

4

GOODS MOVEMENT IN CENTRAL ONTARIO-TRENDS AND ISSUES

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, April 25, 2005, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works, subject to replacing the first bullet point in Recommendation 1 with the following:

- **Early implementation of the Highway 404 extension to Keswick to Glenwoods Avenue**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council request further action by the Minister of Transportation of Ontario on the following items which relate to goods movement as identified in the report “Goods Movement in Central Ontario: Trends and Issues”:
 - Early implementation of the Highway 404 extension to Keswick
 - Determination of the Highway 427 route and property protection for the corridor
 - Determination and property protection for the East-West Economic Highway corridor
 - Acceleration of the GO Transit rail capital program
 - Increased monitoring of goods movement on highways throughout York Region in order to determine priorities for investment
2. Copies of this report be forwarded by the Regional Clerk to the Ministry of Transportation, and to Clerks of the local municipalities in York Region, the City of Toronto and other Regions in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area.

2. PURPOSE

This report is prepared to highlight the trends and issues related to goods movement particularly as it pertains to York Region.

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) commissioned a major study of goods movement through Ontario with a particular emphasis on trucking and congestion difficulties at Windsor and along Highway 401.

The Provincial study, entitled “Goods Movement in Central Ontario: Trends and Issues”, is a report which addresses the need for continuing economic vitality for the Growth Plan

for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area (GGHA), and is expected to be used as a reference for determining the need to further expand the Provincial highway network.

3. BACKGROUND

The Ministry study is a broad overview of the importance of goods movement and highlights a number of the challenges that the Province faces in ensuring satisfactory solutions to issues such as border crossings, congestion, air quality, noise, pavement damage, road safety and technology. These issues are examined in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement, increased global trade, just-in-time delivery, and international security concerns.

3.1 Trends/Background

The MTO report primarily stems from continued concern about traffic congestion on 400 series highways and at the Windsor boundary. It is largely devoted to a description of the existing system – global, national, Ontario, Free trade, and the GGHA. The report examines marine, shipping, pipelines, rail, air freight, trucking and multi modal transport, but lacks in recommending specific capital projects or determining the priorities for capital investment.

There are interesting statistics by market and manufacturing sector of the role that Ontario plays in the North American market and how various market sectors have changed in the last decade (The motor vehicle export sector accounts for 40% of all exports in 2001, but is declining in constant dollar terms). There is also a detailed discussion of modern supply side economics.

Truck traffic in the GGHA is focused on Highway 401 and the QEW - each with over 30,000 truck trips daily. Highway 7 and 407 handle about 5,500 and 4,200 truck trips on a weekday at their peak points. Total traffic volumes crossing the US border dropped 30% in September 2001 and remain about 20% lower than 1999 levels.

The report notes that four projects in York Region – the Highway 404 extension, Bradford Bypass and Highway 427 along with a “GGHA West Corridor....between Guelph and Vaughan” are among eight being studied or with environmental assessments underway.

Aggregate haulage is also a major element of truck traffic in York Region. Throughout the GGHA it accounts for about 14,000 trips a year. Much of the need for aggregate haulage is related to roadway construction itself where the construction of one kilometre of roadway requires about 600 truck loads for removal and supply of new material.

Also of interest is Vaughan’s CP Intermodal yard which was built in 1991 to handle 110,000 container units a year. It has since been expanded to handle 350,000 units per

year but the surrounding provincial highways network has not been expanded to a significant degree.

Despite the statistics contained in the report, significant data gaps exist in such areas as speed/delay, origin/designation, hazardous goods, truck trip generation rates and truck weights – particularly for specific corridors and local municipalities such as those in York Region.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The consultants on this study have produced a comprehensive report examining road, rail, air, shipping and intermodal goods movement. From this report the Minister of Transportation has supported six key areas for action:

- Highway Expansion
This will include extensions to existing highways as well as the development of new infrastructure will be based on the need for access to employment centres, connections to US borders, tourism, recreation, as well as carpool and transit services.
- Border Infrastructure
MTO along with affected local municipalities, the United States and shippers will develop policies and infrastructure to improve efficiency and enhance security.
- Freight Forum
A stakeholder group was established in 2003 to air issues and solve mutual problems.
- Long Combination Vehicles (LCV)
These larger vehicles have been licensed in many parts of the USA. Shippers and carriers are presently working on a submission to MTO for similar licensing which will ensure road safety and consider shared highway needs. Regions will also need to be assured that axle loads will not compromise the structure of municipal roads.
- Select Network Improvements
Additional lanes, interchanges and highway design as well as rail improvements for freight and passenger service will continue to be investigated.
- Freight Supportive Land Use Guidelines
Workshops are presently being scheduled to present examples of how land use patterns can be developed and buildings positioned to better suit goods movement.

