

Clause embodied in Report No. 6 of the Planning and Transportation Committee, as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its meeting held on June 26, 27 and 28, 2001.

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Highway 404 Extension

(City Council on June 26, 27 and 28, 2001, amended this Clause by adding thereto the following:

“It is further recommended that the following motion be adopted:

‘WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has just completed the widening of Highway 404 north of Highway 401; and

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario is planning to extend Highway 404 north from its current terminus at Davis Drive in the Town of Newmarket; and

WHEREAS the recent widening has increased traffic volume on Highway 404 and noise levels in the residential communities located adjacent to Highway 404 south of Steeles Avenue in the City of Toronto; and

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has a long track record of erecting sound/noise barriers adjacent to expressways under its jurisdiction, such as Highways 401 and 427 and the Queen Elizabeth Way;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Toronto request the Province of Ontario to erect sound/noise barriers along both sides of Highway 404 between Highway 401 and Steeles Avenue.’ ”)

The Planning and Transportation Committee recommends that:

- (1) through its representation on the Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB), Council press for a review of the Province of Ontario’s announcement concerning the overall expansion of the 400-series highway network within the context of a regional growth management strategy for the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) based on “smart growth” principles;**
- (2) the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) be requested to keep both the City and the GTSB, informed of and involved in, all planning studies on Provincial highway expansion projects in and around the GTA;**
- (3) a copy of the report (April 17, 2001) from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services be forwarded to the MTO, the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and the Regional Municipalities of York, Peel and Durham;**

- (4) Council reaffirm its position adopted in 1999, following the release of the findings of the Task Force on Transportation Funding, that the Provincial and Federal Governments be requested to enter into a Transportation Funding Partnership and revenue sharing agreements with the Cities and Regions of the GTA to ensure adequate funding for the maintenance and expansion of the region's transportation system;**
- (5) the (GTSB), and its constituent municipalities, be requested to initiate an updated review of transportation funding in the region with the view to ensuring that local governments are given the financial and legislative means by which to meet their transportation planning responsibilities;**
- (6) the Province of Ontario be advised of Council's concern over the mismatch between ambitious plans to expand the Provincial highway system and the Province of Ontario's limited five-year commitment to helping fund inter-regional transit expansion, and recommend that a more balanced pattern of transportation investment be pursued through the GTSB transportation planning process and the funding partnership mechanisms referred to in Recommendations 4 and 5 above;**
- (7) a copy of report (May 29, 2001) from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services be forwarded to the Federal and Provincial Ministers of Transportation, the Chair of the GTSB, the Chair of the Regional Municipalities in the GTA, the Mayor of the City of Hamilton, and the Chairs of GO Transit and Toronto Transit Commission;**
- (8) Council strongly endorse the resolution passed recently at the GTSB which called for a strengthened GTSB with growth management, macro planning powers across the GTA and the creation of a Transportation Authority for the Greater Toronto Area which would be responsible for transportation (roads and mass public transit) planning across the GTA;**
- (9) it be impressed upon the Province of Ontario that time is of the essence in addressing this urgent transportation and planning issue; and**
- (10) public transit be given equal consideration with road expansion in formulating a "Made in Ontario" smart growth strategy.**

The Planning and Transportation Committee submits the following report (May 29, 2001) from the Commissioner, Urban Development Services:

Purpose:

This report is in response to a request from the Planning and Transportation Committee regarding transportation funding and road tolling policies in the Greater Toronto Area.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

This report reiterates an earlier (1999) request for the Provincial and Federal Governments to establish a Transportation Funding Partnership and revenue sharing agreement with the Cities and Regions of the GTA to ensure adequate funding for the maintenance and expansion of the region's transportation system. If acted upon, these requests would have beneficial financial results for the City of Toronto and the GTA.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Council:

- (1) reaffirm its position adopted in 1999, following the release of the findings of the Task Force on Transportation Funding, that the Provincial and Federal Governments be requested to enter into a Transportation Funding Partnership and revenue sharing agreements with the Cities and Regions of the GTA to ensure adequate funding for the maintenance and expansion of the region's transportation system;
- (2) request the Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB) and its constituent municipalities to initiate an updated review of transportation funding in the region with the view to ensuring that local governments are given the financial and legislative means by which to meet their transportation planning responsibilities;
- (3) advise the Province of its concern over the mismatch between ambitious plans to expand the Provincial highway system and the Province's limited five-year commitment to helping fund inter-regional transit expansion, and recommend that a more balanced pattern of transportation investment be pursued through the GTSB transportation planning process and the funding partnership mechanisms referred to in Recommendations 1 and 2 above; and
- (4) forward a copy of this report to the Federal and Provincial Ministers of Transportation, the Chair of the GTSB, the Chair of the Regional Municipalities in the GTA, the Mayor of the City of Hamilton, and the Chairs of GO Transit and Toronto Transit Commission.

