October 23, 2007

Kevin Christenson, Clerk
City of Hamilton
77 James Street North
Hamilton, ON L8R 2K3

Dear Kevin Christenson:

SUBJECT: Niagara to GTA Corridor: Status of EA Study and City of Burlington Comments
File: 502-02-43

The Council of the Corporation of the City of Burlington, at its regular meeting held on Monday, October 22, 2007, approved the following recommendation, being Item No. CD-164-07:

THAT Engineering Department Report E-58/07, dated September 26, 2007 be approved for submission to the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO), the Ministry of the Environment (MOE), and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (MPIR) as the City of Burlington’s comments on the Niagara to GTA Corridor EA draft Study Plan, draft Overview of Environmental Conditions and Constraints, and the draft Overview of Transportation and Socio Economic Conditions; and

THAT Engineering Department Report E-58/07, dated September 26, 2007 be sent to the Region of Halton, Region of Halton’s Local Municipalities, City of Hamilton, the Region of Niagara, Brant County, the Region of Waterloo, City of Guelph and Wellington County for their information.

If you have any questions with reference to the above, please do not hesitate to contact Tom Eichenbaum of the Engineering Department at 905-335-7600, ext. 7795.

Yours truly,

Jennifer Shaw
COMMITTEE CLERK

/dj

c. Tom Eichenbaum, Engineering Department
TO: Chair and Members of the Community Development Committee

SUBJECT: Niagara to GTA Corridor: Status of EA Study and City of Burlington comments

Report Number: E58-07 Report Date: September 26, 2007
Author(s): Tom Eichenbaum Date to Committee: October 10, 2007
Telephone: 905-335-7600 Ext. 7795 Date to Council: October 22, 2007
Ward(s) Affected: 1 2 3 4 5 6 All File Number(s): 502-02-43

APPROVALS: Department Head General Manager City Manager

To be completed by the Clerks Department

Committee Disposition & Comments

01 – Approved 02 – Not Approved 03 – As Amended 04 – Referred 05 – Deferred 06 – Received & Filed 07 – Withdrawn

Council Disposition & Comments

01 – Approved 02 – Not Approved 03 – As Amended 04 – Referred 05 – Deferred 06 – Received & Filed 07 – Withdrawn

1.0 RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Engineering Department Report E58/07 be approved for submission to the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO), the Ministry of the Environment (MOE), and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (MPIR) as the City of Burlington’s comments on the Niagara to GTA Corridor EA draft Study Plan, draft Overview of Environmental Conditions and Constraints, and the draft Overview of Transportation and Socio Economic Conditions; and

THAT Report E58/07 be sent to the Region of Halton, Region of Halton’s Local Municipalities, City of Hamilton, the Region of Niagara, Brant County, the Region of Waterloo, City of Guelph and Wellington County for their information.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

n/a

2.0 PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the status of the Niagara to GTA Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) Study; and to request endorsement of staff comments as a submission to the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) on the following 3 documents:

- NGTA Study Plan
- NGTA Overview of Environmental Conditions and Constraints
- NGTA Overview of Transportation and Socio-Economic Conditions

3.0 BACKGROUND:

The MTO has now initiated Phase 1 of the Planning and Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for the Niagara to GTA Corridor. The following documents were made available on June 12, 2007 for public and agency review and comment:

- Study Plan (Draft for Consultation) – documents the methodology to be used in identifying the transportation problems and opportunities, the assessment and evaluation of area transportation system alternatives, the development of a Transportation Development Strategy and the proposed consultation program.

- Overview of Environmental Conditions and Constraints (Draft for Consultation) – documents significant and sensitive natural, socio-economic, and cultural features within the Preliminary Study Area at a broad level. This document also presents the environmental policy context for this study.

- Overview of Transportation and Socio-Economic Conditions within the Analysis Area (Draft for Consultation) – documents the baseline of transportation and socio-economic data and a historic examination of existing conditions and patterns in the Preliminary Study Area. The report also presents the outlook on all modes of transportation for moving people and goods including an outline of transportation and economic policy context for this study.

