

**To:** Jin Wang **Date:** August 24, 2021  
**From:** Sabbir Saiyed **Subject:** Peel Comments on the  
GGH Plan - Discussion  
Paper  
**CC:** Terry Ricketts,  
Susan Tanabe,  
Alex Legrain,  
Thiago Oliveira,  
Henrick Zbogor,  
Brian Lakeman,  
Andrew Pearce,  
Arash Olia **Our File:**

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) Transportation Plan discussion paper released on June 14, 2021. Overall, Peel staff are pleased with the content, and understand that the discussion paper is intended to inform about the proposed 2051 vision that will guide the development of the long-term transportation plan for the GGH region. For your consideration, staff comments from the Region of Peel are provided below.

### **General Comments**

- The vision and outcomes of the GGH Transportation Plan should be founded on principles and outcomes that extend beyond moving people and goods. The goal statements of the transportation plan should include the environment as a key consideration and guiding framework for recommended strategies and actions.
- The vision, principles and goals should recognize the impact of transportation infrastructure and vehicle emissions on the environment and communities and acknowledge concepts to avoid and minimize impact, incorporate ecological management frameworks formally, such as implementing a mitigation hierarchy management approach, and seeking opportunities for net gain, mitigation, restoration and enhancement of the environment.
- The minimizing of impacts should also recognize context sensitive design, as an element in the Plan's vision, principles and goals to address the impacts of provincial transportation networks on local communities in the implementation of the transportation plan.
- It was good to see that climate change and system resiliency was referenced within the discussion paper, the Ministry is strongly encouraged to present its support for climate change action more strongly by making mention of this critical issue early in the Plan and

explore options for how it can further inform decision-making as it is currently absent in the discussion paper

- The Plan could further support broader public health goals on climate change and air quality, with consideration to reference health more frequently throughout the plan. Specifically, the terms “Air Quality” and “Health” are only mentioned a few times throughout the entire document. There should be consideration for further emphasizing these areas of focus.
- The Plan should acknowledge as a defining objective/principle the need to address climate change holistically both in terms of prioritizing the reduction of GHG emissions across solutions and ensuring that provincial and regional transportation infrastructure and services is adapted to future climate conditions including extreme weather. The principles should recognize transportation solutions differ in terms of their ability to achieve environmental outcomes and place emphasis and priority on solutions that best contribute to meeting these objectives.
- Clarification is sought as to how often this plan will be revisited and updated, and whether this plan is intended to replace or supplement the Metrolinx 2041 RTP.
- The Region of Peel has been advocating for a provincial Vision Zero Framework. MTO is encouraged to include this as a part of this plan.
- In addition to transit, vehicular, and goods movement infrastructure improvements, MTO is encouraged to incorporate infrastructure recommendations for active transportation and micromobility solutions such as e-scooters and e-bikes, specifically as they relate to bridging AT barriers and the provision of first-and-last mile connections.
- While maps 1, 2 and 3 are useful in understanding the general improvements MTO is proposing through this plan, it is unclear as to what some of the improvements are and as such, the maps should be accompanied with a list of improvements, technologies and limits would enable municipalities and the public to provide more fulsome comments on the infrastructure recommendations.

## **Detailed Comments**

### **Section 2 – A Vision for Mobility in 2051**

- Staff are supportive of the proposed vision of an interconnected transportation system that provides a safe, seamless and accessible transportation experience for all. Beyond the general comments above regarding expanding the principles and outcomes, some suggested changes are below to the content already in the report are outlined below:

### **Pillar 1 - Getting People Moving on a Connected Transit System**

- What modal split is targeted for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, compared to current state, and how can the actions associated with this pillar ensure that the modal split is achieved by 2051?