Background:

At its meeting on May 7, 2001, the Planning and Transportation Committee deferred consideration of the report titled "Highway 404 Extension" from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services. The foregoing report recommended that City Council:

- (1) through its representation on the Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB), press for a review of the Province's announcement concerning the overall expansion of the 400-series highway network within the context of a regional growth management strategy for the GTA based on "smart growth" principles;
- (2) request the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to keep both the City and the GTSB informed of and involved in all planning studies on Provincial highway expansion projects in and around the GTA; and

- (3) forward a copy of this report to MTO, the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and the Regional Municipalities of York, Peel and Durham.

The “Highway 404 Extension” report was part of a response to the Provincial Government’s March 1, 2001 announcement of a series of planning initiatives to expand the Provincial expressway system in and around the Greater Toronto Area. These Provincial planning studies will look at:

- extending Highway 427 further north,
- extending Highway 407 further east,
- extending Highway 404 further north and establishing a Bradford By-pass,
- providing additional capacity at the Windsor-Detroit border crossing,
- a new east-west corridor in the GTA, and
- a new mid-Niagara peninsula corridor.

In deferring the “Highway 404 Extension” report, the Planning and Transportation Committee requested that:

- (1) the Chair of the Greater Toronto Services Board be invited to address the June 4, 2001 meeting of Planning and Transportation Committee regarding the GTSB’s approach to the proposed extension of Highway 404;
- (2) the Federal Minister of Transportation be invited to address the June 4, 2001 meeting of Planning and Transportation Committee on the Federal Government’s role as it relates to transportation in the Greater Toronto Area;
- (3) the Minister of the Environment be advised that the Planning and Transportation Committee has concerns regarding the extension of Highway 404 and its impact on the Oak Ridges Moraine watershed and that she extend the 30 day consultation period to enable City Council to discuss this matter fully;
- (4) the Commissioner of Urban Development Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services, to report to the June 4, 2001 meeting of the Planning and Transportation Committee with recommendations on how to redress the imbalance between road and transportation improvements in the Greater Toronto Area and provide estimates of the funding required to attain a balance;
- (5) the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to report to the June 4, 2001 Planning and Transportation Committee meeting on the effect of the Provincial Government’s policies on tolling on the balance of the road network; and
- (6) people who can speak to the matter of incorporating the Oak Ridges Moraine into transportation planning for this region be invited to address the Planning and Transportation Committee on June 4, 2001.

Comments:

Transportation Funding in the GTA

(a) The Picture in 1999

In 1999, the Transportation Funding Opportunities Task Force, comprising representatives of the City of Toronto, City of Hamilton and Regional Municipalities of Durham, York, Peel, and Halton, released its report, which concluded that:

- (1) the GTA/H-W transportation system is in trouble with over 70 percent of the expressway system being congested during peak periods, GO Transit not being able to provide sufficient services to meet growing demand with its current capital funding levels, TTC having to reduce services, having difficulty maintaining its vehicles and facilities and having limited expansion funds beyond current commitments, and other local transit systems having capital expansion difficulties;
- (2) a high quality transportation system is vital to the economic, social and environmental health of the GTA/H-W;
- (3) current (1999) annual capital investment of \$570 million is \$800 million short of the projected \$1.37 billion annual investment required to rehabilitate and expand the GTA/H-W transportation system;
- (4) municipalities cannot fund their transportation system needs with existing tools – other sources of revenue are needed; and
- (5) The assistance of senior governments is required.

(b) The Picture in 2001

These major findings remain true today. Road congestion has, in fact, become even more widespread since 1999 and there has been no significant additional transit capacity provided to relieve this situation. In particular, the annual capital funding gap of \$800 million required to develop and expand the transportation system to keep pace with growth in the GTA/H-W region, remains unresolved.

Since this time, the Provincial Government announced, in March 2001, a series of planning initiatives to expand the Provincial expressway system as noted above. These new expressways would be under Provincial jurisdiction and funded either exclusively by the Province or through as yet undefined public-private partnerships.

At the March, 2001 public open houses on draft transportation options for the new Official Plan, the general consensus of the public was one of deep concern about the state of the transportation system and the need for increased funding for transportation improvements, particularly expanded rapid transit services.

In the May, 2001 Ontario Budget, the Province announced the creation of a Golden Horseshoe Transit Investment Partnerships (GTIP) Fund of \$250 million over five years to address congestion and gridlock in the GTA and the surrounding Golden Horseshoe region. The GTIP is to support the expansion of inter-regional transit infrastructure such as commuter rail, light rail and dedicated transitways. As part of this announcement, the Province acknowledged that “a co-ordinated approach to transit planning, service delivery, fares and financing is needed to ensure both a seamless transit system in the GTA and beyond, and that transit becomes increasingly attractive and efficient.” Further, the Province “will consider options for meeting future inter-regional transit needs in the GTA and the surrounding Golden Horseshoe regions, including the most appropriate governance and financing options.”

