

Committee of the Whole (1) Report

DATE: Tuesday, November 30, 2021

WARD: 1

TITLE: GTA WEST UPDATE PRESENTATION – FEDERAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT

FROM:

Vince Musacchio, Acting Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the GTA West Transportation Corridor Route Planning and Environmental Assessment (EA) Study, including the presentation from the GTA West Project Team regarding the Federal Impact Assessment Act (IAA).

Report Highlights

- On May 3, 2021, the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change determined that the GTA West Study warrants designation under the Federal Impact Assessment Act (IAA).
- Following the designation, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is preparing an Initial Project Description (IPD) to submit to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada in early 2022.
- MTO is consulting with stakeholders to inform the IPD.
- The provincial Environmental Assessment (EA) process is ongoing including the preliminary design of the preferred route, consultation engagements, field investigations and environmental studies.

Recommendations

1. That the presentation by the Ministry of Transportation with respect to the GTA West Corridor Route Planning and Environmental Assessment Study be received for information purposes; and

2. That a copy of this report be forwarded to the Province, the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO), the City of Brampton, Town of Caledon, Township of King, Region of Peel and Region of York.

Background

The GTA West EA study spans from Highway 400 in the east to the Highway 401/407 ETR interchange in the west. The new corridor would include a 400-series 4-to-6-lane highway with freeway-to-freeway connections at Highway 401/407 ETR, Highway 410, Highway 427, and Highway 400. The right-of-way would range between 110m (highway) without the transitway and 170m including a separate adjacent transitway. Additional information can be found on the GTA West EA website at: <https://www.gta-west.com/>.

The GTA West Study is being undertaken as an Individual EA in accordance with the Ontario EA Act and the GTA West Corridor EA Terms of Reference, which was approved by the Ontario Minister of the Environment on March 4, 2008. On May 3, 2021, the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change determined that the GTA West Study also warrants designation under the Federal Impact Assessment Act (IAA). Council, at its meeting of March 10, 2021 supported the Federal Impact Assessment on the proposed GTA West Corridor. Council also voted to reverse the endorsement on the proposed GTA West Corridor.

Previous Reports/Authority

September 14, 2021 Committee of the Whole (1) (SC3) [GTA West Transportation Corridor Route Planning and Environmental Assessment Study – Update](#)

September 22, 2020 Committee of the Whole (2) (Item 5, Report No. 40), [GTA West Transportation Corridor Route Planning and Environmental Assessment Study – Update and Announcement of Preferred Route](#)

June 29, 2020 Council, [Member's Resolution](#)

November 12, 2019 Committee of the Whole (2) (Item 10, Report No. 36.), [GTA West Transportation Corridor Route Planning and Environmental Assessment \(EA\) Study Resumption](#)

April 19, 2016 Committee of the Whole (Item 23, Report No. 18), [GTA West Corridor Transportation Route Planning and Environmental Assessment Study, Stage 2 Ministry of Transportation \(Ontario\) Suspension of Study](#)

April 21, 2015 Committee of the Whole (Item 38, Report No. 17), [GTA West Corridor Transportation Route Planning and Environmental Assessment Study, Stage 2 Ministry of Transportation \(Ontario\) The Kleinburg And Area Ratepayers' Association Comments](#)

March 24, 2015 Priorities and Key Initiatives Committee (Item 1, Report No. 2), [GTA West Corridor Transportation Route Planning and Environmental Assessment Study, Stage 2 Progress Update Ministry of Transportation \(Ontario\)](#)

Analysis and Options

Federal Impact Assessment Act (IAA) Update

On May 3, 2021, the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change designated the GTA West Project under the Federal Impact Assessment Act (IAA). Following the designation, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation is developing materials required for the planning phase of the Federal Impact Assessment process including the preparation of an Initial Project Description. MTO is planning on submitting the IPD to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) in early 2022.

