

Meeting Minutes

Project Name:	GTA West Transportation Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study, Stage 2	Meeting:	Greenbelt Transportation Advisory Group Meeting #2
Project No.	2013-E-0008	Date:	May 7, 2015
Location:	Element Vaughan Southwest, Oak Room	Time:	1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Independent Facilitator:	Glenn Pothier	GLPi	
Project Team Attendees:	Natalie Rouskov	MTO	
	Chris Barber	MTO	
	Sarah Merriam	MTO	
	Neil Ahmed	MMM	
	Sandy Nairn	MMM	
	Jim Dowell	MMM	
	Brenda Jamieson	AECOM	
	Tim Sorochinsky	AECOM	
	Patrick Puccini	AECOM	
	Britta Patkowski	AECOM	
	Melissa Raffoul	AECOM	
GTAG Attendees:	Removed in accordance with the <i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i>		
Legend:	Q: Question		
	R: Response		
	C: Comment		

1. Opening Remarks and Introductions

G. Pothier, the Independent Facilitator, called the meeting to order, welcomed and thanked all participants for attending, introduced the project team, and encouraged the stakeholders to take the opportunity to participate fully in the meeting. G. Pothier highlighted four objectives of the meeting:

- Affirm the role of the GTAG and its relationship to the project;
- Provide an overview of the study and work completed since Public Information Centre #1;
- Review and discuss the evaluation methodology for the short list of route alternatives, and obtain input on the importance of each of the evaluation factors; and

- Review the key issues and trade-offs the project team has identified in the west, central and east sections of the GTA West study area, and obtain input on the key issues and trade-offs.

Each attendee was provided with the meeting materials, including:

- The introductory presentation - study overview, and update on project activities since Public Information Centre (PIC) #1;
- Session 1 presentation - the evaluation methodology for the short list of route alternatives;
- Session 2 presentation - key issues and trade-offs the project team has identified in the west, central and east sections of the GTA West study area; and
- Summary of Evaluation Factors and Criteria for Alternative Methods (Draft May 2015).

2. Review of Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities of the GTAG

G. Pothier provided an overview of the purpose of the GTAG, and the roles and responsibilities of the members. He emphasized that the GTAG will play an advisory role. G. Pothier noted that, as a general membership rule, members are to keep information confidential when requested, as some project information is previewed at the GTAG and will not be publically released until a later date. However, in the interest of transparency and openness, members of the general public are permitted to attend GTAG meetings as observers and abide by the same confidentiality guidelines as members. There is no spokesperson for the GTAG.

G. Pothier noted that the purpose of the GTAG is not to discuss whether a transportation corridor should be built, as this decision was made during Stage 1 of the study. The GTAG is a forum for discussing how a transportation corridor can be built in the Greenbelt area that respects Greenbelt sensitivities and policies. It was noted that outside of the GTAG meetings, members can express opinions as they please; however, in order to have constructive meetings, members should respect the intent of the GTAG – to share ideas that will assist with wise and informed decision-making.

3. Study Overview and Update on Project Activities Since Public Information Centre (PIC) #1

N. Ahmed provided an overview of the recommendations from Stage 1 of the GTA West Study along with the focus of Stage 2, the elements of the new transportation corridor, the study process, a summary of the feedback received from PIC #1 and how the project team incorporated feedback into the study. N. Ahmed also presented the refined short list of route alternatives and potential interchange locations, the refined focused analysis area, an overview of the spring/summer 2015 field investigation program and the consultation program, and next steps in the study. G. Pothier invited questions and general comments from the GTAG before moving forward with the agenda.

C: People want cycling opportunities and corridors within the GTA West right-of-way.

R: Active transportation will be considered during the preliminary design stage once we know where the bridge crossings will be and what they will look like. MTO has a plan for cycling but 400-series highways do not allow for cycling corridors within the right-of-way due to safety issues. We are however considering localized active transportation opportunities which coordinate with municipal plans.

Q: There is a focus on goods movement. Will this transportation corridor be tolled? The answer is key for goods movement and will impact whether trucks will use the facility or not. Currently trucks pile on to Highway 401 and Highway 400. Highway 407 could be an alternative but trucks