### **Map 1 - Current, Planned and Conceptual Future Transit Infrastructure and Services**

- Please provide more information on the prioritization and timing of the delivery of infrastructure of the conceptual and new higher order transit projects.
- The proposed transit network differs significantly from the Frequent Rapid Transit Network (FRTN) identified in the Metrolinx 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (Metrolinx RTP). As the legend is fairly high level, Regional staff request further clarity on the following:
  - a. A higher order transit corridor is proposed along Airport Road however there appears to be a gap in the corridor between Queen Street and Steeles Avenue. The Metrolinx RTP identified priority bus along Airport Road. Clarification is sought as to what technology is being proposed along Airport Road and rationale for the gap between the two major arterial roads.
  - b. There appears to be two new conceptual higher order transit corridors (one that sweeps from Burlington to Oshawa and the other from Pearson to Richmond Hill). Clarification is sought as to what these two new transit corridors are. Given that the two corridors are light purple, indicating that they are new conceptual corridors, if the longer corridor is the 407 transitway, is MTO proposing an enhancement from BRT to LRT?
  - c. The GTA West Transitway is identified on this map as a new regional bus connection however MTO has advised that the facility will include provisions to upgrade to an LRT when required. If the long-term plan is to provide LRT along the corridor, that should be reflected in this plan.
  - d. Regional staff are pleased to see the connection of the Kitchener Rail corridor to Pearson Airport from the west and look forward to further engagement from on the Province and Metrolinx on that connection.
  - e. Pearson Airport is identified to be a transit hub and more information should be included in the plan on Pearson's Airport role as a Regional Transit and Passenger Centre.

- f. More information is requested on the light purple connection between Kipling Station and Pearson Airport as it is unclear as to what this project may be.
- g. Regional staff are pleased to see the inclusion of the Queen Street BRT project and look forward to continued work with Metrolinx on assessing the best approach for implementing BRT while balancing vehicular mobility and goods movement along the Queen Street corridor.
- h. The 2008 Big Move identified rapid transit along the Steeles Avenue Corridor defined as LRT, BRT, Automated Guided Transit and other technologies and separated partially or completely from general vehicular traffic. Subsequently, the Metrolinx 2041 RTP identified priority bus along the corridor defined as a buses without the need for a dedicated right-of way by providing protection from mixed traffic. As Map 1 identifies the project as "new higher order transit", clarification is requested on the definition of higher order transit and in particular the technology proposed for the Steeles corridor.
- i. Regional staff are pleased to see the inclusion of the Eglinton Crosstown West LRT Extension to Pearson Airport, the Hurontario LRT North Extension to Downtown Brampton GO Station, and the Dundas BRT.
- j. Map 1 identifies higher order transit along Derry Road west of Hurontario Street while the Metrolinx RTP identifies priority bus along the corridor. Further clarification is requested on the type of transit technology and why the corridor limits were reduced to the west side considering that there is an opportunity to connect to Malton and the Pearson Airport employment area to the east.
- k. The Milton GO Line is identified as an existing GO Rail Line however the Metrolinx RTP recommends two-way, all-day, 15-min service along this rail corridor which also scoring highly in the Metrolinx FRTN Prioritization Framework. This improvement should be considered for inclusion in the plan.
- l. Map 1 identifies higher order transit along the eastern segment of Lakeshore road. Further clarification is requested on the type of transit technology along the Lakeshore Corridor. The Metrolinx RTP recommends LRT and the City of Mississauga is also currently undertaking a BRT study for the corridor.
- m. Map 1 appears to indicate bus service along the QEW. Clarification is sought as to whether this new service indicates a future transitway along the QEW and if so whether the modelling assumed lane addition or lane conversion.
- n. The priority of improved transit service is a supportable goal and we understand that desire to expand transit from the Toronto-centric

radial system. We note, however, that there are still some high growth areas and provincially designated employment areas (including the Bolton southwest expansion area) that are not connected to the high order transit system. GO Rail service to Bolton has been identified in Metrolinx's transit plans since the 2008 Big Move and more recently in the Metrolinx 2041 RTP which identifies it as a project beyond 2041. However, more recently, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing recently issued a Ministers Zoning Order for the Bolton GO station. Also, the Region has designated this area as a primary Major Transit Station Area (MTSA). The explicit inclusion of the planned Bolton GO Rail station and GO Rail service would provide that connection and should be explicitly included in the system to address future growth in Caledon. Region of Peel and Town of Caledon staff have been continually advocating to the Province to bring the Bolton GO line back under the 2041 planning horizon and move forward with implementing this improvement to enhance connections between Bolton and Union Station.

