



**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
MEMORANDUM**

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TO: CITY BUILDING COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: BRADFORD BYPASS REFERRAL MOTION 21-G-086

PREPARED BY: B. GRATRIX, P. ENG.
SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER – TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

SUBMITTED BY: M. BANFIELD, RPP
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: A. MILLER, RPP
GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: M. PROWSE
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

DATE: MAY 11, 2021

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Committee with a response to Council motion 21-G-086 concerning the Bradford Bypass. The Memorandum provides information to inform a decision with respect to supporting the Active Transportation and Sustainability Committee recommendation from their meeting of April 6, 2021.

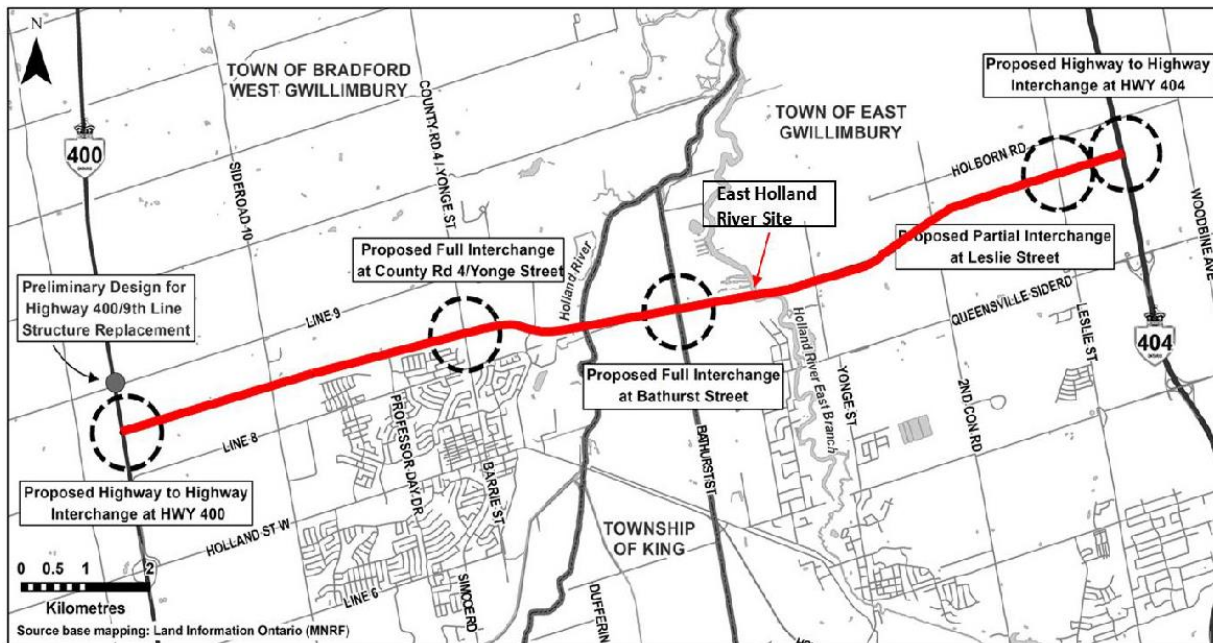
21-G-086 **PROPOSED BRADFORD BYPASS - REFERRAL TO STAFF IN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

That the following motion be referred to staff in the Development Services Department to review and provide information by way of a memorandum at the next City Building Committee meeting:

- “1. That, due to the potential negative impacts on Lake Simcoe the City of Barrie request that the Government of Canada conduct a comprehensive federal environmental impact assessment of the proposed Bradford By-pass and make the results available to the public.
2. That the City of Barrie request the Government of Ontario conduct the 15 studies as outlined as conditions to the Class Environmental Assessment for the Bradford By-pass in addition to studying the potential impacts on Lake Simcoe and the climate.
3. That, in accordance with the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, the City of Barrie requests that the Government of Ontario conduct a comprehensive impact assessment on Lake Simcoe and those vulnerable watersheds and inflows into Lake Simcoe.
4. That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Provincial Minister of Transportation, Provincial Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and all local MPPs and MPs.”

Overview of the Proposed Bradford B-pass

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is undertaking preliminary design and an update to the approved 2002 Environmental Assessment (EA) that identifies a new 16.2 – km freeway connecting Hwy 400 and Hwy 404.