A Public Information Centre (PIC) was held on June 18, 2007 in Burlington to present the above documents and to update the public on the planned schedule for the EA. The attached Appendix A shows the planned steps of the 2-phase overall EA process. Appendix B provides a more detailed explanation of Phase 1 and points out where we are in the process presently.

The City has dealt with numerous staff reports on this EA in the past. The most recent was Engineering Report E53/06, which resulted in the following resolution (CD-273-06) at the Council meeting of December 18, 2006:
THAT the City of Burlington request the Region of Halton allocate one of the two seats allotted to the Region of Halton for the Municipal Executive Advisory Group (MEAG) for the Niagara to GTA Corridor EA to the City; and

THAT the Director of Engineering be directed to revisit the attached letter in Appendix C of Engineering Department Report E53/06, dated November 24, 2006, in light of new information received from the Ministry of the Environment and is further directed to draft a revised letter with the City’s response to the approval of the Environmental Terms of Reference (EA TOR) prior to the regular meeting of Council on December 18, 2006.

Also at its meeting December 18, 2006 Council approved the following resolution CD-273-06-02:

THAT the letter attached to the correspondence dated December 15, 2006, from Tom Eichenbaum, Director of Engineering, be submitted to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) as a City response to the approval of the Niagara to GTA Corridor Environmental Terms of Reference.

References to the City’s Strategic Plan pertaining to this issue were provided in Report E24/05.

4.0 DISCUSSION:

City staff have carefully reviewed the above draft documents together with Region of Halton staff and our consultants. Dillon Consulting Ltd. is providing advice on overall EA and transportation aspects, and Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP is providing advice primarily on process and legal matters.

The attached Appendix C is a “Summary of Key Issues” as compiled by Dillon as per City and Region staff comments. Additional detailed comments on the 3 documents can be provided on request. All of the compiled comments have already been submitted as “Staff comments” in order to expedite our feedback to the EA project team. If Committee wishes to amend or revise our submission, this can be addressed at the Community Development Committee meeting.

Key Issues (Highlights)

a) Study Area:
In the past, the City has emphasized the importance of including the Region of Waterloo, Brant County, and City of Guelph, etc. areas in the overall EA Study Area as they pertain to overall Western GTA growth trends and to overall transportation solutions.

The Study Plan now appropriately identifies the need to assess a wider “Area of Influence” with respect to travel demands and goods movement. However, an explicit need to extend the Study Area is still missing. Also, the interconnectivity of other corridors (such as the Highway 24, Highway 6 and GTA West Corridors) is not explicitly addressed in the Study Plan. As shown on the attached Appendix D, City staff continue to point out the potential merits of a Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) “outer ring” of connected corridors.
b) **Highway Based or Multi-modal Based Solutions:**
The Study Plan continues to indicate that the MTO will only carry forward to implementation those elements of the transportation development strategy, which are under the jurisdiction of the MTO. We continue to be concerned that this may result in a primarily ‘highway’ oriented solution. The ongoing active involvement of GO Transit, the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA), MPIR and the other transport providers in the EA, is essential in order to ensure a truly multi-modal solution. Given the importance of transit in the Places to Grow Growth Plan, we recommend that at least one transit-based transportation system alternative be carried forward to the preliminary planning alternative assessment.

c) **New Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) Transportation Model:**
A new GGH model is being developed in order to analyze and predict travel demands and goods movement throughout the GGH and for specific use for Corridor EA’s. We are requesting that the model, its inputs and assumptions be accessible for review by Stakeholders. Also, we are expressing the need for congruency with the MTO’s GGH model and any modelling being done by the GTTA.

d) **Coordination of NGTA Assumptions and Municipal Growth Plans:**
Pursuant to the enactment of the Province’s Places to Grow Act, the municipalities in the GGH are presently in the process of developing their respective growth plans. Finalization of these growth plans will take at least 2 years. The NGTA modelling assumptions need to reflect the possible variations in these growth areas.

e) **Evaluation Factors and Criteria:**
The establishment of appropriate factors and criteria for evaluating alternatives is important for an EA. In Phase 1 of the NGTA EA, the factors and criteria for both selection and definition of transportation system alternatives and for the evaluation of preliminary planning alternatives are critical. In our submission, we are asking that adequate time be allowed for Stakeholder input on these criteria.