- o. Given that this plan is intended to provide a long term vision for transportation in the GGH, clarification is sought as to why this infrastructure improvement is not recommended in Map 1.
- As this plan is intended to provide a long term vision for transportation and transit in the GGH, it should include plans for GO Electrification and an associated map.

## **Pillar 2 - Enhancing Capacity and Performance on Congested Roads**

- With regards to the vision for enhancing the capacity and performance of congested roads, there is a goal to manage the road right-of-way design to support safety and mobility for all users.
- In March 2021, Regional Council approved motions to not support construction of the GTA West Corridor traversing Peel in the form of a highway and requested that the Province study alternatives. This information was provided to Premier Doug Ford, Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Hon. Caroline Mulroney Minister of Transportation, and staff contacts at these and other relevant ministries. The Resolutions 2021-291, 2021-292, 2021-293 and 2021-294 are attached for your reference.
- How is the Ministry prioritizing the environment in its planning and siting of future infrastructure?
- In establishing a network of connected managed lanes, staff particularly encourage the inclusion of bus-only lanes on highways that traverse Peel.
- Supporting innovation and leveraging new technologies has been identified as a strategy to achieve a safer, more efficient, equitable and

sustainable transportation system. It is clear how active modes, followed by transit and carpooling, can support a more equitable system as they offer more affordable options however further details are requested as to how innovation and technologies will also achieve this.

- The discussion paper does not provide a long-term vision for carpooling however the Province has an existing network of carpool lots. MTO is encouraged to include long term strategies (policy and infrastructure) that support carpooling as well as guidance on the impact of on demand shared vehicles and any necessary supporting infrastructure such as pick up and drop off areas.

### **Map 2 – Current, Planned, and Conceptual Future Road Infrastructure**

- The map identifies a new corridor connecting Cambridge and Brantford. Clarification is requested on whether this is a part of the Niagara to GTA West corridor and any future plans for the extension to the border.
- The map identifies a new corridor north of Newmarket. Clarification is requested on whether this corridor is the Bradford By-pass.
- The GTA West Transportation Corridor EA identifies the extension of the Highway 427 to from Major Mackenzie to the GTA West Transportation Corridor which is consistent with Map 2. The Region of Peel has been advocating for the extension of Highway 427 to Highway 9 and beyond.
- Map 2 shows the extension of Highway 410 to the GTA West Corridor which is consistent with the GTA West Transportation Corridor EA however it also identifies new capacity expansion between Sandalwood Parkway and Mayfield. Further details are requested on this expansion including whether or not it will include HOV lanes.

### **Pillar 3 – Efficiently Moving Goods Across the Region**

- How will negotiations with CN/CP to accommodate two-way, all-day, 15-min service on the Milton GO Line and future Bolton GO Station impact goods movement along these rail corridors?
- Has MTO considered the Missing Link and Kitchener Freight Bypass in the development of this plan to balance the goods movement and transit in the long term?
- A number of road segments that have been identified in the GGH Strategic Goods Movement Network are not identified in the Peel Goods Movement Strategic Network. These have been listed in the attached Excel file.
- Please note that Peel's Strategic Goods Movement Network developed in 2012 will undergo an update in 2022. The goal will be to update Peel's

Strategic Goods Movement Network in the context of the Regional Strategic Goods Movement Network, and work with MTO and other stakeholders to exchange lessons.

### **Section 3 - Near Term**

- One of the priorities that people identified was to “make getting around healthier for me and for the planet”. The proposed plan doesn’t go far enough in exploring this priority and providing meaningful ways to address it.