In preparing the draft IPD, MTO would like to continue engaging with municipalities and provide opportunities to help shape the content of the IPD. MTO wants to ensure that the interests of municipalities are captured appropriately in the IPD prior to submission to the Agency and will be engaging municipalities to:

- Share the reason for the Federal designation of the GTA West Study
- Review the Federal Impact Assessment (IA) process and the next steps for the GTA West Study
- Provide a high-level overview of what stakeholders can expect to see in the IPD
- Discuss the technical studies being added to the GTA West Study in response to the Federal designation
- Obtain feedback on the socio-economic context of municipalities, and
- Obtain feedback on the key issues raised by municipal staff and other stakeholders in the community and how they are being addressed through the study

As part of the stakeholder engagement with municipalities, the GTA West Project Team met with the City of Vaughan Transportation and Infrastructure Task Force on October 7, 2021. In addition, The GTA West EA Study team held a Municipal Workshop Focused on the Federal Impact Assessment Process (with York Region and King Township staff), on November 15, 2021 via zoom.

Once the IPD is submitted, the Agency will consult with the Indigenous communities and other stakeholders and prepare a Summary of Issues. MTO will then prepare a Detailed Project Description (DPD). After the DPD is submitted, the Agency must provide a decision regarding whether a Federal Impact Assessment (IA) is required.

A designation of the GTA West project for a Federal IA does not replace the provincial Environmental Assessment (EA) process that is underway. The Project Team will continue with preliminary design efforts and planned public and stakeholder consultations and engagements.

GTA West Community Engagement Webinars

On July 28, 2021 the first GTA West Community Engagement Webinar was held on the Zoom platform from 6:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. 457 people were in attendance.

To further meet the public's needs and address community questions, the GTA West Project Team hosted a second Community Engagement Webinar where the public and stakeholders could understand more about the project and have their questions answered. The Community Engagement Webinar took place on September 29, 2021 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. 285 people were in attendance.

During both webinars, the GTA West Project Team provided a brief overview of the project followed by a question & answer period. Expert panelists from a variety of disciplines (e.g., noise, air quality, fisheries, archaeology, etc.) were in attendance to answer questions.

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, the webinars were conducted as online sessions hosted through the Zoom platform. Recordings of the events have been posted on the project website at <https://www.gta-west.com/consultation-2/> under Previous Consultation.

Ongoing Preliminary Design Meetings, Field Investigations and Environmental Studies

After confirming the Preferred Route and 2020 Focused Analysis Area on August 7, 2020, the GTA West Project Team commenced developing the Preferred Route to a preliminary design level of detail. Staff continue to attend preliminary design meetings with the GTA West Project Team to protect the City's interests, address the City's requirements, and to provide technical comments on the preliminary design. Such meetings have taken place in October 2020, February 2021 and June 2021.

The GTA West Project Team has received Permission to Enter from some property owners to allow access to lands to obtain field information that is helping to develop the preliminary design of the Preferred Route. Field investigations will inventory the natural, social, cultural and other infrastructure features in the study area.

Financial Impact

There are no immediate financial impacts associated with this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Staff from the Region of York are actively participating in the GTA West Corridor EA and have been attending the Municipal Advisory Group (MAG) meetings.

Conclusion

The provincial Environmental Assessment (EA) process is ongoing including preliminary design, consultation engagements, field investigations and environmental studies. City staff continue to work with the GTA West Project Team on the Preliminary Design for the Preferred Route. The Project Team is expecting to hold the next Public Information Centre in late 2021 and submit the Initial Project Description to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada in early 2022. Staff will provide updates to Council as the study progresses.

For more information, please contact Selma Hubjer, Acting Director, Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management, ext. 8674.

Prepared by

Hilda Esedebe, Transportation Project Manager, Transportation Planning and Engineering, ext. 8484.

Selma Hubjer, Acting Director, Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management, ext. 8674.

Approved by



Vince Musacchio, Acting Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

Reviewed by



Nick Spensieri, City Manager