



CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Transportation Planning and Parking Division

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 20, 2021
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Towards a Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) Transportation Plan (PED21169) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Brian Hollingworth (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2953
SUBMITTED BY:	Brian Hollingworth Director, Transportation Planning and Parking Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That a copy of Report PED21169, entitled Towards a Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) Transportation Plan, be forwarded to the Ministry of Transportation by the Office of the City Clerk, and considered the City of Hamilton's formal comments, as outlined in Appendix "A", on the Province of Ontario's Towards a Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) Transportation Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 30, 2021, the Province of Ontario released a Discussion Paper entitled "Towards a Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan". The Discussion Paper outlines initiatives and concepts that are aimed at addressing mobility in the region and sets out priority near-term actions as a foundation to achieve the stated Vision for Mobility in 2051. The paper states that the proposed plan would help guide and align decisions and investments over the long-term to ensure other levels of government, transportation agencies, industry, local businesses, and other service providers are working collaboratively to shape the transportation system.

The Province requested that comments on the discussion paper be submitted by August 28, 2021. Staff submitted preliminary comments through the Provincial consultation portal in order to meet this deadline but advised that further comments

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could be forthcoming based on input from Council. Staff comments are included in Appendix A to Report PED21169.

Staff have reviewed the Discussion Paper and are generally supportive of the 2051 Vision for Mobility which is described as “an interconnected transportation system that provides safe, seamless, and accessible transportation experience for all.” This Vision is supportive of the City’s 2018 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) which similarly is structured around sustainable transportation, healthy communities and economic prosperity.

It is noted that the GGH Transportation Plan was prepared to be complementary to other plans including the Growth Plan for the GGH and the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 8

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: N/A

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) initiated the development of a GGH Transportation Plan in 2016. A first key step was the establishment of municipal Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of all 22 upper-tier/single-tier municipalities and 17 lower-tier municipalities within the GGH. The City of Hamilton (the City) has had representation on the project TAC since its inception. A total of ten TAC meetings have been held since 2016.

Throughout the period between 2018 and 2020, the main focus of the TAC meetings was to gather input on the long list of potential improvements, as well as, feedback on the development and evaluation of options. City staff provided input throughout this period, drawing heavily on the City of Hamilton’s TMP which was approved by Council in 2018.

Since 2020, the TAC engagement has focused on a set of short-listed network options and associated travel demand model analysis results. These network options, developed for the entire GGH study area, comprised of different combinations of land use development patterns and strategic network assumptions. The best performing

network and policy options were refined by MTO to derive the 2051 network and policy recommendations for the GGH Plan. The City's 2018 TMP recommended road and transit networks were provided to MTO as input to the network modelling.

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POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The Discussion Paper will inform the development of a Final GGH Transportation Plan. Once complete, the GGH Transportation Plan will provide a high-level framework for the City's next TMP and will be a key reference for subsequent Official Plan Policies. It is expected that several of the sample actions listed under the category of "Future Ready", including those related to connected and autonomous vehicles, electric vehicles, and climate change, may result in policy or legislative changes once detailed in the final GGH plan.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

N/A

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Proposed 30-Year Vision

The Discussion Paper sets out a proposed 30-year vision for mobility in the region to guide and align decisions and investments over the long term.

The proposed vision is of an interconnected transportation system that provides a safe, seamless, and accessible transportation experience for all.

The proposed 2051 vision includes three pillars:

1. Getting People Moving on a Connected Transit System;
2. Enhancing Capacity and Performance on Congested Roads; and,
3. Efficiently Moving Goods Across the Region.

The proposed vision is generally supportive and complementary to Hamilton's strategic planning needs and objectives as outlined in the City's TMP, Official Plan, and the current Term of Council Priorities for 2018 to 2022 under Multi-modal Transportation.

The proposed Vision is articulated through nine descriptors, all of which are very important to Hamilton, such as improving access to jobs and services, creating more active and sustainable modes, and making it easier to travel by transit. The Vision also includes reference to “supporting a more sustainable and resilient region”. However, it is staff’s opinion, informed by Council’s declaration of a Climate Emergency, that climate change and its impacts should be more explicit in the 2051 Vision. Notwithstanding this, several of the near-term actions are related to climate change, as is the pillar related to a Connected Transit System. Similarly, several other themes such as public health, an aging population, and the need for sustainable funding are not prominent in the Vision.

