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## NOTES OF REGULATORY AGENCY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #6

**PROJECT:** GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment

**MEETING NO:** Regulatory Agency Advisory Group Meeting #6

**FILE NO.:** 06-3184

**DATE:** April 29, 2011 **TIME:** 1:30 p.m.

**PLACE:** Caledon West Ballroom, Holiday Inn Select Brampton, Brampton, ON

**PRESENT:**

**Agencies**

Eva Ping	Hydro One, Transmission Planning
Tina Kianzad	Hydro One, EDCS
Jonquil Li	Hydro One, Environment
Alexandra Barrett	Ontario Power Authority
Julia Salvini	Metrolinx, Policy and Planning
Anthony Caruso	Metrolinx, Policy and Planning
Michael Baran	Niagara Escarpment Commission
Liam Marray	Credit Valley Conservation
Jennifer Lawrence	Conservation Halton
Paul Kerry	CP Rail
Jamie Ferguson	Grand River Conservation Authority
Bohdan Kowalyk	Ministry of Natural Resources
Sharon Lingertat	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Jackie Van de Valk	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

**MTO**

Jin Wang	MTO Provincial and Environmental Planning
Frank Pravitz	MTO Provincial and Environmental Planning
George Ivanoff	MTO Provincial and Environmental Planning

**Consultant Joint Venture (CJV)**

Neil Ahmed	MRC
Mike Bricks	BPE Inc.
Karin Wall	AECOM
Catherine Christiani	Ecoplans Limited

**PURPOSE:** To present and discuss the recently released Draft Transportation Development Strategy (TDS) Report, with particular focus on the proposed new transportation corridor, in order to facilitate review of the Report. Provide an opportunity to receive and discuss preliminary comments on the Report.

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**ITEM PROCEEDINGS:**

**ACTION BY:**

**1.0 Welcome and Introductions**

1.1 J. Wang welcomed attendees to the meeting. The project team, presenters and attendees introduced themselves. The meeting purpose was also reviewed.

**2.0 Project Team Presentation**

2.1 N. Ahmed and M. Bricks presented a study update, an overview of the study background and process, the key elements of the recommended Draft Transportation Development Strategy (including the new transportation corridor and north-south link), the key factors of the recommendation and summary of the additional analysis conducted, reviewed the preliminary route planning study area, and outlined the study's next steps.

**3.0 Discussion**

3.1 The following questions / comments were raised after the presentation:

3.1.1 *Question:* Is the new facility intended to tie into the Tremaine Road interchange at Highway 401?

*Response:* Alternative 4-3 will likely connect to Highway 401 somewhere to the west of Dublin Line, west of the proposed Tremaine Road interchange area. The specific location will be determined during Stage 2 of the EA (Route Planning and Preliminary Design). One of the objectives of this connection is to provide additional capacity around Milton without requiring a new crossing of the Niagara Escarpment.

*Follow-up Question:* There will likely be future pressures on the Tremaine Road interchange due to the presence of the GTA West corridor connection nearby. Tremaine Road is currently a rural road that crosses environmental features. Increased pressure on Tremaine Road will mean increased pressure on those environmental features.

*Response:* Comments noted.

3.1.2 *Question:* What type of corridor connection will be made at the Highway 401/407 ETR interchange?

*Response:* Slide 29 shows a representative 4-leg interchange, containing the required provincial / inter-regional interchange connections. Other representative interchange configurations will be considered. The Project Team will be discussing additional access requirements with municipalities as the study progresses. Access and interchange locations will be determined in Stage 2 of the EA.

3.1.3 *Question:* The TRCA questioned the need for the road and noted some concerns regarding the fragmentation of conservation lands and natural corridors. The TRCA's biggest concern is a potential new Humber River crossing. Is there any way to remove or avoid impacts in the Humber River area?

*Response:* The Project Team used demand forecasting to determine the need for transportation capacity improvements. The result of that analysis determined that the most congested area within the study area is in York Region, between Highways 400 and 410. Through the use of the building

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blocks approach, it was determined that optimization alternatives, modal alternatives and improvements to existing facilities would not address the transportation issues in the area and a new transportation corridor is required. Unfortunately, a new corridor crossing of the Humber River Valley is unavoidable due to that fact that it runs north to south through the study area. Stage 2 of the EA, Route Planning and Preliminary Design, will provide the opportunity for field work to be completed in order to identify features, minimize intrusion impacts and find the best available crossing. The Preliminary Route Planning Study Area has been developed to be as large as possible in the vicinity of the crossing so that several route alternatives can be examined during Stage 2 of the EA. For example, an established development area in Kleinburg was kept in the Preliminary Route Planning Study Area, despite developer opposition, in order to keep a key environmental crossing opportunity available. It is recognized that not creating a new crossing would be most desirable however if a crossing is required the Project Team wants to maximize the number of options available. The footprint (or, right-of-way) for the proposed corridor is estimated to be 170 m, while the study area shown is approximately 3-5 km wide. Potential effects can be minimized using innovative design and mitigation techniques. Potential future land use changes can be controlled by limiting access and proper land use planning in order to limit the introduction of incompatible uses into the area.

