

Ministry of Infrastructure

Ministère de l'Infrastructure

Ministry of  
Transportation

Ministère des  
Transports

OCT 15 2013



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OCT 3 - 2013

M2013-5854

His Worship Bob Bratina  
Mayor  
City of Hamilton  
Hamilton City Hall  
71 Main Street West  
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

Dear Mayor Bratina,

Ontario's economy depends on efficient highways, roads, border-crossings and public transit. We know businesses want to spend less time in traffic to deliver services and get goods to market on time. Ontarians want to spend less time in traffic so they have more time to do the things that matter the most.

Our government is doing its part to tackle congestion across the Greater Toronto Area and throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Since 2003, unprecedented investments have been made to address congestion. We have invested more than \$16.1 billion in public transit across the province, including \$7.7 billion to improve GO Transit, and more than \$19 billion has been committed to design, repair and expand provincial highways and bridges across the province.

Planning for the future is important for the economy of our province.

I would like to inform you that the final Transportation Development Strategy for the Niagara to GTA Corridor Environmental Assessment Study was released for review on September 5, 2013. I would also like to apologize for the delay in notifying you of this important milestone for the Niagara to GTA study.

For your reference I have enclosed a copy of the executive summary of the Transportation Development Strategy. This strategy provides an outlook to 2031 with several recommendations, including support for transit enhancements, transportation demand management, advanced technologies and new highway capacity to meet the challenges of today and those posed by future growth.

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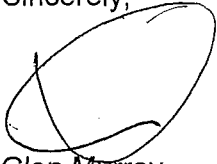
We are committed to ensuring a high quality of life in the region while balancing social, environmental and economic objectives. The recommendations in the strategy will help realize the goals and aspirations of the provincial *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* – and prepare us for the future by making strategic decisions today to secure an even better tomorrow.

Throughout the Niagara to GTA Study process, we have received significant public and stakeholder input, which was greatly valued and taken into consideration. The end result is a comprehensive, innovative and multimodal transportation strategy.

The strategy is available for review on the project website ([www.niagra-gta.com](http://www.niagra-gta.com)) and at local libraries and municipal offices until November 4, 2013. After the review period, we will schedule the planning and design work required to implement the recommended improvements. Extensive outreach and consultation was a cornerstone of Phase 1 and will continue to be a key part of the process as we move forward.

Thank you for your interest in the Niagara to GTA Corridor Study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Glen Murray  
Minister

Enclosure

**Niagara to GTA Corridor**  
**Planning and Environmental Assessment Study**

**TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

September 2013

[www.niagara-gta.com](http://www.niagara-gta.com)



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### The Challenges and Opportunities of Growth

The Niagara to GTA study area is located within the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) - one of the fastest growing regions in North America. By 2031, the population of the GGH is expected to increase to 11.5 million people with 5.5 million jobs.

To manage this extraordinary growth, the Ontario government released the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (the *Growth Plan*) in 2006, which provides a framework for building strong and prosperous communities. The *Growth Plan* also provides the strategic policy framework for the transportation system in the GGH that provides for more transportation choices, promotes public transit and active transportation and gives priority to goods movement on highway corridors. Under this policy framework, the *Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study* (NGTA study) is designed to explore all modes of transportation for facilitating the efficient inter-regional movement of people and goods.



The NGTA study area is in a strategically important location critical to Ontario's long term economic competitiveness as part of the Ontario-Quebec Continental Gateway and Trade Corridor, ensuring the efficient movement of people and goods between Ontario communities and US markets. Within the NGTA study area, the municipalities of Hamilton, Halton and Niagara expect to add over 445,000 new residents and 195,000 new jobs between 2011 and 2031.

From a transportation planning perspective, this growth poses a significant challenge, as many of the existing transportation facilities are already operating at or near capacity during peak periods. By 2031, there will be more than 1.2 million additional passenger and commercial vehicle trips per day in the NGTA study area. As it stands today, the existing transportation network within the NGTA study area will not be able to support these additional transportation demands.

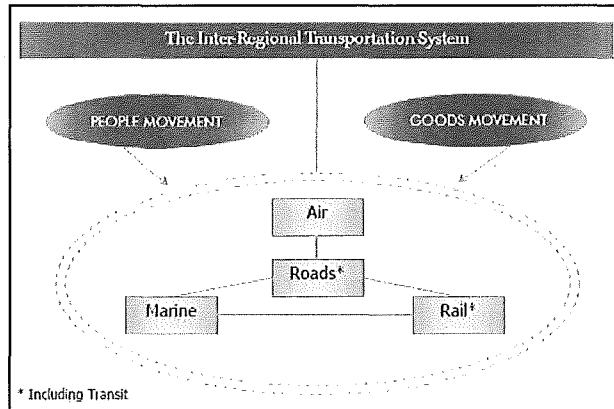
### Transportation Problems and Opportunities

Transportation demand in the study area is met through a variety of modes, including transit, rail, air, marine and roads / highways. While all of these transportation modes serve an important purpose, there is a high degree of reliance on the road and highway network throughout the study area.

Transportation service providers for rail, air and marine have indicated that their systems generally have sufficient capacity to accommodate future travel growth. Enhancements to these individual modes to accommodate growth and / or changing travel markets (for example, a further shift to containerization of goods) can generally be made within the existing lands /

corridors of the railways, ports and airports. The key transportation issues identified by all of the service providers relate to the following:

- Lack of capacity on the highway network to handle growth;
- Need for improved connections between different travel modes; and
- Highway congestion, particularly during the weekday peak period commute in the Hamilton and Halton areas, as well as high volumes of summer tourism and recreation travellers in the Niagara area.



In addition to these transportation problems, there are numerous transportation opportunities that can be achieved within the study area by providing an efficient multimodal transportation system. These include:

- Improved access to Niagara Falls and the US border for tourism and trade;
- Improved access to intermodal facilities such as the Hamilton International Airport and the Port of Hamilton;
- Support for approved municipal land use planning:
  - Niagara's "Grow South" plan to protect the tender fruit lands;
  - Hamilton's planned Airport Employment Growth District (AEGD); and
  - Halton's planned employment growth lands in Milton, Oakville and Burlington.
- Minimized impacts to the natural, social, economic and cultural environments, through measures including optimizing existing transportation infrastructure.

## The Province's Action Plan

To address these issues, the Ontario government is planning for the future. The *Growth Plan*, the *Greenbelt Plan (GP)*, and the *Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP)* provide an important policy context and foundation for future growth. These policies provide a basis for municipalities and the Ontario government to plan communities with land use that is supportive of a more balanced transportation system - one that makes best use of the existing infrastructure, and prioritizes the use of transit and other non-roadway modes of transportation for people and goods movement.

In addition to providing a sustainable policy framework, a *Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)* for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), also known as "The Big Move," has been completed by Metrolinx (including GO Transit – GO 2020) and adopted by the Metrolinx Board of Directors in accordance with the *Metrolinx Act*.

Many of the "Big Move" projects are currently underway and will be completed in the very near future. Projects like Union Pearson Express and Union Station Revitalization will be completed by 2015/2016, and the York Viva BRT will have sections finished by 2013.