4.1 Region of York Perspective and Issues

Improving the efficiency of the goods movement network –particularly for trucks, within and beyond York Region is a key objective of the Region's long term growth

management strategy and of the Official Plan. In 2003, York Region exported \$12.5 billion worth of products, accounting for approximately 38% of its gross domestic product. Over \$7.7 billion of these exports were transported by road. Consequently, both the maintenance and continued expansion of the provincial highway system is critical to the economic competitiveness and expansion of York's economy and the projected growth in new jobs in areas such as Keswick. In addition to this however, in the development of the Region's draft economic strategy, consultants for businesses in the Region have also stressed the importance of developing new transit infrastructure.

Most recommendations in the report are either too general, outside the scope of municipalities to control or are already being addressed. There are however, six areas specific to trucking which could be pursued by the Region:

- Require specific truck/service vehicle traffic impact studies for all development in the Regional Centres and Corridors areas to ensure that suitable off street facilities are provided in the design of "continuous main street frontage" type developments. Separate off-street facilities for courier, cartage and service vehicles are lacking in the central area of Toronto, and is considered an important factor that the Region must examine in their development approvals process where street frontage development is being encouraged. Attention to this now will greatly benefit the Region in the future.
- Ensure consistent standards between local municipalities and the Region along with development incentives for innovation in the development of goods movement facilities.
- Increased roads capacity in the vicinity of intermodal yards.
- Continued development of our traffic control system.
- Continued support for transportation system management solutions to reduce peak period traffic in general.
- Continued advocacy for an expanded highways network.

Despite the identification in the report of the need for increased highways construction, there is presently no Provincial plan for implementation. The Ministry must follow up this study with a specific plan for a multi-year phased construction program, and an expanded database of existing trucking in York Region in order to determine priorities for new investment. In order to reduce congestion difficulties and to support the Region's economic growth plan, York must continue to advocate for the extension and expansion of the 400 series highways in and through the Region, specifically:

- Highway 427 extension and property protection.
- Highway 404 and Bradford Bypass.
- Highway 407 expansion.
- East/West Economic Highway property protection.
- Additional highway interchanges.

and for:

- Expansion of the GO rail network.
- Rail/rail and road/ rail grade separations.

- Increased roads capacity at intermodal yards.
- Enhancement/coordination of the speed of incident management.

The 2002 Transportation Master Plan outlined a number of areas for additional attention including:

- Improved freeway network.
- Improved arterial/freeway connections.
- Enhanced access to intermodal yards.
- Rationalization/consolidation of rail freight facilities.
- Shift rail transit away from major freight lines.
- Priority lanes for commercial truck traffic.
- Improved off street loading and parking facilities.
- Efficient incident management systems.
- Further development of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) initiatives to handle traffic more efficiently.
- Transportation System Management (TMS) initiatives to reduce peak period truck traffic.
- Elimination of institutional barriers.

4.2 Other Observations

The report has suggested the establishment of a freight forum that brings together representatives from all modes and levels of government. This should be supported as a priority for the anticipated new Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA).

Recommended priority areas identified in the MTO report are to:

1. Identify and address spot and corridor improvements by removing bottlenecks and planning for network growth.
2. Improve data collection and real time information to improve traffic efficiency.
3. Improve planning for freight handling and the protection of future goods movement corridors.

Despite this priority list, the MTO has yet to commit to solutions to address them.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial impacts associated with this report. Implementation of the suggested provincial highway improvements could serve to increase economic competitiveness of communities throughout York Region leading in turn to shorter work trip travel distances.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Goods movement is an issue which is important to each of the local area municipalities for a variety of reasons.

7. CONCLUSION

This report is geared primarily to areas of Provincial and Federal government jurisdiction.

Notwithstanding this, improvements in highway and railroad networks will greatly improve the economic attractiveness of the Region and quality of life for residents. In order to accomplish this, the Province needs to adopt a multiyear program for capital investment. In this regard, there are a number of specific areas of investment that the Region would recommend:

- Early implementation of the Highway 404 extension to Keswick.
- Determination of the Highway 427 route and property protection for the corridor.
- Determination and property protection for the East-West Economic Highway corridor.
- Acceleration of the GO Transit rail capital program.
- Increased monitoring of goods movement of highways throughout York Region in order to determine priorities for investment.

The issues outlined in this report may become a prime focus for review by the proposed GTTA.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.