- do not use it because of the cost. You need to make sure that the transportation corridor solves the transportation needs.
- R: The decision about tolling has not been made and this decision will not be made by the project team. Goods movement priority features will be included in the design of the transportation corridor.
- C: Concern that the project team said that the green areas on the Focused Analysis map are being opened up for development. Some of those green areas are in the Greenbelt.
- R: MTO has a reduced interest in properties located in the green areas and is noting that applications can proceed through established municipal development processes in those areas. MTO will continue to review all development applications in the study area, but it is anticipated that applications in the green areas will not be impacted by the GTA West transportation corridor. MTO does not make decisions about land use outside of the right-of-way. The project team will review the wording regarding the purpose of the green areas on the Focused Analysis Area map.
- Q: How does the GTA West Study relate to the review of plans like the Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan? It seems like the coordinated review process isn't taking into consideration the GTA West Study.
- R: The coordinated review of plans like the Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan are out for public review. We have the Ministry for Municipal Affairs and Housing on the GTA West contact list and we are liaising with them. This study is working within the existing policy framework, and if that changes, we will adapt to it so that we align with the new policies. The Greenbelt Guideline developed during Stage 1 of the study is a guiding document taking us in to Stage 2 of the study.
- Q: Where is the need for the GTA West transportation corridor documented? The project team needs to explain that the Growth Plan is driving this study.
- R: The Transportation Development Strategy is available for download on the Archive page of the project website (www.gta-west.com).
- Q: How much opposition was received at PIC #1?
- R: The project team received both opposition and support for the need for the GTA West transportation corridor, and support and opposition for various route alternatives.
- Q: Have studies been conducted to date with respect to existing topography and groundwater conditions? Past developments didn't realize there was a high water table until it was too late, resulting in design changes and a higher cost. These issues need to be explored early on in a study.
- R: We have high level information from our secondary source reviews, which we considered in the screening of the long list of alternatives. Once we are in the preliminary design phase of the project we will look at the localized geology of the preferred plan. The 250m band of the recommended plan gives us room to move the corridor to avoid sensitive areas. We will look at groundwater recharge and discharge areas.
- C: The project team should consult with transit operators to understand what you are integrating with.

- Q: There is an understanding that the Growth Plan was intended for urban areas only, so how does this apply to the GTA West Study?
- R: The Growth Plan allocates growth to 2031 and that is the growth scenario that the project team is using to forecast travel demand and access needs. Some existing rural areas are designated for future urban growth. We are working with the future visions that the municipalities have outlined based on the Growth Plan. The GTA West transportation corridor will go through some areas of the Greenbelt in order to connect urban growth areas.

4. Approach for Evaluating the Short List of Route Alternatives

P. Puccini provided an overview of the purpose and structure of an evaluation and the two methodologies being used by the project team to evaluate the short list of route alternatives. The two methods include the reasoned argument method as the primary method, and the arithmetic method as the secondary tool to test the results of the reasoned argument method. P. Puccini also provided an overview of the evaluation factors being used, and how the project team will use the results of the two evaluation methodologies to select a preferred alternative for the GTA West transportation corridor. P. Puccini inquired if the presentation of the evaluation methodologies was understandable and whether it would be appropriate for the Community Workshops in June 2015. P. Puccini also inquired what evaluation factors were important to the GTAG and why.

- Q: Please confirm that weighting is subjective and that the project team will develop their weighting scheme based on input and information received?
- R: Yes that is correct. We are going to consider all input and revise the trade-offs we have made based on that input. The importance of a factor may also change in different areas of the study area. The benefit of the arithmetic method is that we get to ask you how important different factors are to you and then we can compare those evaluation results against what the project team and other stakeholders developed.
- Q: Still confused about the need for this study. Is a new highway needed to take traffic off of existing highways or is a new highway needed to support future growth?
- R: The project team conducted a needs assessment study within the current policy framework like the Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan, and the traffic modelling suggested that based on the input from municipalities, and population and employment growth forecasts, that there is need for additional transportation capacity beyond what is already planned.
- C: Some concern was expressed about the ability of members of the public to digest all of the information that will come out of the evaluation of the short listed alternatives. Comments were also made that the project team should provide a high level overview of the results of the evaluation and what the recommended plan is, and interested people can delve into the details of the evaluation if they are interested.
- C: Agricultural lands and operations/businesses are a sub category under land use. This factor disappears under land use and should be given more importance in the evaluation.

- C: Members of the public need to hear that the project team is not being unduly influenced by one stakeholder group or type of land use (e.g. development, agriculture, Greenbelt). The perception must be that you are not caving into the desires of one group or land use type. People may not agree with the answer, but they should be happy with the process used to get the answer.
- C: More importance needs to be given to agriculture.
- Q: How does cost get factored into the evaluation?
R: Capital cost is considered under the transportation category.
- C: The transportation corridor will be a major intrusion on peoples' lives so you need to make sure there are no unintended consequences. You also do not want to disconnect the urban area from the rural area. It seems that Brampton will be split from Caledon.
- C: Population allocations have been made to 2031 but the general public does not understand what this means and how dense some areas will actually become. There will be very little green space in some areas, and there will be impacts to air quality and water. Therefore, the natural environment needs to be given a high priority in the evaluation.
- Q: Is the project team taking into consideration ecological goods and services?
R: Yes, we are considering ecological goods and services. We have looked at how this criteria has been applied in other jurisdictions and we are integrating those as a comparison between different land use types. We have evaluation criteria for ecological goods and services.
- C: It is offensive to see pictures in your presentation of natural areas and agricultural lands when these lands will be covered up by the transportation corridor. I would rather see what the future roadway will look like.
R: Not all natural or agricultural areas will be impacted by the transportation corridor and we have not yet determined the location of the corridor. We will take your comment into consideration.