Metrolinx recently released the "Next Wave" of projects that will be implemented as part of the \$50 Billion program to expand rapid transit in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, including:

- **Brampton Queen Street Rapid Transit:** 10 km of upgraded transit along Queen Street.
- **Downtown Relief Line:** New subway that will improve access to the regional core for residents from across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and provide relief to the overflowing arteries of the Toronto transit system.
- **Dundas Street Bus Rapid Transit:** 40 km of bus service running in dedicated lanes, connecting Toronto, Mississauga and Halton.
- **Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit:** 36 km of bus service running in dedicated lanes, connecting Scarborough Centre to downtown Oshawa via Pickering, Ajax and Whitby.
- **GO Rail Expansion: More Two-Way, All-Day and Rush Hour Service:** Introducing more two-way, all-day service, adding additional rush hour service across the entire network, and extending trains to Hamilton and Bowmanville.
- **Electrification of GO Kitchener line and Union Pearson Express:** Upgrading diesel train service to electric propulsion for these two complementary transit services that share a substantial portion of their routing.
- **GO Lakeshore Express Rail Service – Phase 1 (including Electrification):** Transforming GO Transit's line from Hamilton to Oshawa into a faster, more frequent and more convenient transit option by beginning the transition to an international-style

#### Projects have started:

The province has already initiated work on major projects all around the GTHA representing a \$16 billion investment in new transit infrastructure including:

- **Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension**
- **Union Pearson Express**
- **York Region vivaNext Rapidways**
- **Eglinton Crosstown LRT**
- **Mississauga Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project**
- **Scarborough Rapid Transit (RT) Extension**
- **Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT)**
- **Georgetown South Project**
- **Sheppard East Light Rail Transit (LRT)**
- **Union Station – Train Shed Revitalization**
  
- **GO service expansion into Niagara Region**
  
- **High Occupancy Vehicle Lane Network Plan (2007-2011)**
  - **Highway 404** – construction complete
  - **Highway 403** – construction complete
  - **Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW)** – HOV lanes now open between Trafalgar Road and Guelph Line
  - **Highway 400** – construction underway
  - **Highway 427** – study underway
  
- **MTO's 2012 to 2016 Southern Highways Program**
  - In 2012/2013, the province will invest \$2.4 billion to repair and expand highways, roads and bridges across the province
  - \$1.87 billion will be designated for Southern Ontario highway construction

Express Rail service.

- **Hamilton Rapid Transit:** 14 km of rapid transit stretching from McMaster University to Eastgate Square.
- **Hurontario-Main Light Rail Transit:** 23 km LRT line connecting Port Credit to downtown Brampton via Cooksville and Mississauga City Centre.
- **Yonge North Subway Extension:** 6 km extension that will connect the City of Toronto to the Richmond Hill / Langstaff Urban Growth Centre.

In addition, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has developed a *High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane Network Plan (2007-2011)* to encourage carpooling and to support bus transit. Several elements of this plan have already been constructed, including new HOV lanes on:

- Highway 404 between 407 ETR and Highway 401;
- Highway 403 through Mississauga; and
- The Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) between Trafalgar Road in Oakville and Guelph Line in Burlington.

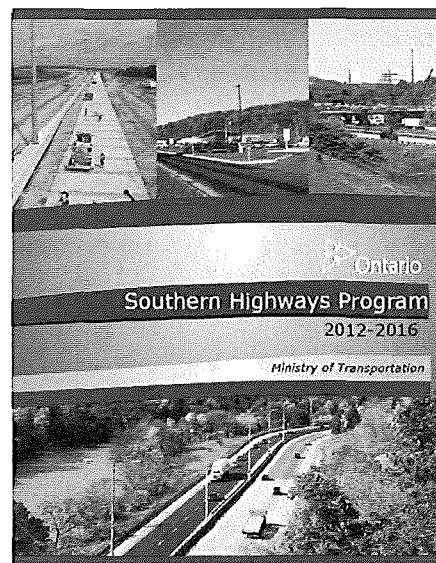
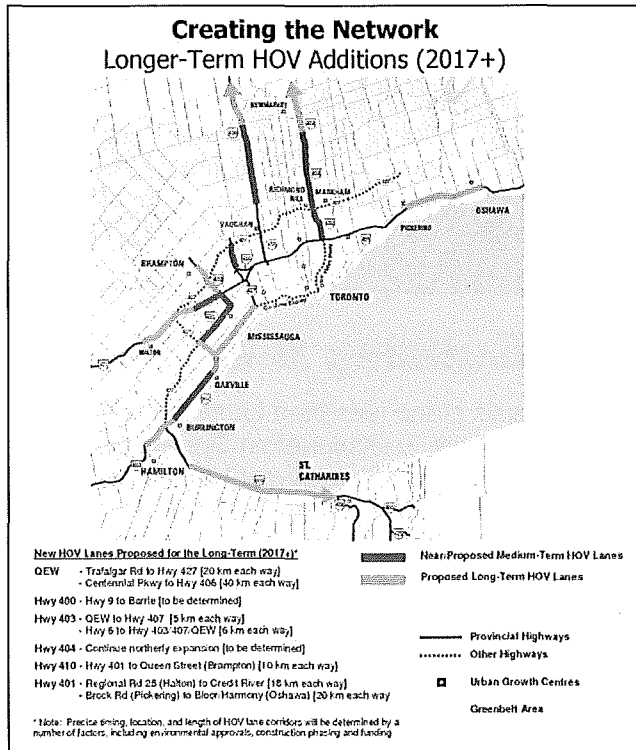
Construction is underway on sections of other provincial facilities such as Highway 400.

In addition to these initiatives, the MTO's *Southern Highways Program 2012-2016* identified investing \$2.4 billion to repair and expand provincial highways and bridges. This includes \$1.87 billion for southern Ontario, creating more than 18,500 direct and indirect jobs. In 2012, the province's planned accomplishments in Southern Ontario included:

- 102 km of new highways;
- 5 new bridges;
- 410 km of highway rehabilitation; and,
- 79 bridges to be rehabilitated.

At a municipal level, all municipalities within the GGH either have approved or are working on Official Plan amendments to conform to the *Growth Plan*, which promotes more compact, transit-supportive development. This is the first step towards building compact transit supportive complete communities.

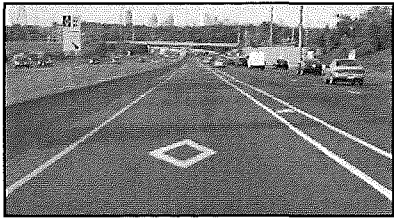
While all of these initiatives will help to address the future travel demand that is anticipated by 2031, more is needed.



This NGTA Study has been initiated to explore all modes of transportation, including:

- transit,
- rail,
- marine,
- air, and
- roads and highways.

The objective of this study is to develop a Transportation Development Strategy (Strategy) for the NGTA study area that builds upon all of the Ontario government's current plans and identifies transportation improvements to address the future needs.