f) **Region of Niagara and City of Hamilton Growth Plans:**
Staff are very cognizant of the need expressed by both the Region of Niagara and the City of Hamilton for the NGTA corridor. On September 4th, 2007 Mayor Jackson and Messrs. L. DeLoyde and T. Eichenbaum were invited to meet with Regional Chair P. Partington and senior Niagara Region officials. At that meeting Niagara officials explained the importance of the NGTA corridor to their Niagara South Growth Strategy and to the Region of Niagara’s overall Economic Development Strategy. We also acknowledge the potential significance of the NGTA Corridor to Hamilton’s Airport area growth strategies.

City staff do not have particular issues with the Corridor alternatives as they pertain to the section from the Niagara River to Highway 403 west of Hamilton. We are, however, particularly interested in the Corridor and transportation system alternatives from Highway 403 easterly through the Flamborough and Region of Halton areas.
5.0 **FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

Considerable staff time in several departments will be required for the City to be engaged in this Provincial initiative. In addition, we have hired peer consultants (transportation and legal) to assist with our involvement. The funding for these external costs has been provided via the Contingency Reserve. The costs for the external consultants are being shared with the Region of Halton. This overall EA process (Phases 1 and 2) could last over 3 years.

6.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS:**

The Niagara to Corridor could have significant environmental implications depending upon its ultimate location. Given the Environmental Assessment Act defines the environment as air, land and water including plants, animals and humans plus the social, economic and cultural conditions that influence the life of humans or a community. The Provincial Planning documents as well as the Regional Plan and Burlington Official Plan recognize the importance of the environment and the natural areas within the City. The proposed EA is intended to be an “Individual” EA (“Full EA”), which will address impacts to the natural, social, economic and cultural environment for the Study Area. Staff are particularly concerned about any crossing of the Niagara Escarpment, wetlands, and features such as the Medad Valley.

7.0 **COMMUNICATION MATTERS:**

This City staff report has been shared with Region of Halton staff. Once approved, the Report will be distributed to the Region of Halton, the Region of Niagara, City of Hamilton and other municipalities in the western GTA/Golden Horseshoe area.

Also, in this Community Development Committee agenda is a Clerks Report CL-19-07. The future of the Niagara to Corridor Stakeholders Advisory Committee is discussed in another report elsewhere in this agenda. The MTO’s project team is establishing a new Citizens Advisory Committee (CAG). We understand several Burlington residents have been accepted as members of the CAG. A copy of this Report will be forwarded to the Burlington CAG members.

We anticipate that the EA Project Team will request a working session with City and Region of Halton staff to go over the points of the City’s and Region’s submissions. A follow-up report or memo to Committee will be provided as necessary.

8.0 **CONCLUSION:**

The Province has now initiated the Niagara to GTA Corridor EA. This report presents the City’s comments on the first 3 draft EA documents.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Eichenbaum, P.Eng.
Director of Engineering
Appendices:

- Appendix A  Overall EA 2-phased process
- Appendix B  Phase 1 Study Process
- Appendix C  Compiled comments (summary of issues)
- Appendix D  Map of Western GTA, Hamilton and Niagara

Staff / Others Consulted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul Allen</td>
<td>X 7800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Smithson</td>
<td>X 7747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo DeLoyde</td>
<td>X7883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Head</td>
<td>Region of Halton 905 825-6000 x7475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notifications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mailing or E-mail Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region of Halton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Oakville</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Milton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Halton Hills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Hamilton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of Niagara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brant County</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of Waterloo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Guelph</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington County</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special Instructions:  

APPENDIX A

NGTA EA Phase 1

Present Stage in Process

Overview of EA Study Process (Study Plan) and Existing Conditions → Problems and Opportunities → Generation of Transportation System Alternatives → Evaluation of Transportation System Alternatives → DECISION POINT: Transportation Development Strategy