3.1.4 *Comment:* Hydro One and the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) are looking at opportunities to coordinate the GTA West Corridor planning with a possible future transmission corridor within the Preliminary Route Planning Study Area during Stage 2 of the EA. It was requested that this be made clearer in the final TDS report. In January, Hydro One provided comments on a project discussion paper.

*Response:* Comments noted. Both Hydro One and the OPA are encouraged to provide comments on the draft TDS, in addition to the discussion paper presented in January. The Project Team is planning to have a meeting with MOE regarding the discussion paper, which contains a number of EA coordination options.

*Comment:* Both the GTA West Project Team and Hydro One/OPA need to ensure their efforts are coordinated so that neither precludes another's opportunities, and overall impacts are minimized. Any corridor will have effects on natural and agricultural lands.

*Response:* Comment noted.

3.1.5 *Question:* Does the Project Team plan on meeting with each of the agencies individually?

*Response:* If required, follow-up meetings will be arranged with specific agencies to discuss their comments. During the route planning stage of the study (EA Stage 2), field work and detailed studies will begin. Individual meetings with agencies will most likely take place at that time.

3.1.6 *Comment:* The CVC is concerned with a potential Credit River crossing. The GTA West study area is larger than the HP-BATS study area.

*Response:* There will likely be only one crossing of the Credit River. The Preliminary Route Planning Study Area is larger than the HP-BATS study area because the GTA West Project Team saw an additional crossing opportunity to the north that accommodates extension to the west. The Preliminary Route Planning Study Area was made as large as possible to ensure opportunities

**ITEM PROCEEDINGS:**

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aren't precluded, and to wait for field investigations to commence.

3.1.7 *Question:* When will Stage 2 of the EA begin?

*Response:* The draft TDS report was released on March 7<sup>th</sup>, and will be available for review and comment for a minimum of 90 days. A government decision will be made as to the start of Stage 2 of the EA, once all comments are received.

3.1.8 *Comment:* Metrolinx recently completed a freight study in January, which was approved by the Board. Intermodal freight pilot projects will soon be beginning. Other studies/work that Metrolinx is working on are:

- The University of Toronto is compiling more data on freight;
- A Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) study is underway on truck lanes; and,
- An industry round table has been set-up to advise on urban freight issues.

*Response:* Comments noted. The Project Team appreciates the update, and may contact Metrolinx regarding the results of the studies being completed. As a part of the traffic analysis, a scenario for a truck-only facility was tested. It was found that particularly between Highways 400 and 427, there is a need for a 4-lane truck-only facility. The Project Team's recommended new transportation corridor could contain a combination of HOV lanes, truck-only lanes and a transitway. Truck-only lanes or a truck-only facility could also be phased in during implementation.

3.1.9 *Question:* Have species at risk been considered?

*Response:* Species at risk (SAR) was considered and will be further examined during the route planning stage of the EA. The Project Team has information on SAR from both the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Conservation Authorities, however it will all need to be confirmed through field work during Stage 2 of the EA. This information was considered in the evaluation as secondary source data, and helped to identify where concentrations of SAR were. The Niagara Escarpment was one area where large concentrations of SAR existed, and because of this (amongst other reasons), a crossing of the Niagara Escarpment can be avoided.

3.1.10 *Question:* Will the future transportation corridor be given a 400-series highway number?

*Response:* Upon approval of the EA, the legal name of the corridor will be determined.

3.1.11 *Question:* During the evaluation, how were trade-offs between factor areas made?

*Response:* The Project Team used a qualitative approach to the evaluation, called the Reasoned Argument Method. The reasoned argument method highlights the differences in net effects associated with the various alternatives. Based on these differences, the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative are identified according to the evaluation of trade-offs between the various evaluation factors, criteria and indicators. The relative significance of potential impacts is then examined to provide a clear rationale for the selection of the preferred alternative.

**4.0 What's Next**

**ITEM PROCEEDINGS:**

**ACTION BY:**

4.1 N. Ahmed thanked attendees for their participation. Any further comments or questions on the presentation material were encouraged to be submitted to the Project Team.

RAAG  
Members

**The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.**

Note that a copy of the presentation is available on the project website.

***Post Meeting Note:** In response to input received on the draft GTA West Corridor Transportation Development Strategy, the ministry has decided to carry out additional analysis and consultation to further examine the recommendations in the Halton area. The additional work will be carried out over the Fall and Winter and is expected to be completed by Spring 2012. The ministry will consult with all stakeholders on the results of the additional work before any decision on next steps is taken.*

*The forgoing represents the writer's understanding of the major items of discussion and the decisions reached and/or future actions required. If the above does not accurately represent the understanding of all parties attending, please notify the undersigned immediately upon receiving these minutes (905-823-4988).*

Minutes Prepared by:  
**Ecoplans Limited**



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Catherine Christiani

cc: Attendees  
Project Team Members  
Regulatory Agency Advisory Group Contact List