Staff are also supportive of the direction to include a mix of solutions including new infrastructure, better services, and new policies. This is preferred over more traditional plans which are focused primarily on capacity-based solutions.

Transit Elements

“Getting People Moving on a Connected Transit System” is the first of three pillars in the 2051 Vision. It includes eight components as follows:

- Delivering on major transit investments;
- Exploring a new east-west cross-regional connection;
- Exploring a new transit loop that connects to the Ontario Line (Toronto);
- Increasing the frequency of local services;
- Fully integrating transit fares;
- Ensuring 24-hour public transportation access;
- Planning services to support equity of access and mobility; and,
- Promoting walking and cycling.

All of these components are important to Hamilton and support the City’s target of achieving a 12% modal share for transit by 2031 as identified in the City’s TMP. The concept of ensuring 24-hour transit service to the Region’s largest employers is also significant for Hamilton’s growing Airport Employment Growth District (AEGD) and other hubs; however, it is unclear what role the Province would play in achieving these enhanced service standards. The integration of transit fares is also critical to capture growing cross-boundary transit trips.

In terms of infrastructure, the Discussion Paper explicitly references Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) consistent with recent commitments by the Province and Federal government. Mapping and background documentation also include the A-Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), all-day two-way GO service, and extension of GO Rail to Niagara Region. There is no explicit recognition, however, of Metrolinx’s proposed Frequent Transit Network which includes the remaining BLAST Corridors in Hamilton.

One potential gap that staff have identified in the preliminary plans is a higher order connection between Hamilton, Brantford/Brant County, and Waterloo Region. By 2051, the combined population of these three centres will be close to two million people, and currently the only transit connections are by GO Bus. Given the size of these areas, a more robust transit solution, potentially utilizing managed lanes on Highway 403 and Highway 6, will be required.

Road Elements

“Enhancing Capacity and Performance on Congested Roads” is the second of three pillars in the 2051 Vision. It includes six components as follows:

- Delivering major highway projects;
- Expanding highways at strategic locations;
- Establishing a network of continuous managed lanes;
- Exploring options to manage passenger travel demand and congestion;
- Supporting innovation and leveraging new technologies; and,
- Planning, designing, and managing the road network and rights-of-way to support safety and mobility for all users.

Overall, these elements of the Vision are consistent with Hamilton’s TMP and past directions provided by Council to the Province. In particular, Council has, on multiple occasions, directed correspondence to the Minister of Transportation with respect to key highway improvements including the 403 widening, QEW widening, and improvements on Highway 6 North (i.e. Highway 5/6 Interchange).

One area of discrepancy with the proposed highway projects is with respect to limits of widening on Highway 403. In the 2013 Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and EA Study Phase 1 Transportation Development Strategy, the proposed widening limits were from King Street/Main Street to Jerseyville Road. Conversely, the current discussion paper leaves a gap between Aberdeen Avenue and the Lincoln Alexander Parkway (LINC). It is unclear if this is based on the needs assessment or physical constraints with respect to the escarpment. However, this determination is best dealt with through the formal Environmental Assessment which has not yet been initiated by MTO.

In reviewing future options for Highway 403, staff intend to raise the idea of reconfiguring the ramps at King Street and Main Street to allow for the potential for two-way operations.

Another omission from the Discussion Paper or background documents is the Highway 5/6 interchange; however, it is understood that this is included in the modelling work but not specifically mentioned as there are many such interchange improvements throughout the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

Staff are supportive of all other elements of the Roads pillar including those related to Travel Demand Management (TDM), managed lanes, and leveraging technology. It is noteworthy that Hamilton is a leader in the testing of new technology around connected and autonomous vehicles through the Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network (AVIN). Hamilton is one of six Regional Technology Development Sites (RTDS).