Stakeholder Consultation / Outreach Throughout

NGTA EA Phase 2

Define Preliminary Study Area → Identify Significant Preliminary Study Area Features → Generate Alternative Methods → Refine Alternative Methods


Stakeholder Consultation / Outreach Throughout
APPENDIX B

Present Stage in Process

Phase 1 Study Process

Transportation System Planning

Technical Work

Consultation

Documentation

Pg 8 of Report E58/07
APPENDIX C

September 10, 2007

Niagara to GTA Corridor Project Team
C/o URS Canada Inc.
75 Commerce Valley Drive East
Markham, ON L3T 7N9

Dear Sir or Madam

Re: Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study
Phase 1 Draft Study Documents
File: 145-03

Attached are the City of Burlington staff comments for the 3 Study Documents:
- Study Plan
- Overview of Environmental Conditions and Constraints
- Overview of Transportation and Socio Economic Conditions

We intend to present these comments to our Council for endorsement at the Community Development Committee meeting of October 10, 2007.

We thank you for the opportunity for input on these documents and we would be willing to meet with you to discuss our comments and issues.

Yours truly

Leo DeLoyde, General Manager
Development and Infrastructure Division

cc: Andrew Head, Manager of Transportation, Regional Municipality of Halton
Tom Eichenbaum, Director of Engineering, City of Burlington

attachment.
1 Introduction

The following provides comments on three draft documents released by the MTO in June 2007:
- NGTA Study Plan (Draft for Consultation)
- NGTA Overview of Environmental Conditions and Constraints (Draft for Consultation)
- NGTA Overview of Transportation and Socio-Economic Conditions (Draft for Consultation)

The comments consolidate input from the following:
- City of Burlington
- Region of Halton
- Dillon Consulting Limited acting on behalf of these municipalities; and
- Gowling acting on behalf of these municipalities

The comments are organized into four sections. The first provides a summary of the key issues identified for the three documents. The second to fourth provide specific comments by section for each of the three documents.
2 Part I Summary of Key Issues

The following summarizes key issues and comments on the three documents. We note that some significant improvements have been made to the study design and background information. We are pleased that the scope of work regarding need and alternatives has been expanded and there is more clarity regarding the work to be undertaken. However, we continue to have some concerns regarding the following issues and believe that the study process can be significantly improved if these issues are addressed.

2.1 Key Issues NGTA Study Plan

- We have previously recommended that the study area be expanded to include Kitchener/Waterloo, Guelph and Brant County areas and are disappointed that this change has not been made. We are pleased to note that you have now included Exhibit 1-2 which introduces an “Area of Influence” which includes the larger study area. We have the following questions/concerns regarding the area of influence:
  - Will potential alternatives and solutions be identified in this area of influence if they can help to solve the problems and needs in the preliminary study area?
  - Will the preliminary study area be expanded to incorporate the larger area if appropriate?
  - It is unclear how the area of influence will be engaged in the process.

- We continue to be concerned that MTO will be acting on its own (independent of other critical transportation system providers) to identify and evaluate alternatives. It is a concern that the study design simply indicates that “All recommendation that fall outside the jurisdiction of the MTO will be forwarded to the relevant agencies/authorities for their consideration.” (pgs. 5, 18, 21, Exhibit 7-2, 66) Clearly, the outcome of the EA is going to involve a multi-modal solution with a high emphasis on non-auto solutions including improved transit service. Given that many of these elements are not within MTO’s mandate, it is critical that all relevant agencies “buy-in” to the package of solutions and identify funding and implementation strategies in collaboration as the study progresses. We recommend that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal take a stronger role in ensuring collaboration by other service providers.

- We note that the GGH transportation model is to be used for this study. We also note that the outcomes of the GTA West Corridor study are to be considered in the NGTA study. We fully support this larger systems analysis including broad consideration of a larger study area and integrating issues across the GTA AH. We will be asking MTO to provide evidence of this analysis and how these three important projects are being fully integrated.

- As part of Phase 1, consideration cannot only be given to approved policy documents as there are a number of studies underway that could impact the outcome of Phase 1. The Needs Assessment Study will require input from the Sustainable Halton Study and associated studies (e.g. Transportation Master Plan) as well as other growth management plans being...
undertaken by the Municipalities in the Study Area to meet the Places to Grow June 2009 target.