The GTIP figure of \$50 million a year for inter-regional transit capital investment across the entire Golden Horseshoe needs to be seen in context. Prior to the Provincial downloading exercise, the Province used to contribute \$180 million per year (1996 to 2001 capital agreement) for the maintenance of the TTC system alone. In addition, over this period the Province funded 75 percent of the cost of the new Sheppard subway line. Consequently, although the GTIP is a welcomed initiative, it still leaves the region a long way from bridging the annual transportation funding gap of \$800 million referred to above.

It should be noted that as of 1999, the Provincial and Federal Governments received almost \$2 billion annually from the GTA/H-W region from transportation related taxes and fees. As a result, there is a revenue stream from which the Provincial and Federal Governments could provide an on-going and stable source of road and transit funding. It is a matter of debate as to what these levels of funding from the higher levels of governments should be and the basis on which they should be determined. City Council has already adopted a broad position on these matters when, in May 1999 it adopted Clause No. 8 of Report No. 7 of the Urban Environment and Development Committee, headed “Report of the Task Force on Transportation Funding” which recommended that the City:

- “Support and promote the establishment of a Transportation Funding Partnership consisting of the City of Toronto, Regions of York, Peel, Durham, Halton, and Hamilton-Wentworth (now the City of Hamilton), and the Provincial and Federal governments, the goals of which are to reduce congestion levels, ensure a competitive economy, assist in meeting air quality targets, reduce dependency on the private automobile and to provide a better quality of life for all Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton-Wentworth residents; and
- support that the proposed Transportation Funding Partnership meet 66% of the road and transit infrastructure needs in the GTA and Hamilton-Wentworth through a sustainable revenue sharing agreement with the Provincial government encompassing existing gasoline taxes, driver licensing and vehicle registration fees, and Provincial Sales Tax (PST) generated through vehicle sales and leases and strategic investments by the Federal Government.”

Subsequent to the City adopting this position, the Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB) conducted two workshops in 1999 focussing on the issue of transportation funding. These workshops led to the creation of an accord (reproduced in Appendix A) that was signed by public

and private stakeholders representing over 30,000 groups and individuals. This accord calls for a shared responsibility between municipalities, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada to provide an adequate, long-term and stable source of funding for transportation in the GTA/H-W region.

More recently, the GTSB has endorsed the use of municipal development charges to provide 33 percent of funds necessary to implement GO Transit's 10-year plan, and calls on the Provincial and Federal Governments to provide the remaining 66 percent. A separate report is being prepared by the City Finance Department for City Council consideration of this tool to pay for the City's share of GO Transit's 10-year plan funding requirements.

Thus, the City and the other member municipalities of the GTSB are pursuing a number of initiatives to engage the Provincial and Federal Governments in putting transportation funding in the region on a more predictable and sustainable footing. However, the response to-date from these higher levels of government has been very limited. Indeed, as noted above, the Provincial emphasis has been on the expansion of the regional expressway system, with possible private sector involvement, while public transit has been left to largely fend for itself. The type of transportation funding partnership and revenue sharing agreements called for by the "Report of the Task Force on Transportation Funding" (1999) have yet to be put in place and the on-going \$800 million a year capital shortfall remains as much a concern as ever.

(c) Funding Alternatives

The City, in concert with other GTA municipalities, should continue to pursue initiatives with the Provincial Government that would empower municipalities, regional governments, or the GTSB to generate funding from sources other than, or in addition to, local property taxes and development charges. Such initiatives could include special automobile fees (as recently introduced in Vancouver) and road pricing schemes based on new electronic pricing technology. The Federal Government also has special interests in urban transportation related to airport access, VIA Rail services, and recent international commitments to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions that result from our increasing dependence on automobiles. Targeted requests for specific projects that deal with some of these federal issues may be successful in attracting capital contributions from Ottawa towards transit improvements in the GTA.

(d) Moving Minds

As pointed out in the "Directions" report (April 2000) for the formulation of the City's new Official Plan, one of the biggest challenges with respect to transportation is "moving minds" in the sense of changing our attitudes towards the way in which we transport people, goods and services in the City. To quote from the report:

"We know we cannot build our way out of congestion with new roads. The 'predict and provide' style of transportation planning no longer works. Catering to the travel demands of urban sprawl has proven futile and we need new ideas and leadership.

This doesn't mean asking people to drive less and hoping for the best. We can only hope or expect people to change their life patterns if we provide options that are appealing, affordable and doable." (page 110).