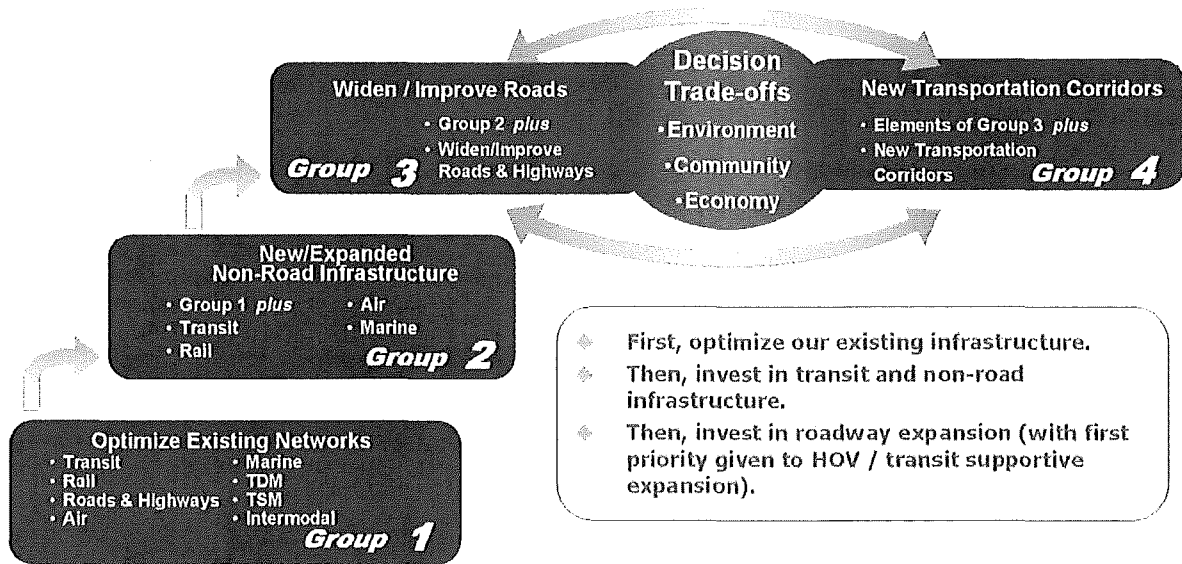


## The Building Block Approach

On the basis of the identified future transportation needs, the Study Team developed a series of multimodal Area Transportation System Alternatives to address these needs (refer to **Chapter 3** of this report). The development of the Area Transportation System Alternatives has involved a unique and creative process, built upon an extensive consultation program with a wide range of stakeholders and other transportation service providers.

The “building block” approach (**Exhibit E-1**) is consistent with current government policies and priorities of first optimizing the existing transportation network, and then if necessary, incorporating non-road infrastructure improvements and expansion, before moving to consider the widening of existing roadways or the provision of new roads and / or highways.

Exhibit E-1: The “Building Block” Approach





The Study Team's objectives throughout the process have been to fully explore the potential of all transportation modes, as well as the potential of optimization techniques aimed at managing transportation demand (Transportation Demand Management – TDM) and enhancing and improving the existing transportation system using emerging technologies (Transportation Systems Management – TSM).

As part of this exercise, Study Team specialists for each of the modes of transportation were tasked with reviewing transportation practices in other jurisdictions around the world to determine which elements of these practices can be applied to the unique set of circumstances presented by the transportation, environmental, economic and social features and conditions within the NGTA study area.

In addition, the specialists have conducted numerous meetings with other transportation service providers such as Metrolinx (including GO Transit), CN Rail, CP Rail, Ontario Motor Coach Association, St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, Hamilton Port Authority and the Hamilton International Airport. The goal of these meetings has been to discuss the potential to increase the utilization of their respective mode of transportation for the movement of people and goods, and to gain valuable insight with regard to the specific policy issues and constraints that govern their ability to provide transportation services.

The findings of the specialists have been used by the broader Study Team through numerous workshops, as well as through meetings with municipalities, government agencies, members of the public and First Nations, to inform the development of an innovative and creative 'long-list' of multimodal transportation alternatives.

In developing the initial 'long-list', the Study Team removed perceived barriers from consideration, such as policy constraints and / or pre-conceived notions based on past experience. This fostered the development of a truly creative set of alternatives. This list was subsequently analyzed and refined by the Study Team's specialists. Each alternative was examined on the basis of its ability to substantively contribute to addressing the transportation problems and opportunities identified by the Study Team during the previous phase of work. Concepts that were not considered capable of addressing the inter-regional transportation problems and opportunities were not carried forward for further consideration. The remaining concepts were categorized as worthy of pursuit as part of subsequent phases of this study or by other studies and initiatives.

## **Draft Transportation Development Strategy**

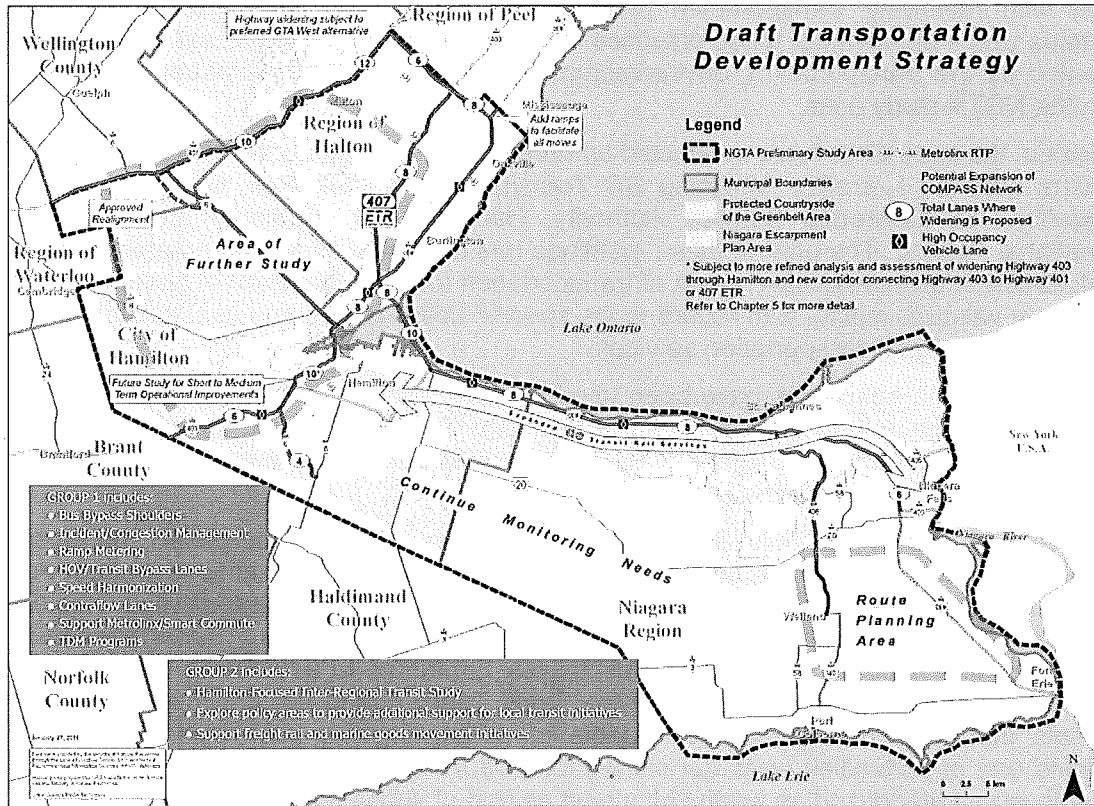
Presented in March 2011, the draft Strategy (**Exhibit E-2**) focused first on optimizing existing transportation infrastructure and increasing transit ridership. The draft Strategy noted, however, that to fully realize the vision of a functional and efficient multimodal transportation network that provides choice and promotes efficient movement of people and goods, planning for additional highway capacity is required in the long term.