- All data being utilized as part of this undertaking should be the most up-to-date available data i.e. Statistics Canada (2006).

- Phase 1 of the EA study must produce a clear problem statement broken down by the appropriate sections of the Study Area where the differences in needs, problems and opportunities exist.

- For the generation, evaluation and selection of the Area Transportation System alternatives, consideration will need to be given to the unique characteristics and needs of the individual Regions. Extensive consultation will be required as part of the evaluation phase.

- At each of the key milestones it is requested that at least 90 days be provided to the Municipalities and Agencies for review of all documentation provided.

2.2 Key Issues NGTA Overview of Environmental Conditions and Constraints

- In general the documents are really just a general descriptive overview of some local conditions. Only the provincially designated features are currently mapped, but the reports acknowledge that the future phases will collaborate and consider the more detailed information provided by municipalities and other agencies. We would like to stress the importance of this collaboration and consideration of detailed information.

- A synthesis of key environmental issues that might be of importance with respect to transportation needs and problems would be helpful. Examples are key environmental barriers to new or expanded corridors, key areas of significance (fruitlands, NEC, Greenbelt mapped), and areas of sensitivity to existing or projected air quality effects.

2.3 Key Issues NGTA Overview of Transportation and Socio-Economic Conditions

- The Environmental Conditions and Constraints report and this report each provide an overview of provincial and municipal planning policy and issues. Descriptions of municipal policy are provided in three places and are not consistent and are hard to follow across the two reports.

- There is some improved information in this report regarding population, economic and employment trends. However, the data is simply presented without any attempt to synthesize and highlight the overall social-economic conditions and trends.

Key questions to be answered include: What has the historical growth pattern been and why? What is the rate, direction and location of growth and projected future trends and why? What are the economic drivers, how do they influence location and movement of people and what
are the projected changes/future trends? Where are municipalities anticipating growth and what is the status of approval of these growth areas? How would a new major transportation corridor affect growth patterns should this option be identified and how can the EA consider these effects? What key social sensitivities exist in the communities in the study area that need to be considered (multi-cultural areas, core nodes and corridors, core areas and characteristics that define each community and thus need to be protected?).

- On Page 4 the “area of influence” and modelling for the GGH is discussed. Access to the modelling assumptions (land-use, trip generation and assignment, model split, goods movement, etc.) for our review is essential for buy-in to the model’s analysis and results. Also, the use of this model for the NGTA Study and that of the GTTA’s planning model needs to be explained. Will they be the same model?

- “The purpose of this report is to provide baseline transportation and socio-economic data upon which the Environmental Assessment will be built:” (pg. 5). The transportation information in this report is very general and high level. It does not fulfill the purpose to provide baseline transportation data.

- As noted on Page 8, the transportation and land-use planning considerations need to be integrated. The NGTA EA should address the status and timing of the “sub-area” growth plans and indicate how they will be merged with the NGTA plans.

- The current Provincial Policy has a clear emphasis on pursuing transit and other non-auto modes of travel before justifying the need for any new auto-based projects/roads. Given MTO’s mandate to build roads for auto-based travel and roads to support transit, it is very un-clear how the EA will direct any non-auto based projects through to implementation and how they are being considered as part of this exercise. It is critical that MTO carry forward a transit solution identified in Stage 1 to Stage 2 of the EA Study, particularly if the solution relates to GO Transit. As the Provincial transportation authority, the Ministry of Transportation needs to take ownership of a transit solution and carry it through the full process.

- The Proponent has set out not only certain information that it has gathered but also set out evaluation factors and criteria which would be applied. It is inappropriate to such an important study that key participants in the study such as Burlington/Halton be given a limited period of time in which to submit comments on such critical documents. The criteria are preliminary and a rigorous review and discussion with stakeholders is considered necessary. A commitment is needed to allow for further time during which the information and criteria can be refined and completed to all of the stakeholder’s satisfaction.
APPENDIX D
(Figure based on GGH Places to Grow Conceptual Map)