The region is anticipated to accommodate an additional 2.6 million more people over the next 30 years to grow to the present-day size of London, England. Given this scale of growth, it is clear that governments, citizens and stakeholders in the GTA have to fundamentally rethink how the region's growing transportation demands can be met in a sustainable manner. Work in this direction has already begun through the GTSB's strategic transportation plan exercise which places the emphasis on finding public transit solutions to the region's future transportation needs.

The abilities of the GTSB and its constituent municipalities to achieve these aims are currently severely constrained by the funding and governance structure imposed by the higher levels of government. The City of Toronto, in conjunction with its regional partners should act to follow up on the 1999 report of the Task Force on Transportation Funding to pursue a phase two implementation strategy aimed at giving the municipalities the legislative power to carry out the transportation responsibilities that they have been given. A true commitment to developing a sustainable future for the region must begin from a substantial shift in the mindset of government itself and the City should be prepared to initiate this shift.

Impact of Toll Roads

The general experience in North America has been to use tolling primarily as a means of funding the construction of new roads, usually expressways. Typically toll roads have been built in corridors where there already exists a congested untolled expressway so that road users have a choice between paying for a less congested, faster road or taking a free but usually more congested and slower one. In Toronto, for example, the new Highway 407 toll road parallels the Highway 401 to provide this type of choice. The level of tolls charged will have an impact on the level of use of the toll road and the use of the free roads for which it acts as a substitute.

Toll roads can be built by either the public or private sectors, or some combination thereof. The institutional arrangements under which the toll road is built and operated may make little difference to the direct users of the facility. However, the use of the revenue stream that tolling produces will vary considerably depending on the public/private mix of ownership and control. Highway 407 which is operated privately by the "407 ETR Concession Company Limited" has proven financially successful in the sense of allowing tolls to be increased while maintaining high volumes of use.

Although tolls introduce an element of the "user pay" principle, they are, as noted above, generally applied as a means of funding expressway expansion and, therefore, accommodating the growth of vehicular traffic. This may not be a desirable consequence in congested urban areas because of the other detrimental impacts of increased road traffic, including possible impacts on the use of public transit. In this context, tolling is not to be viewed the same as area-wide "road pricing" which many economists and other urban experts favour as a means of managing congestion on the existing street system in densely developed urban areas. The general expectation is that revenues from such "road pricing" schemes would not be used to expand the road system but rather to pay for on-going maintenance and to subsidise and promote other more efficient means of urban transportation.

This brief discussion of tolls has touched upon some of the issues that tolling raises without forming definitive conclusions. Each proposal for a toll highway has to be looked at on its own merits in terms of its purpose, type of ownership, control of revenues, traffic impacts and socio-economic consequences. The City itself will have to assess some of these complex issues when it examines the possibility of tolls as a means of helping to finance the Waterfront Plan, including the reconfiguration of the Gardiner/Lakeshore Corridor.

The Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report and he concurs in its conclusions.

Conclusions:

A comprehensive study of transportation funding needs in the GTA was undertaken in 1999 when the GTA Regions and the City of Toronto formed a task force to look at the issue. The study identified an on-going \$800 million a year shortfall in the funding of the region's projected capital needs for transportation. The task force noted that neither the local property tax system nor development charges is capable of generating the revenue necessary to meet this annual gap in transportation funding. The task force report called upon the Provincial and Federal levels of government to enter into a new transportation funding partnership with the City and Regions and to establish sustainable revenue sharing agreements. If local government is to be given the responsibility of funding all transportation costs (road and transit; operating and capital), with the exception of the 400-series highway system, then it must be given the tools to generate the revenues to get the job done.

To date there has been little reaction by the senior levels of government to the task force's funding recommendations. The Province has indicated its support for planning the GTA on "smart growth" principles and its announcement of ambitious expansions to the system of 400-series highways has to be assessed in this context. The recent Provincial commitment of \$250 million over five years in capital funding for inter-regional transit improvements in no way matches the apparent commitment to expand the Provincial highway system in the region nor does it seriously address the \$800 million funding shortfall in transportation at the municipal level. Further, there has been no clarification or agreement as to the on-going role of the Federal Government in funding urban transportation initiatives. The achievement of "smart growth" will, in large measure, be dependent upon the establishment of "smart and innovative" funding for transportation infrastructure but the actions or non-actions of the senior levels of government have yet to produce real progress in this field.

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Appendix A

A Transportation Investment Partnership for the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton-Wentworth

The Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton-Wentworth region is facing a transportation crisis. Congestion pressures are unparalleled in Canada. Declining investment in our transportation infrastructure threatens our quality of life and economic competitiveness. Left unaddressed, the repercussions will be far reaching.

The economy of the GTA and Hamilton-Wentworth region is the driving force behind Ontario's prosperity. Its long-term success is critical to the well-being of the province and the nation. Yet congestion is grinding the movement of people and goods to a halt and threatening our competitive trade advantage. We cannot afford the status quo.

