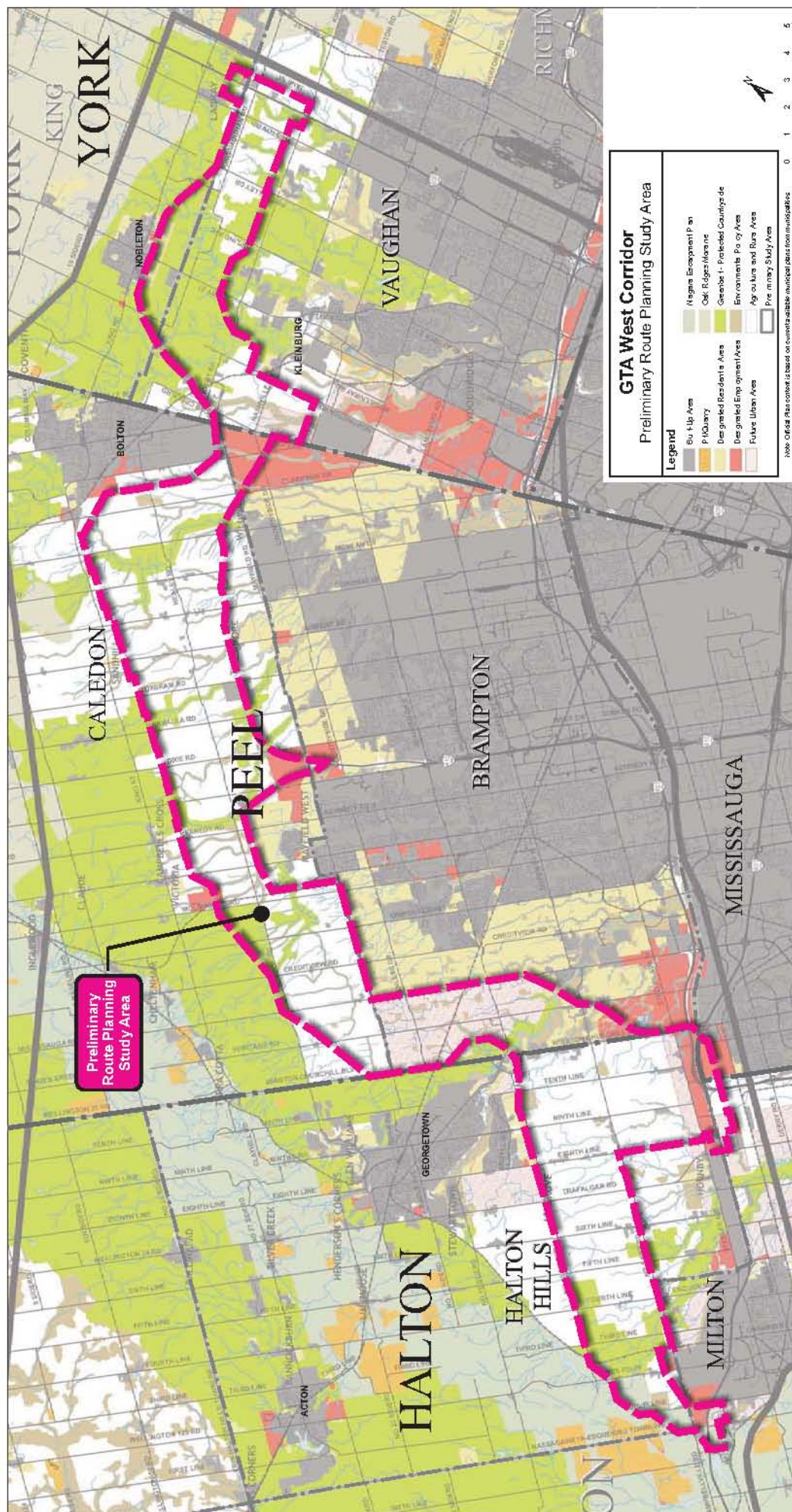
GTA West – New Transportation Corridor Alternatives

Alternative 3

- Most ability to significantly improve transportation performance
- Reduced impacts to sensitive natural and prime agricultural areas as compared to 4-4, 4-5
- Supports future growth and municipal land use
- Serves business / industry dependent on roads in future employment areas
- Construction costs are less than other alternatives

CARRIED FORWARD





Development Areas in Vaughan affected by GTA West Route Planning Study Area