As described in **Chapter 5**, following the release of the draft Strategy in March 2011, and in response to stakeholder feedback, the Study Team undertook additional analysis in the West, Central and East Areas to further examine the highway recommendations of the draft Strategy based on more refined corridors and a more detailed assessment of the potential impacts of each alternative.

In the West Area, this analysis was focused in the area identified as an "Area of Further Study" in **Exhibit E-2**, and involved the development, assessment and evaluation of a number of highway expansion alternatives including new highway corridor and highway widening alternatives. In the Central Area, this analysis involved reviewing the draft Strategy's recommendations for a widening of QEW by 2 HOV lanes. This involved more detailed

transportation analysis (including a review of the future freight forecasts) to evaluate the longer-term (i.e. beyond 2031) effectiveness of an 8 lane cross-section on QEW. In the East Area, this analysis involved developing, assessing and evaluating a number of new highway corridor alternatives within the “Route Planning Area” identified in **Exhibit E-2** to identify a more refined study area for the future Route Planning study.

**Exhibit E-2 - Draft Transportation Development Strategy**



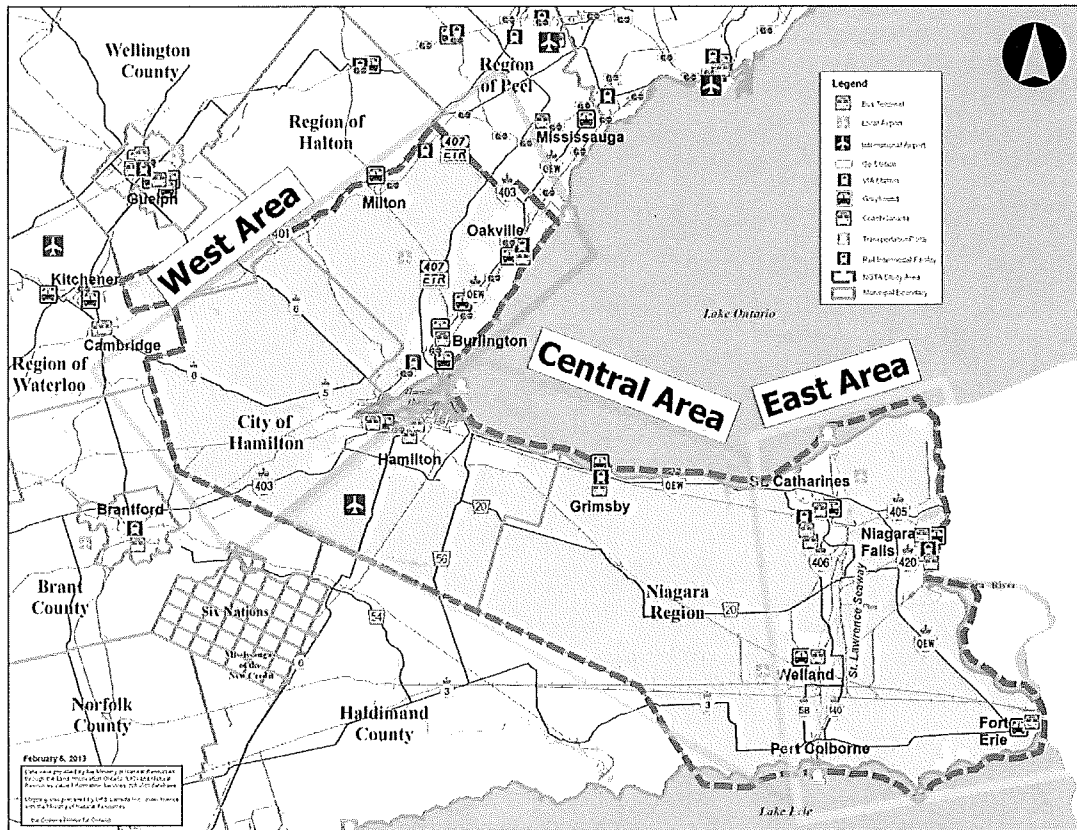
## Overview of Additional Analysis

As described in the previous section, the Study Team committed to undertaking additional analysis (refer to **Chapter 5**) subsequent to the release of the draft Strategy in an effort to gain further insight into the complex issues and trade-offs associated with each portion of the study area. More detailed existing conditions information for all three portions of the study area was obtained from agency and municipal sources to support this analysis and the impacts of all of the alternatives were considered at a greater level of detail.

It is important to note that although the additional analysis in the West, Central and East Areas focused on a more detailed review of the highway expansion alternatives, all of the recommendations pertaining to optimizing the existing transportation network, and new/improved non-road infrastructure that were included in the draft Strategy have been carried forward, and are included in the final Strategy. These recommendations are summarized later in this Executive Summary, and described in greater detail in **Sections 6.2-6.3** of the main report.

The additional analysis of highway expansion alternatives was conducted within each of the sub-areas illustrated in (**Exhibit E-3**).

Exhibit E-3: Geographic Specific Assessment



As noted, the objectives of the additional transportation analysis for each sub-area of the NGTA study area were as follows:

East Area

- Further refinement of the recommended study area for a new provincial highway connecting Highway 406 and QEW through the assessment and evaluation of various corridor alternatives. Refer to **Exhibit E-4** for alternatives developed and assessed.

Central Area

- A review and assessment of the draft Strategy recommendation to widen QEW to 8 lanes (including 2 HOV lanes) between Hamilton and Niagara, considering longer term growth beyond 2031 and summer traffic volumes on the QEW in addition to commuter peak period traffic volumes.

West Area

- A more focused assessment of major highway widening and new corridor alternatives in the West Area based on more refined corridors and a more detailed assessment of the potential impacts of each alternative. The alternatives considered included a major widening of Highway 403 through Hamilton, as well as various new highway corridor alternatives between Highway 403 and Highway 401, 407 ETR, and Highway 6. Refer to **Exhibits E-5** and **E-6** for alternatives developed and assessed.