What is required is an investment in our future. The investment needed goes beyond the financial capacity of GTA and Hamilton-Wentworth municipalities. It cannot be sustained on the property tax base of our residents and businesses. It demands a shared responsibility that includes the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario.

All levels of government must reinvest some of the wealth generated by this region back into the transportation system which is the foundation for that wealth. It is an investment which will pay dividends in the economic prosperity, safety, health and well-being of all our communities. It is critical to the quality of the air we breathe and to meeting our international obligations on global warming.

We are committed to the development of a transportation plan for the GTA and Hamilton-Wentworth. The plan will target priorities and ensure the optimal use of resources to overcome our congestion crisis. The regional transportation system must include a balanced use of all modes, a strong public transit network, an efficient road system, co-ordination among the various modes of travel, and ongoing revitalization of our existing infrastructure. But, successful implementation will require new investments.

Action must be taken now. We, the signatories of this transportation accord, are committed to ensuring that the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton-Wentworth region continues to thrive. A transportation investment partnership must be forged. All levels of government and the private sector must work together to ensure secure, ongoing investment in our transportation infrastructure in the 21st century.

The Planning and Transportation Committee also submits the following report (April 17, 2001) from the Commissioner, Urban Development Services:

Purpose:

This report is in response to a request from the Planning and Transportation Committee regarding Provincial plans to extend Highway 404.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications from this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that City Council:

- (1) through its representation on the Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB), press for a review of the Province's announcement concerning the overall expansion of the 400-series highway network within the context of a regional growth management strategy for the GTA based on "smart growth" principles;
- (2) request the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to keep both the City and the GTSB informed of and involved in all planning studies on Provincial highway expansion projects in and around the GTA; and
- (3) forward a copy of this report to MTO, the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and the Regional Municipalities of York, Peel and Durham.

Background:

On March 1, 2001, the Province of Ontario announced a series of planning initiatives to expand the Provincial expressway system in and around the Greater Toronto Area. These planning studies will look at:

- extending Highway 427 further north,
- extending Highway 407 further east,
- extending Highway 404 further north and establishing a Bradford By-pass,
- providing additional capacity at the Windsor-Detroit border crossing,
- a new east-west corridor in the GTA, and
- a new mid-Niagara peninsula corridor.

A conceptualised map of these highway expansions accompanied the Province's announcement and is reproduced as Map 1 of this report. The Highway 404 Extension appears schematically on Map 1 as part of a new highway arching northwards across the top of the GTA region.

Responding to the Province's proposals, the following motion was put forward at the March 26, 2001 meeting of the City's Planning and Transportation Committee:

"Whereas the Province of Ontario has announced its intention to extend the 404 Highway north of Newmarket; and

Whereas it has been proved that throughout the world a creation of new highways creates additional traffic that would not otherwise be generated; and

Whereas the extension of 404 will facilitate the development of low density urban sprawl on the Oak Ridges Moraine and the agricultural areas to the north; and

Whereas the extension of urban sprawl will result in additional automobile traffic clogging the roads into the Greater Toronto Area;

Therefore be it resolved that the City of Toronto is opposed to the extension of Highway 404; and

Be it further resolved the City of Toronto requests that if the Province is to proceed with the extension of Highway 404 the City of Toronto is hereby requesting a full scale environmental assessment and hearing to address the following issues:

- (1) the alternatives to Highway 404 including an expansion of the public transit system; and
- (2) that any such environmental assessment examine the advisability of imposing tolls on any extension of Highway 404 to minimise the impact on the taxpayers in the GTA and to discourage commuter use on any extension.”

The Planning and Transportation Committee requested the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to report on the above-captioned motion to the Committee’s next meeting on May 7, 2001.

Comments:

- (1) Geographic Context and Planning of Highway 404 Extension

The existing Highway 404 originates as the Don Valley Parkway in the City of Toronto and stretches north from Highway 401 to Davis Drive in the Town of Newmarket. It passes through the Towns of Markham, Richmond Hill, Whitchurch-Stouffville, and Aurora. It also traverses the Oak Ridges Moraine in the area of Richmond Hill and Aurora. The last extension of Highway 404, which brought its terminus to Davis Drive in Newmarket, was completed in 1989.

When the Province first proposed extending Highway 404 to meet Highway 12 to the northeast in Durham Region, the Regional Municipality of York called for a three-phased staging of the extension:

- Davis Drive to Herald Road,
- Herald Road to Ravenshoe Road in Keswick, and
- Ravenshoe Road to Highway 12 in Durham Region.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) began its EA study of the Highway 404 Extension in 1993, completing it in late 1997. It examined the proposed extension of Highway-404 from its current terminus all the way to Highway 12. The Provincial announcement of March 1, 2001 refers to the extension of Highway 404 north of Herald Road and noted that the EA is with the Ministry of the Environment for approval. This proposed undertaking consists of approximately 43 kilometres of new four-lane divided highway with controlled access, and is estimated to cost \$222 million.