5. Specific Issues and Trade-Offs in the Study Area

T. Sorochinsky, B. Jamieson and J. Dowell reviewed the key issues and trade-offs in the west, central and east sections of the study area respectively. The three design leads sought input from the GTAG on the key issues and trade-offs identified and any additional ones that the project team should emphasize in the evaluation of the short listed alternatives.

West Section (Highway 401/407 ETR Interchange to Mississauga Road)

- C: The TransCanada pipeline already crosses on the south side of the Credit River. Do not introduce a new crossing, so the south crossing is preferred.
- C: Place the Credit River crossing where it is the cheapest to build the bridge and where less wooded area would be impacted.
- C: The south crossing of the Credit River is preferred because it is farther from Belfountain.

- C: The Sant Nirankari Mission and the Jehovah Witness temple are impacted by Alternative 2A1. These should be avoided. St. Elias Church burnt down and the community is going through the expense and effort of rebuilding the church. They should not be impacted again.
- C: The project team needs to consider the proximity to residential areas. Downwind areas will experience more noise and air pollution. Keep these sensitive land uses upwind.
- C: North-south transportation flow needs to be considered. Ensure all arterial roads have at least underpasses or overpasses, if not interchanges.
- C: Mayfield Road is a better interchange location than Mississauga Road as there will be future growth along Mayfield Road.

Central Section (Mississauga Road to Highway 50)

- C: Commuter traffic goes north-south through Caledon so all regional roads should have access to the GTA West transportation corridor. Key farm businesses in Caledon also seem to be directly impacted by some of the freeway-to-freeway interchanges. These farm businesses are home bases for the extended farming operation. Alternative 5D appears to impact at least 2 of these key farm operations.
- C: When the transportation corridor is built, development will spread northerly to it. You should follow the southern routes. Keeping the transportation corridor as far south as possible preserves farmland.
- C: The Peel Plain is the third most fertile land in Canada. The transportation corridor needs to avoid these lands. Cater to farmers. We need to eat.
- C: Highway 50 is a highway with a lot of truck traffic on it and yet there is not a full interchange identified at that location. The project team needs to service that need.
- R: The challenge with putting in an interchange at Highway 50 is its close proximity to the Highway 427 extension alternatives. We are investigating if we can provide some ramps to Highway 50 but it may not be a full interchange.
- C: We appreciate that you cannot put a full interchange everywhere, but you need to connect all of the major roads and consider non-typical interchange configurations.

East Section (Highway 50 to Highway 400)

- C: The issue with an interchange at Pine Valley Drive is that it takes you right into the Greenbelt. We do not want development opened up in those areas. Preference is for Weston Road as a full interchange even if it's close to Highway 400. Partial interchanges create more traffic on other roads.
- C: If an interchange is built at Pine Valley Drive, then a link has to be opened up to the 407 ETR to the south, and a link to the north has to be opened up.

- C: Request for larger scale mapping of the short listed route alternatives.
R: Larger scale mapping will be provided with the minutes of the GTAG meeting.
- C: In the Unites States, there are parkways with landscaped areas and lots of trees. It creates a very relaxing drive. The 407 ETR is not a relaxing drive and this mistake should not be repeated on the GTA West transportation corridor.
- C: You should use a different weighting scheme for rural and urban areas.
R: Yes, we will be doing that and are in fact asking for your weighting on both a rural and an urban scenario.
- C: Do not create dead end roads at the transportation corridor. You need north-south connectivity.
- C: Consider environmentally friendly ways of constructing bridges over valleys – to reduce the impacts underneath.
- C: When you are located close to a highway, everything becomes a backdrop to the noise. Consider noise mitigation measures in natural areas so that the noise does not overwhelm the area (berms, see-through noise walls, etc.).
- C: Consider dark sky lighting in natural and residential areas.
- C: Consider the proximity to residential areas in terms of noise impacts.
- Q: Has any thought been given to heavy rail?
R: Heavy rail cannot be accommodated and wouldn't address the transportation needs identified in Stage 1. Furthermore, heavy rail is best-suited for long-haul trips.

6. Next Steps and 7. Open Forum

G. Pothier provided an overview of next steps in the study and N. Rouskov mentioned the upcoming Community Workshops in June 2015.

8. Closing Remarks

G. Pothier and N. Rouskov provided closing remarks, and thanked all participants for taking the time to provide their input.

Submitted by: B. Patkowski, AECOM

Distribution: Attendees, Regrets

Attachments: Larger scale mapping of the revised short listed route alternatives and potential interchange locations.