Exhibit E-4: East Area Alternatives

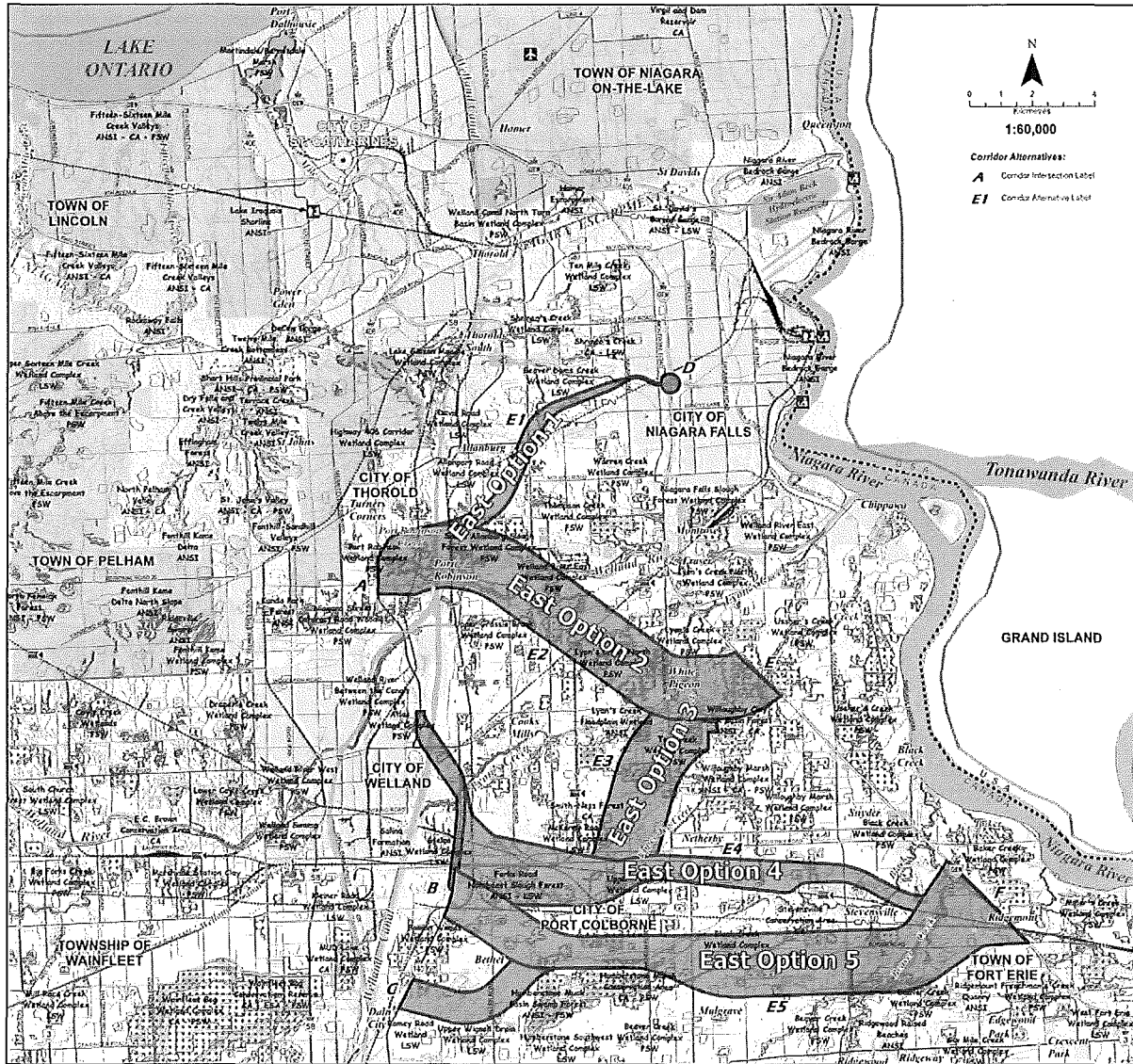


Exhibit E-5: West Area Alternatives – New Corridors

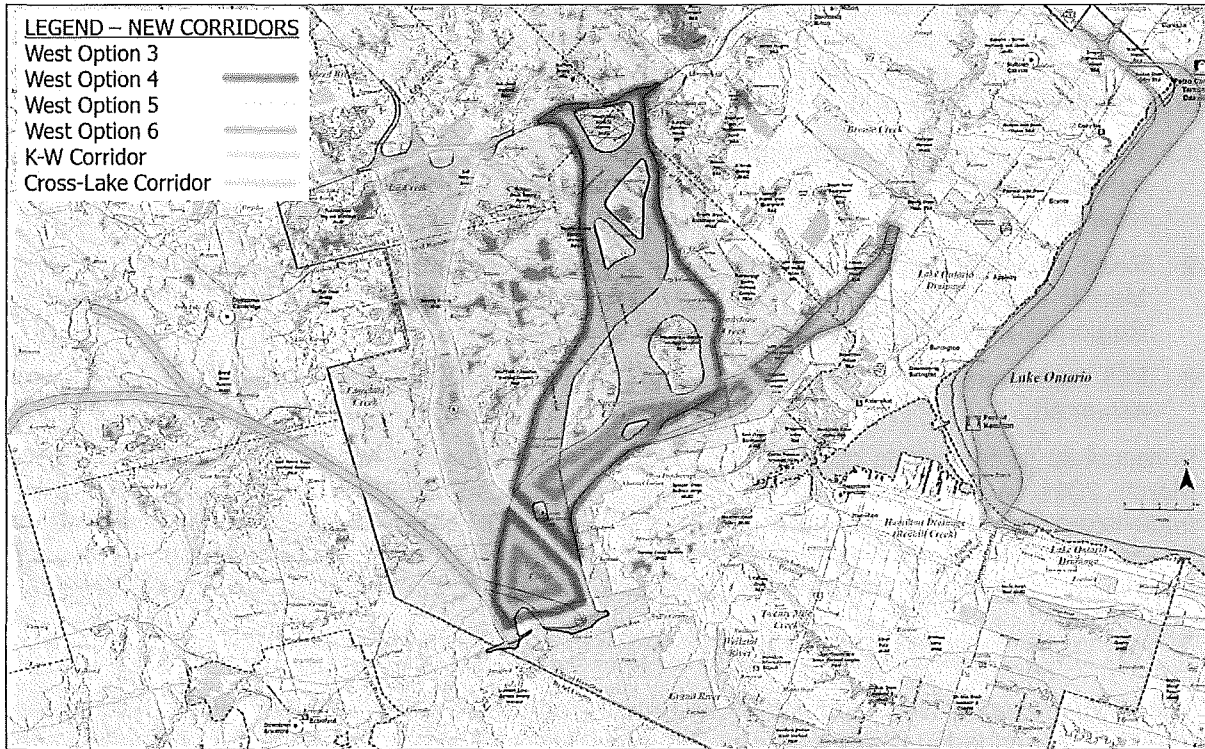
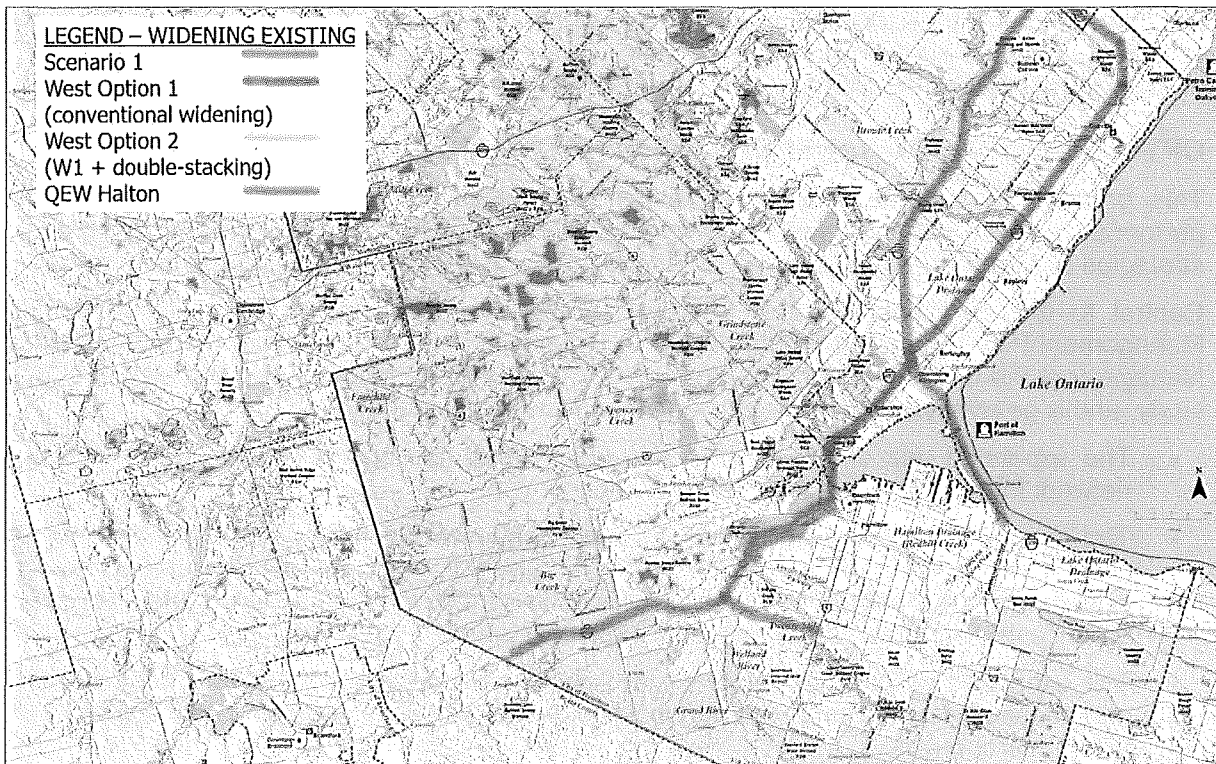