In 1996, York Region completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the construction of the new east-west Green Lane/Herald Road (one concession north of Davis Drive) which included the first stage of the northerly extension of Highway 404 to Herald Road. These projects have been approved by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and are now being constructed, including the 2 km first stage of the Highway 404 Extension (see Map 2).

(2) Status of Highway 404 Extension Approval

MTO's EA study is an Individual (or Full) Environmental Assessment Study. The Ministry of the Environment (MOE) is currently reviewing the environmental assessment study report (ESR). Upon completing its review, expected shortly, MOE will be filing a public notice of completion for a period of 30 days during which time its review document (or "blue book") of the ESR will be available for public viewing. Comments from the public and stakeholders on the "blue book" must be submitted to MOE during this 30-day period. MOE staff will then consider the comments received and incorporate them, where appropriate, into their recommendations to the Minister of the Environment. It is then up to the Minister to make public his decision on the project.

MTO is also conducting another study to address operational improvements between the north and south junctions of Highways 12/48 in the Region of Durham where the Highway 404 Extension will end. This study has been modified to take into account the findings of the planning for the Highway 404 Extension. Recognizing the physical link between these two projects, MTO has suggested the following condition be applied to the approval of the Highway 404 Extension:

"Construction of the Highway 404 Extension north of Green Lane (Herald Road) may not occur until MTO has secured environmental clearance for the Highway 12/48 Environmental Study Report."

(3) Issues

First, it should be noted that the Highway 404 Extension is being subjected to a full EA and is now in the late stages of the approval process. The 30-day review period of the MOE's "blue book" will not provide sufficient time for staff to prepare a report back to Committee and onto Council for a formal City response. Further, under the established EA process, any response to the "blue book" has to be limited to the issues raised in that document.

It should also be noted that Highway 404 already traverses the Oak Ridges Moraine and the proposed extension will push into the rural areas beyond the moraine. Undoubtedly, the Highway 404 Extension will encourage further urban development in these rural areas and, indeed, the planned growth of such centres as Holland Landing, Sharon, Queensville and Keswick is predicated on the new highway being in place. These centres are, generally, beyond the City of Toronto's commutershed.

The MTO's EA for the Highway 404 Extension was designed to address the problem "... of a deficiency in the capacity of the transportation network in northern York and Durham regions to accommodate forecasted commuter and recreational travel needs" (page 36). "Non-roadway

alternatives” were not considered as “reasonable” options and, therefore, were screened out of the EA process at an early stage. Consequently, it is not now possible to introduce transit alternatives for consideration at this advanced stage of the EA process. The issue of imposing tolls to fund the Highway 404 Extension was also not examined in the EA process.

A disturbing aspect of the Highway 404 Extension and the other recently announced expansions to the 400-series highways (see Map 1) is the fact that these major transportation investments appear to have been made without reference to a comprehensive growth management plan for the GTA region. These highway expansion proposals need to be assessed within a regional planning context and should, at a minimum, be referred to the Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB) for review and comment. The GTSB is currently developing a transportation plan for the GTA based on “smart growth” principles. A major thrust of the GTSB’s current proposals is to develop Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as a key element to meet future travel demands and increasing the use of transit. It needs to be shown how expanding the region’s highway network will reduce auto dependency and help create a more sustainable pattern of growth and development.

Further, with the expansion of the 400-series highways being funded by Provincial sources while transit improvements have to be borne on the property tax base, there is a very real possibility that the expansion of the highway system will occur in advance of any substantial improvements to the region’s transit systems. The threat of such an unbalanced transportation investment program will exacerbate rather than assist efforts to pursue a “smart growth” strategy for the region.

