



## INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

**TO:** A. B. Marshall, Chief Administrative Officer  
**FROM:** Melissa Ricci, Senior Policy Planner  
**DATE:** July 31, 2020  
**RE:** Town of Halton Hills Comments on the Proposed Regulation to Streamline the GTA West Corridor EA process.

**Under the Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act (Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1990, Chapter E.9); and the delegated authority given to A. B. Marshall, Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Halton Hills we hereby request the following:**

### **REQUEST:**

The purpose of this memorandum is to obtain approval for staff comments on the proposed regulation to update the existing environmental assessment process for the Ministry of Transportation's GTA West Transportation Corridor posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) on July 8, 2020. Comments are requested to be submitted through the ERO by August 22, 2020. Planning and Transportation staff have worked in collaboration to prepare comments outlined in this memorandum as the proposed regulation has potential local transportation, land use and economic development implications.

### **RATIONALE:**

The purpose of the proposed regulation is to streamline the Environmental Assessment (EA) process for assessing the potential environmental impacts of the GTA West Corridor as well as the EA consultation process. The streamlined process aims to eliminate duplication and expedite the project by completing field investigation and collecting technical information through the preliminary/detailed design and the early works construction phases. If approved, the regulation will shorten the study timeline, allowing for the preliminary design to be completed in 2022 instead of 2023. This would also allow for construction to start earlier than originally anticipated.

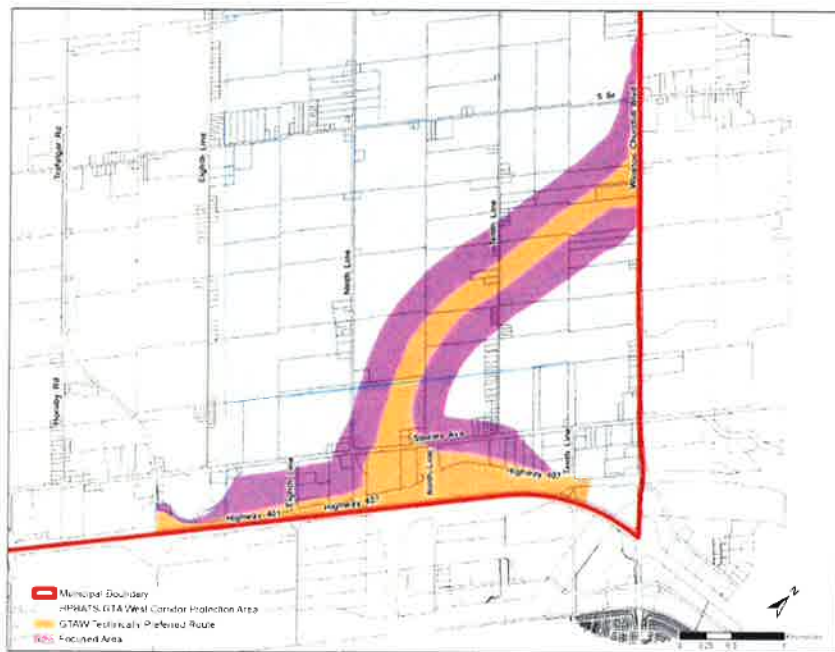
During preliminary/detailed design, this streamlined process would require the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to prepare an Environmental Conditions report. This report

would include documentation of all work completed from the start of the project up until the completion of the preliminary design phase. After detailed design, the Ministry will complete and publish a draft Environmental Impact Assessment report which will include the elements of the final Environmental Conditions report (including any changes), along with impact assessment and a proposed plan to deal with any identified environmental impacts.

In addition, the proposed regulation would permit early works to proceed to construction before the completion of the draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report, subject to specific conditions. Early works could include bridge construction/improvements, transitway station construction and utility relocation. The Ministry of Transportation would also be able to apply for, and obtain permits and approvals required for construction in advance. As part of the streamlined process, consultation with government agencies, stakeholders, the public and Indigenous communities will be ongoing and the MTO will be required to develop an issues resolution process that replaces the public objections process.

The streamlined EA process would require the establishment of an addendum process for both the Early Works Report and Environmental Impact Assessment Report to deal with any changes to the project that were not included in the original reports. The regulation states that minor changes can proceed without further consultation, while significant changes will require a report with an opportunity for the public and indigenous communities to provide input and submit comments.

**Figure 1: Draft GTA West Focused Analysis Area - Lands under Corridor Protection in Halton Hills.**



In November 2019, Council passed Resolution 2019-0195 asking the province to re-evaluate the GTA West Corridor project and all other transportation projects to ensure that future transportation investment helps reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as per the Town's and the Region of Halton's Climate Change Emergency Declarations. However, understanding that efforts to expedite the GTA West Transportation EA continue, staff have prepared the following comments.

**Town of Halton Hills Comments:**

- The Town supports efforts by the Ministry to streamline the EA process to reduce duplication, avoid delays and shorten the project schedule, while maintaining environmental considerations. In the Town, key employment lands which are strategically located with convenient access to Highways 401 and 407 and in proximity to major shipping hubs, are currently under corridor protection policies. The Town appreciates the effort to expedite the process so that development and economic investment can proceed on those key employment lands located outside of the GTA West corridor.
- The Town continues to advocate that the appropriate planning, scheduling work and coordination between GTA West and NWGTA/IESO Transmission Corridor teams take place to establish more definite timelines for the release of the lands located outside of the Focused Analysis Area. The Town's Premier Gateway Employment lands are strategically located along the Hwy 401/ Hwy 407 Corridor. The lands have been identified by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) as a Provincially Significant Employment Zone (PSEZ), which emphasizes their key role in helping drive job growth and prosperity across the region.
- The removal of corridor protection policies from key employment lands along the Hwy 401/407 Corridor is imperative to expedite development and economic recovery. The Town looks forward to the confirmation of the Technically Preferred Route which was expected in the Spring of 2020. Any further delays in confirming land needs for this and other provincial studies impacting lands in the Premier Gateway will have substantially negative impacts on the Town's economy and finances, with associated negative impacts on the broader region due to delays in economic development.
- With respect to the regulations proposed for the new streamlined process, Town staff believe that the addendum process for both the Early Works Report and Environmental Impact Assessment Report to deal with any changes to the project that were not included in the original reports, should define minor

changes which can proceed without further consultation. It is imperative that local municipalities are consulted on any changes that could potentially impact local plans and priorities.

- Currently, the Town is part of the GTA West Municipal Advisory Group (MAG). It is the expectation of the Town that the MAG will continue to operate as a forum for engaging municipalities through the proposed Environmental Assessment streamlined process.

Once approved by the Chief Administrator Officer, these comments will be forwarded to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Ministry of Transportation and the Region of Halton. The comments will also be uploaded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario.

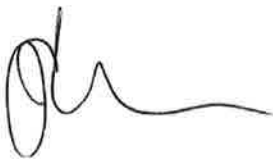
**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no financial implications at this point.

**PURCHASING APPROVAL:**    Yes         No         N/A

**TREASURER APPROVAL:**    Yes         No         N/A

**Reviewed by:**



**John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning and Development**

**Approved by:**



**A.B. Marshall, Chief Administrative Officer**

for.

**Date:**

Aug 10, 2020