Exhibit E-6: West Area Alternatives – Widening Existing Highways



The Ministry of Transportation's (MTO) *Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Model* (GGH Model) was used to forecast future travel demands for the transportation modeling and analysis. The land use, transportation network and other assumptions used for the draft Strategy (March 2011) were carried forward for the additional analysis. The elements that are common with the draft Strategy are as follows:

1. The land use allocation patterns developed for the draft Strategy were retained, reflecting municipal allocation of population and employment as per their *Growth Plan* conformance reviews.
2. Road, transit and active transportation programs identified through approved Transportation Master Plans, Official Plans or Development Charge Background Studies completed by Regional / Lower Tier municipalities were retained.
3. Full implementation of the *RTP* by 2031 and GO Transit's Strategic Plan *GO 2020* was assumed.

In response to comments received from stakeholders following release of the draft Strategy in March 2011, a review of the commercial vehicle (CV) forecasts for the year 2031 was undertaken. Based on the findings of this review, the GGH Model CV forecasts were updated to be consistent with the forecasts from the Continental Gateway study, a longer term study examining future demands on various trade corridors linking Ontario to the US and Quebec.

## Transportation Development Strategy

The Transportation Development Strategy has been assembled based on the building block approach described in **Chapter 3**. The Strategy includes a strong foundation of optimization and non-road recommendations which build on the significant transit expansion plans embodied in the *Metrolinx RTP*, and *GO 2020 Strategic Plan*. While these improvements are crucial to the continued development of the provincial transportation network, the Study Team has also identified the need for expansion of key provincial highway facilities as well as a new highway corridor in the southern tier of Niagara Region. The following sections provide a brief summary of the key elements of the Strategy. Further details are provided in **Chapter 6** of this report.

### OPTIMIZE EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

This group of alternatives includes transportation initiatives that focus on improving the performance of the existing transportation system for all modes of travel and transport through strategies designed to reduce auto and truck demand and improve system operating efficiency.

Central to this component of the Strategy will be the development of an Active Traffic Management Plan (illustrated in **Exhibit E-7**). The scope and composition of the Active Traffic Management Plan will be subject to further study by the Ministry following the completion of this study, and is generally anticipated to include the following key elements:

- The expanded use of bus bypass shoulders along sections of the provincial highway network forecast to experience recurring congestion.
- The development of an enhanced incident management and congestion management system which builds on the existing MTO COMPASS system. Enhancements to the system may also include the provision of real time traffic information to travellers via radio broadcasts, website updates, personal digital assistants (PDAs), etc.
- The expanded use of ramp metering at key interchange locations within the study area and consideration of ramp metering installations as part of the planning and design of all future interchanges.

- The implementation of transit / HOV bypass lanes at existing ramp locations to provide expedited access for transit and HOV vehicles to commuter parking lots as well as efficient access to highway facilities where ramp metering is present.
- Further study of the potential to introduce speed harmonization along applicable sections of the provincial highway network.
- Investigation of the feasibility of contra-flow lanes and moveable barriers.

This Active Traffic Management Plan will serve as the basis for integrating strong Transportation Demand Managed (TDM) and Transportation Systems Management (TSM) principles in all future transportation planning initiatives.

The Strategy also assumes and supports the full implementation of the *Metrolinx RTP*, including:

- Providing information systems for travelers where and when they need it - online and in real-time;
- Providing a wayfinding system to make the transit system easier to use and navigate;
- Integrating transit fares so that travelers can cross municipal boundaries or transfer between modes without fare duplication; and,
- Providing more overhead display boards on roads that notify travelers of delays and suggest alternative routes.

There is also an opportunity to support enhancements to the ride sharing programs currently offered by Metrolinx / Smart Commute, to support new programs, and to support the expansion of these programs beyond the GTHA into Niagara Region, which currently coordinates TDM programs in the region.

The total estimated cost of the elements of the recommended Active Traffic Management Plan described above is anticipated to be between **\$100 million and \$200 million**.

## **NEW / EXPANDED NON-ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE**

This group of alternatives is illustrated in **Exhibit E-8**, and builds upon the comprehensive suite of transit initiatives embodied in the *RTP*, which are also illustrated in the exhibit. Many of these recommendations are policy based recommendations relating to constraints to increased integration and utilization of non-roadway modes for transporting goods. In addition, the Strategy also recommends initiation of a feasibility study for an enhanced inter-regional transit service in the Hamilton area. This concept would build upon the transit recommendations in the *RTP*, and is based on Hamilton's increasing role as a significant employment area, which is anticipated to continue to increase over the coming decades. A transit service that is focused on Hamilton would offer scheduling that would allow commuters in the outlying areas surrounding the City of Hamilton to access the employment districts within Hamilton during peak periods.