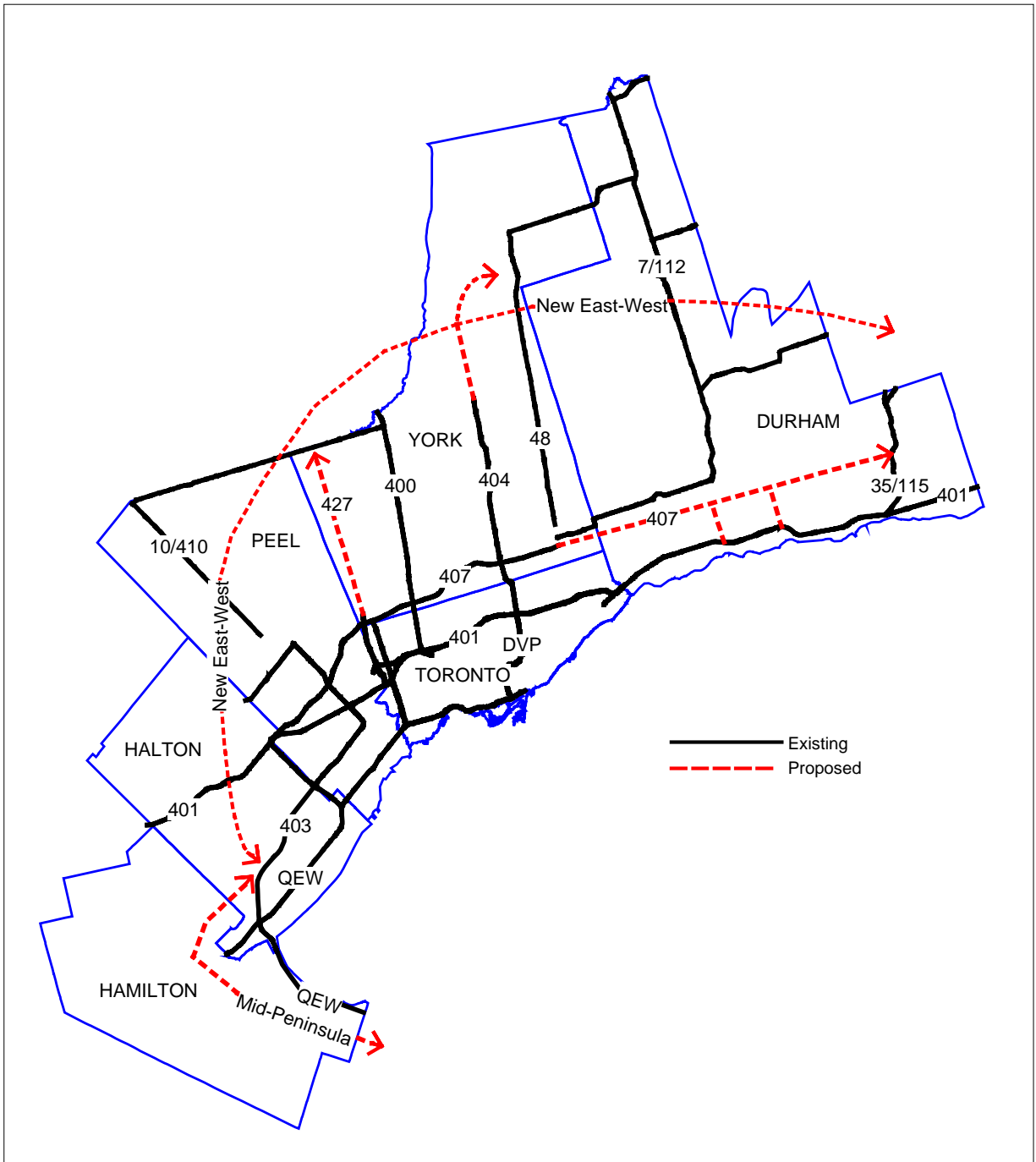
Conclusions:

This report describes the proposal to extend Highway 404 north of Newmarket to Lake Simcoe. A full EA for the proposal has been completed and is now at the final approval stage. There is little opportunity for the City to comment meaningfully on the Highway 404 Extension in terms of the EA process. However, this particular highway extension needs to be looked at in broader terms as part of the whole 400-series highway expansion program and this program, in turn, must be assessed in terms of how it contributes to the development of a growth management strategy for the entire GTA region. The GTSB is currently developing a transportation plan for the region based on “smart growth” principles and the City, through its representation on the GTSB, should seek to ensure that an evaluation of the Province’s highway expansion program is incorporated into this regional planning exercise.