Goods Movement Elements

“Efficiently Moving Goods Across the Region” is the third of three pillars in the 2051 Vision. It includes three components as follows:

- Planning for and managing the movement of freight;
- Connected corridors; and,
- Network performance and monitoring.

Overall, these elements are appropriate as high-level criteria, however, there could be a greater recognition of the importance of data collaboration given its importance in goods movement planning.

The discussion paper also includes a map of the Strategic Goods Movement Network (SGMN) which is important in terms of providing positive guidance on goods movement corridors. The map depicts a higher-level network than Hamilton’s Truck Route System, which is currently under review.

Near Term Actions

In addition to the long-term vision, the Discussion Paper also presents a series of seven interconnected near-term goals comprising a sample of infrastructure, policies and services:

1. Improve Transit Connectivity;
2. Relieve Congestion;
3. Give Users More Choice;
4. Keep Goods Moving;
5. Safe and Inclusive;
6. Future Ready; and,
7. Muskoka, Haliburton, and Connections Beyond the GGH.

Key near term actions of significance for Hamilton are the building of rapid transit and implementation of two-way, all-day GO Rail service (now recently implemented). Several major highway corridor planning and environmental studies throughout the GTHA are referenced; however, there is no reference to advancing studies for Highway

403, the QEW or Highway 5/6 interchange. As such, staff have re-iterated Council's previous directions on these matters in comments submitted to the Province.

Overall, staff are supportive of the breadth of near-term actions highlighted as they represent a balance of infrastructure, policies and services. Many of the actions such as making it easier to walk or cycle to or from transit stations, improving local and regional cycling linkages, developing transit-oriented communities, applying an Indigenous inclusion lens, and developing a framework for transportation access and inclusion are already things that Hamilton is taking action on and thus represent opportunities for partnership with the Province for greater leverage.

Next Steps and Implementation Considerations

The Discussion Paper does not include a detailed implementation plan which is assumed to be part of the next stage as the Final GGH Transportation Plan is developed. Rather the plan recognizes the need for collaboration with various partners including municipalities to advance the shared vision. In circulating the Discussion Paper, the Province specifically asked, "What implementation considerations do you see as most critical as we develop the GGH Transportation Plan to support effective implementation at a regional level, for the province and for its partners?"

Staff have highlighted three critical areas with respect to implementation:

- Coordination of Land Use and Transportation Planning

The success of the GGH Transportation Plan is contingent on strong land use policies that direct and facilitate compact mixed-use developments focused on transit corridors. Similarly, major transit investments in rapid transit and the GO Rail network are drivers of more efficient land use patterns. The GGH Plan presents an opportunity to align land use and transportation plans starting with the Provincial Growth Plan through to municipal Official Plans and Secondary Plans.

- Embracing Innovation

Events that have taken place over the past year and a half as a result of COVID-19 have demonstrated the potential for innovation to have a profound effect on transportation. One example is the move to working from home that was facilitated through rapid deployment of technology in combination with policy changes. It is expected that this type of innovation, along with vehicle technologies, data gathering, and shared mobility will continue to change at a rapid pace and require partnerships between governments, the private-sector and individuals. It will be important, however, to closely monitor this innovation to ensure that interests of individual citizens are

protected, and that changes do not result in greater inequalities because of income, ethnic background or physical abilities.

- Sustainable and Predictable Funding

The past several years has seen major investments in transportation by senior levels of government, and in some cases, investments in areas not traditionally funded, such as active transportation. Notwithstanding these unprecedented investments, there remains many challenges for municipalities in terms of funding for operations, maintenance, and asset preservation. To be successful, the GGH Transportation Plan needs to be grounded by a long-term financial strategy that provides predictability to investments and operations at all levels of government. This is particularly important as many of the actions identified in the plan, such as provision of 24-hour transit service to major employment hubs, may require different funding models than are currently in place.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Council could direct staff to provide revised comments on the Discussion Paper.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Economic Prosperity and Growth

Hamilton has a prosperous and diverse local economy where people have opportunities to grow and develop.

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive City where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state-of-the-art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report PED21169 – Staff Comments on June 2021 Towards a Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan

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