The Strategy also supports the recommendations of the *GTA West Transportation Development Strategy (November 2012)*, which envisages better inter-regional transit services connecting the westerly Urban Growth Centres (UGC's) identified in the *Growth Plan: Downtown Kitchener, Uptown Waterloo, and Downtowns Cambridge, Guelph, Milton, Brampton, Hamilton, and Brantford*. Further details with regard to this recommendation can be found in the *GTA West Transportation Development Strategy Report (November 2012)* which is available under separate cover.

Exhibit E-7: Active Traffic Management Plan

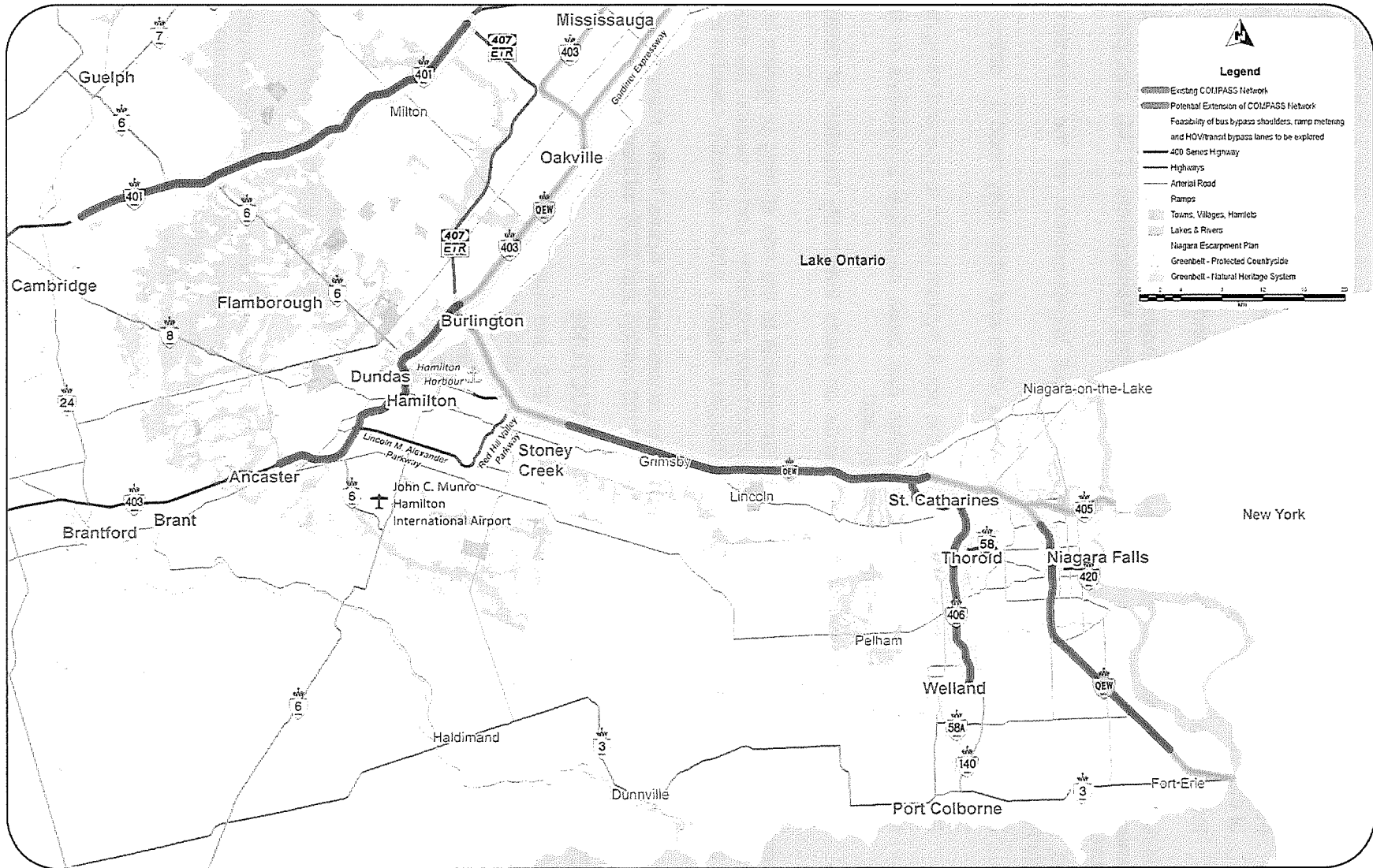
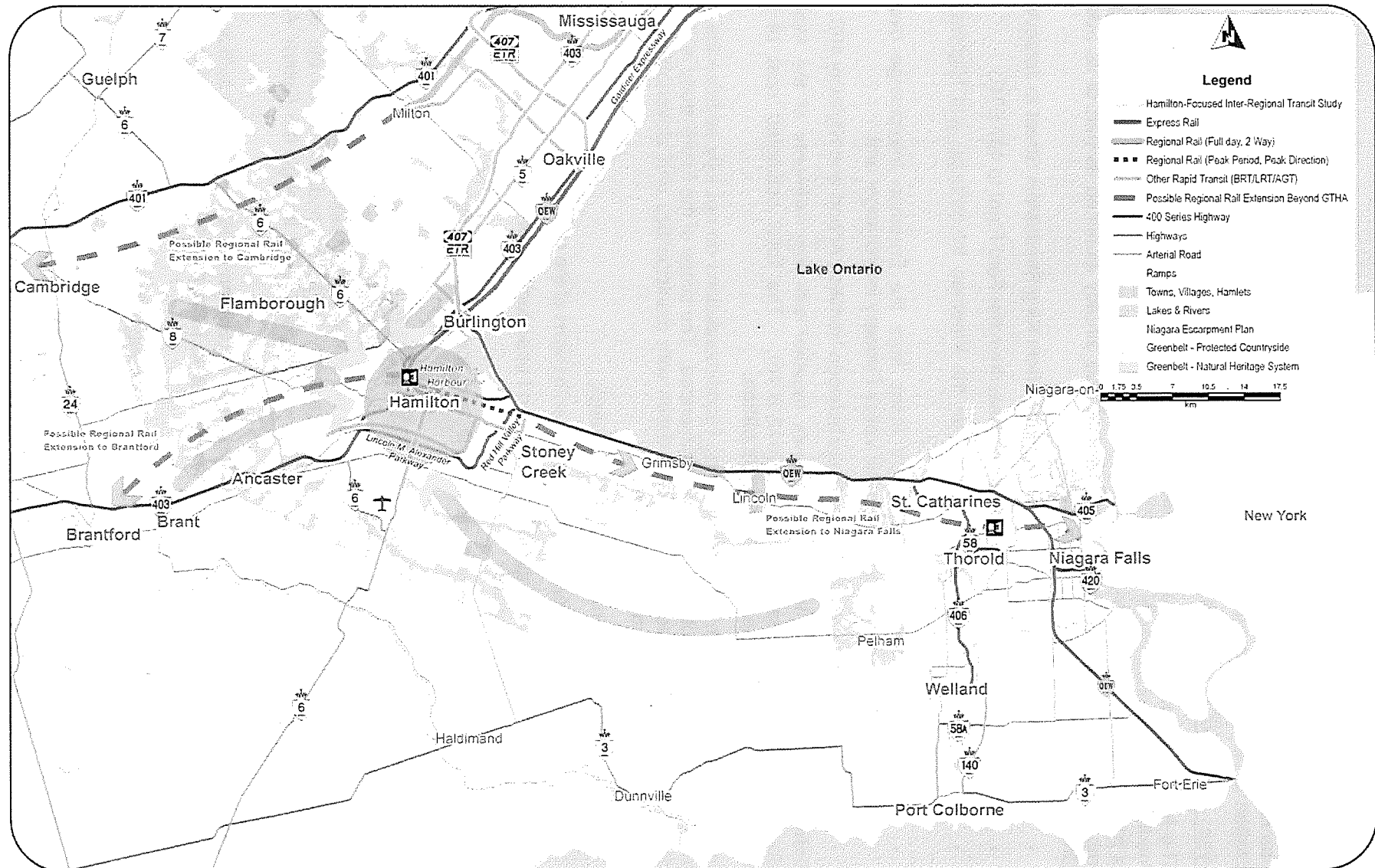