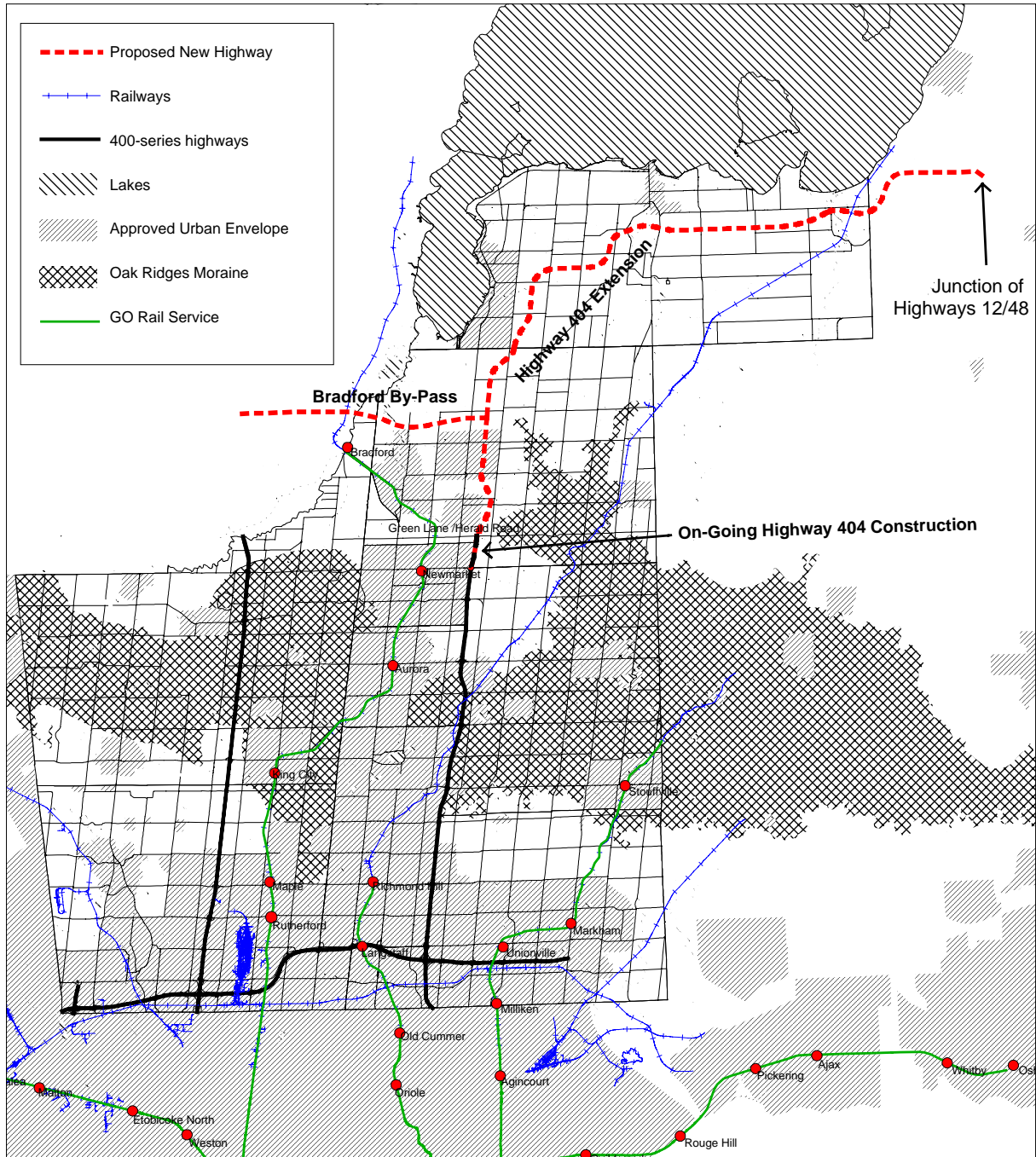
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Map 1
GTA/Hamilton Expressway System



Map 2
Proposed Highway 404 Extension



Dr. Gordon J. Chong, Chairman, Greater Toronto Services Board, appeared before the Planning and Transportation Committee in connection with the foregoing matter.

The Planning and Transportation Committee also had before it the following communications and copies thereof are on file in the office of the City Clerk:

- (May 3, 2001 and May 4, 2001) from Ross Snetsinger, Chair, Rail Ways to the Future, forwarding a submission respecting rail and transit as opposed to new highway spending, a submission, titled "The OECD's Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Project", and comments respecting the overall expansion of the 400-series highway network within the context of a regional growth management strategy for the GTA based on "Smart Growth" strategies. Newspaper articles appended thereto are on file in the office of the City Clerk;
- (undated) from Wilfrid Walker, P.Eng., Board Member, Transport 2000 Ontario, submitting a map, titled "Metropolitan Plan of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area", Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, December, 1966;
- (May 28, 2001) from Michael J. Williams, Director, Environmental Assessment & Approvals Branch, Ministry of the Environment, responding to the Committee's request at its last meeting that the Ministry of the Environment extend the 30 day consultation period to enable City Council to discuss this matter, and advising that the Government Review will be available in early June, 2001 which will be followed by a five week public review period, and that the City Clerk will receive a copy of the Review once it is published;
- (June 1, 2001) from J. Craig Mather, P.Eng., Chief Administrative Officer, The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, supporting the recommendations that the commitment to the extension of Provincial Highways take into consideration the natural heritage system, including the Oak Ridges Moraine.

(City Council on June 26, 27 and 28, 2001, had before it, during consideration of the foregoing Clause, the following communications:

- (a) (May 31, 2001) from Ms. Gemma Connolly, Project Officer, Project Co-ordination, Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch, Ministry of the Environment, forwarding the Notice of Completion of Environmental Assessment Review for the Highway 404 Extension Drive to Highway 12 Route Planning Study and Environmental Assessment; and*
- (b) (April 1, 2001) from Mr. Ross Snetsinger, Rail Ways to the Future Committee, forwarding comments with respect to the Highway 404 Extension.)*