### **Goal 1 - Improve Transit Connectivity**

#### **Action A – Transit Connectivity**

- It is recommended that the reference to “highly urban areas” be replaced with a reference to “urbanizing/densifying areas” to encompass a breadth of areas that are experiencing growth and require transit service.
- Please also consider designing the pathways around or leading to the transit stop to be accessible to all user types, regardless of age or ability, with the inclusion of lighting, benches and shading to enhance usability. Good connectivity and access to services is positively associated with walking frequency and physical activity.
- Staff are suggesting a new action item be included: “Add transit in rapidly growing designated greenfield areas and new settlement expansions as they are built to create transit-supportive communities with a sustainable transportation modal split.” Taking this action this will allow residents to use transit and prevent them from having to settle into auto-oriented habits and transition later. The designated greenfield areas in Peel are being built at higher densities than in previous planning horizons and can better support transit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Some settlement areas in Peel with high population and employment growth forecasts include Mayfield West, Bolton, and employment areas like Tullamore/the Airport Road corridor.
- Will the Ministry of Transportation be working closely with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to ensure that this Plan is supporting the need for compact complete transit-oriented communities?

- In new growth areas, could the Ministry consider investing in transit infrastructure prior to the community being built-out, so residents and businesses moving into these communities can fairly assess transportation options prior to investing in personal vehicles and/or corporate fleet?

### **Action B – Transit Integration**

- The Plan should consider safety regarding the transition of active transportation infrastructure between upper municipalities. At a Regional level, this is already taken into consideration with our lower tier municipalities. There should be some discussion on infrastructure continuity and inherent safety between Regions

### **Action C – Access to Transit by Active Transportation**

- Please also consider designing the pathways around or leading to the transit stop to be accessible to all user types, regardless of age or ability, with the inclusion of lighting, benches and shading to enhance usability. Good connectivity and access to services is positively associated with walking frequency and physical activity.
- It is important to have active transportation solutions that will get local residents to and from transit stations, as the Plan appropriately reflects. It is also important to consider how these modes of transportation can be used to get local residents to local employment hubs. Will transportation infrastructure decisions account for the important roles it has in enabling communities to support living and working in place?

## **Goal 2 - Relieve Congestion**

### **Action Item A – Optimize Existing Corridor**

- To establish a network of connected managed lanes, staff particularly encourage the inclusion of bus-only lanes on highways that traverse Peel.
- In keeping with this priority, MTO is encouraged to propose strategies and infrastructure improvements that optimize the existing transportation network in addition to new infrastructure such as GO service to Bolton using the existing rail line.



### **Action Item B – Provide Route Alternatives**

### **Action item C – Provide Alternative Ways to Travel**

- Staff support this action item but also suggest that it be expanded upon to include building a robust and safe active transportation network that allows residents to access their daily needs via walking and cycling (thus also contributing to a reduction in congestion).
- Transit oriented communities with a range of housing options can create more equitable communities, allowing residents to age in place, and staying physically and socially connected with those around them.

### **Goal 3 - Give Users More Choice**

#### **Action Item A – Transit Availability**

- Please continue to support funding for local transit connections across communities in Peel.

#### **Action Item B – Comprehensive Active Transportation Network**

- This action item focuses on a safe, connected and inclusive active transportation network. Best practices and recommendations shared within the Healthy Development Index suggests that the presence and extent of sidewalks on both sides of the street encourages walking and non-motorized forms of travel. While sidewalks can encourage physical activity, if a sidewalk is in poor condition or inaccessible, it is shown to act as a barrier to walking, especially for seniors

#### **Action Item C – Barriers to Transit Access**

- In order to remove barriers to access within the transportation system, the Province is supporting accessibility improvements at regional transit facilities. Highway interchanges, railways, waterways, and structures are common major barriers in the active

transportation network. MTO is encouraged to include policies and recommendations to address these critical barriers.

- Will transportation infrastructure policy and investment decision-making prioritize greater investment in alternative modes of transportation that support aging populations and aligns with the Region of Peel Term of Council Priority to build a 'Community for Life'?

#### **Goal 4 – Keep Goods Moving**

- The discussion paper recognizes the significance of the movement of goods in the GGH region and how it is essential for economic development.
- The Region of Peel is one of the GGH region's most important marketplaces for goods movement industries. Close to half a million trucks travel through Peel carrying upwards of \$10.8 billion worth of commodity on a weekly basis (2012-2014 Commercial Vehicle Survey).

#### **Action Item C – Sustainability and Efficiency**

- Staff support encouraging Off Peak Delivery across Ontario and would like to see this as a permanent program in the province.
- As part of this action item, the Plan should also include strategies to encourage the use of Long Combination Vehicles.
- Will consideration be given to possible risks to goods movement due to increased frequency of extreme weather brought on by climate change?