Exhibit E-8: New / Expanded Non-Road Recommendations



## HIGHWAY EXPANSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The highway expansion recommendations in the West, Central and East areas are illustrated in **Exhibit E-10**, and summarized in the following sections.

### WEST AREA – HAMILTON TO BURLINGTON/OAKVILLE

The highway expansion recommendations in the West Area are two-pronged. To address the medium term travel demands (2021-2031), strategic widening of key provincial highway facilities is recommended. These improvements are summarized below, and build upon the highway improvement recommendations that the Ministry has already identified as part of its *Southern Ontario Highways Program (2012 to 2016)*:

- **Highway 403 Hamilton** - widen by two lanes from King Street/Main Street to Jerseyville;
- **Highway 403 Oakville** - widen by three lanes from the Ford Plant to 407 ETR;
- **407 ETR** – widen by two lanes between the Freeman Interchange and Highway 403 Interchange in Oakville;
- **QEW Halton** – widen by two HOV lanes from the Freeman Interchange over the Burlington Bay Skyway to the Red Hill Valley Parkway interchange; and,
- **Highway 6 (New)** – widen by two lanes between Hamilton Airport and Highway 403.

**Exhibit E-10** illustrates these improvements together with key elements of the Ministry's *Southern Ontario Highways Program (2012-2016)*. The total estimated cost of these improvements is anticipated to be **\$1.5 to \$2 billion**.

In addition, given that the highway widening recommendations do not fully address the longer term needs, a separate future study is recommended. The scope of the future study is still to be determined, and will be developed in consultation with municipalities and stakeholder groups. Elements of the future study may include:

- A longer planning horizon (e.g. 2041 or later);
- An expanded study area (including areas to the west of the current study area);
- Expansion of the transportation problems and opportunities, based on the expanded study area and planning horizon;
- Opportunities for increased mode shift and integration of non-roadway transportation service providers.

### CENTRAL AREA – STONEY CREEK / HAMILTON TO WEST NIAGARA

The recommendation for the Central Area is to widen QEW to 8 lanes (including HOV lanes), as it is envisioned that an 8-lane cross section will provide sufficient capacity to address the future growth in traffic volumes by 2031, and can generally be accommodated within the existing highway right-of-way. The estimated cost for widening the QEW through the Central Area is anticipated to be **\$1 billion to \$1.5 billion**.

Beyond 2031, it is recognized that an 8-lane cross-section on QEW may not be sufficient, and as such, the Ministry will continue to monitor traffic patterns and travel demands over the coming years.

### EAST AREA – ST. CATHARINES / NIAGARA FALLS / WELLAND / FORT ERIE

The recommendation in the East Area is for a new four lane highway corridor connecting Highway 406 south of Welland to QEW near Fort Erie, including improvements to the Highway 406/140 corridor south of Welland. This recommendation will provide support for the *Growth*

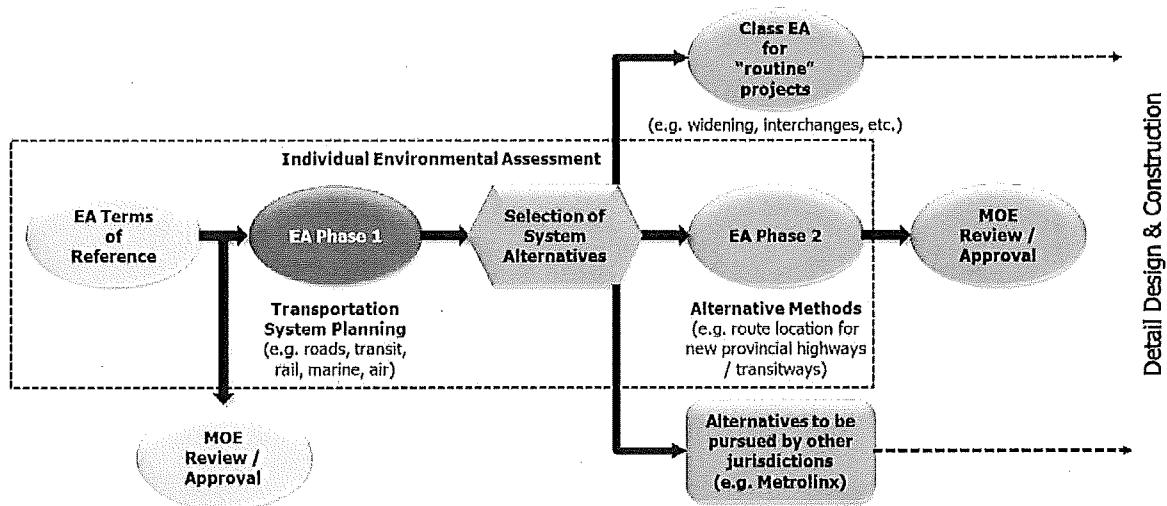
Plan objectives for the Gateway Economic Centre and Zone, and aligns with Niagara's "Grow South" Strategy. This strategy will also provide improved access to the border crossing at Fort Erie.

The route for this new highway will fall within the corridor illustrated in **Exhibit E-10**, and will be identified as part of a separate future route planning exercise that will constitute Phase 2 of this EA. The estimated cost for the new highway corridor and the associated widening of the Highway 406/140 corridor is anticipated to be **\$1 to \$1.5 billion**.

## Next Steps

The Transportation Development Strategy documented in this report will form the basis for all subsequent stages of this project. As illustrated in **Exhibit E-9** below, there are three possible "streams" for the various components of the Strategy.

**Exhibit E-9: Study Process**



The first stream, referred to as "Class EA for Routine Projects" applies to the highway widening components of the Strategy. Each of the widening recommendations will be subject to future Class Environmental Assessment (EA) studies to identify the preferred solution.

The second stream, referred to as "EA Phase 2" applies to the new highway corridor component of the Strategy. Phase 2 will essentially involve a route planning study to identify the preferred route for the new highway corridor including an examination of transit and/or freight priority design options.

Finally, the third stream, referred to as "Alternatives to be pursued by other jurisdictions" applies to those recommendations that are outside the jurisdiction of MTO. These recommendations will be forwarded to the relevant jurisdictions for further review and action as appropriate.

Exhibit E-10: Highway Expansion Recommendations