#### **Goal 5 – Safe and Inclusive**

- Consider renaming this goal "Access and Equity"

#### **Goal 6 – Future Ready**

##### **Action Item A – Environmental Impact**

- Transportation is an important source of air pollution (responsible for 39% of Peel community GHG emissions) that needs to be better addressed in the Plan.

- People living near major roads and travelling in cars are exposed to higher levels of air pollution. Exposure to air pollutants from traffic emissions generally occurs within 300 to 500 meters from a highway or major road. The highest exposure occurs closest to the road and it decreases with increasing distance from the road. In Peel alone, fifty-three per cent of the residents lives within 300 meters of a high-volume traffic road or highway (>25,000 vehicles per day).
- Staff strongly encourages to include mitigation measures for transportation-related air pollution and to acknowledge the public health impacts from transportation in the Plan.
- When making 'decisions about policy and infrastructure investments and providing direction to municipalities', how will the Plan account for climate change and recognize that municipalities, including the Region of Peel, have or are developing clear climate change action plans and targets?
- Will the Ministry be working closely with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks to ensure that Plan is aligned with the Provinces climate change commitments?
- How will the Plan account for Federal climate change commitments that could have linkages to future infrastructure funding?

### **Action Item B – Resiliency**

- In 2018, the World Health Organization stated that climate change was the greatest health challenge of the 21st century.
- The vision for transportation in the GGH needs to shift focus from more highways to sustainable alternatives.
- The Plan does not address climate change and the impacts that will be faced by those in the GGH to the extent required.
- Actions identified in the Plan should acknowledge the impact they will make on reducing GHG emissions, improving air quality and public health and creating resilience through mitigating and adapting to climate change. These issues need to be at the core of this Plan and there needs to be a paradigm shift to build a more health-promoting transportation system.
- Climate factors such as heat waves in western Canada caused the pavements to buckle and render roads unusable. Higher average temperatures, more frequent extreme heat waves and freeze-thaw cycles are anticipated to increase rate of damage/disrepair to conventionally designed/constructed road networks and bridge infrastructure.

- Peel Public Health suggests implementing carbon neutral building materials and heat-resistant technologies for new transportation infrastructure.
- What considerations are being made through planning to ensure that investments account for resiliency and avoid burdening future generations with maintenance costs that may become costly in future climate change scenarios?

### **Action Item C – Emerging Technologies**

- Will the Plan account for the necessary electric vehicle infrastructure for both passenger cars and commercial vehicles?

### Section 4 - Implementation & Next Steps

#### **Are the goals and near-term priorities and actions the right areas of focus?**

- Regional staff agree that the goals and priorities generally need to be more forward thinking as outlined in the detailed comments.
- The Ministry should consider including responding to climate change as an 8<sup>th</sup> 'near term action' within the Plan?

#### **What else should be done in the near-term?**

- Plan for transit in rapidly growing new greenfield areas in project planning and prioritization considerations.
- The strategies should focus more on optimizing the existing transportation network (better use of railway lines and highways) for the near term with little costs (i.e. Bolton GO Rail and Two-way, all-day, 15-min service on the Milton Line).

#### **Are there implementation considerations as we develop the GGH Transportation Plan and turn the 2051 vision into reality?**

- Ensure coordination for implementation with Metrolinx, municipalities, transit and other agencies.

- Continue to consult with municipalities to coordinate on transit investment, timing, and delivery of services in the planning horizon, to aid in planning for growth and land use planning for major transit station areas.
- Take into account policy directions that are in the Provincial Growth Plan related to integrated planning, including the coordination of infrastructure planning, land use planning and infrastructure investment.
- With this Plan having a timeline that will take GGH beyond the end of the decade, will attention be given to possible funding arrangement going beyond the Ontario Community Transportation Grant Program concluding in 2023?
- There is support streamlining and finding efficiencies in the inspection process, will the Province complete a comprehensive process assessment to ensure that removing inefficiencies does not compromise the quality of inspections?