Rationale for the Proposed Bradford Bypass

The Greater Golden Horseshoe Area (GGHA) will experience rapid population growth over the next 20 years. This growth requires major investments in transportation infrastructure to continue to facilitate the timely movement of people, goods and services within the GGHA. The Province is heavily investing in transit to facilitate the movement of people and highway projects to facilitate the movement of goods and services.

The MTO is undertaking numerous highway projects, both within the City as well as in neighbouring municipalities, all to improve critical transportation infrastructure to accommodate planned growth and support economic activity. The Bradford Bypass is a key project serving southern Simcoe County and northern York Region. The Bradford Bypass is estimated to provide a 60% savings in travel time when compared to existing routes, saving up to 35 minutes each way.

MTO Class EA Process

In August 2019, the Province directed the MTO to undertake an update to the approved Route Planning Environmental Assessment (EA) that had been completed in 2002. The 2019 study is following the process for Group 'A' projects in accordance with the MTO Class EA for Provincial Transportation Facilities. The MTO Class EA is a comprehensive process similar to the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment that the City must follow for infrastructure projects.

Required Environmental Studies

The MTO is undertaking detailed environmental studies in support of this project to thoroughly assess impacts to environmentally sensitive areas, with a specific focus on portions of the corridor that cross the Holland Marsh Provincially Significant Wetlands and the Greenbelt. These studies will be an update to previously completed studies and will reflect current industry best practices and regulations including, but not limited to, the *Endangered Species Act*, *Greenbelt Plan*, *Heritage Act*, *Fisheries Act*, *Species at Risk Act* and the *Lake Simcoe Protection Act*. This effort will include field investigations, impact assessments / mitigation plans and adherence to environmental commitments developed as part of the 2002 EA in addition to any new environmental commitments generated from the updated studies. These studies are similar in scope to those the City would complete for City infrastructure projects.

Environmental and social/cultural studies that will be completed for this project include:

- agricultural impact assessment
- air quality impact assessment (comprehensive local and regional air quality and greenhouse gas emissions)
- archaeological assessment (stages 2, 3, and 4, as required, including monitoring with Indigenous communities)
- cultural heritage assessment
- drainage and hydrology
- erosion and sediment control risk assessment
- fish and fish habitat existing conditions and impact assessment
- fluvial geomorphology
- groundwater impact assessment
- land use and property impact assessment
- noise and vibration impact assessment
- preliminary landscape composition plan
- snowdrift assessment
- terrestrial ecosystems existing conditions and impact assessment report (including an assessment of vegetation and vegetation communities, wildlife and wildlife habitat, species at risk and designated natural areas)
- waste and excess materials management plan
- human health

The MTO is engaged with several key environmental agencies and stakeholders with environmental interests including:

Federal

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada

- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
- Environment and Climate Change Canada

Provincial

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
- Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Local Municipalities

- County of Simcoe
- York Region
- Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury
- Town of East Gwillimbury
- Township of King

Conservation Authorities

- Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
- Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

Other Technical Stakeholders

- Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation
- The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation
- York Simcoe Naturalists
- Holland Marsh Drainage System Joint Municipal Services Board

Importance of the Proposed Bradford Bypass to City of Barrie / County / Surrounding Regions

The Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, Town of East Gwillimbury, Township of King, Simcoe County and Region of York all strongly support the implementation of the Bradford Bypass with key benefits including:

- greatly improve east/west capacity between the Hwy 400 and 404 corridors;
- improve the transportation of goods and materials between manufacturing centres in Aurora, Newmarket, Alliston, Barrie, and other emerging areas;
- attract new economic development opportunities; and
- increase travel options for residents and divert inter-regional travel around core urban/settlement areas thereby creating less congestion, carbon dioxide emissions, traffic accidents, property damage and health costs.

It is important to specifically recognize the benefits that residents of Bradford will enjoy when the proposed Bradford Bypass is constructed. Presently, inter-regional traffic travels through Bradford's downtown area as well as adjoining residential areas; this traffic overwhelms the local transportation network and impacts active transportation options and the ability to create a pedestrian friendly environment in the downtown area.

Many years ago, the City of Barrie faced a similar situation as Bradford presently does. The primary north-south highway in Central Ontario (Highway 11) was routed through the City's downtown and resulted in large volumes of inter-regional traffic traversing the downtown area as well as adjoining residential areas until the Province constructed Highway 400, which serves as a bypass for Highway 11.

City Infrastructure Projects

The City is undertaking many large transportation projects in the Hewitt's and Salem Secondary Plan Areas and undertook Municipal Class Environmental Assessments to assess potential environmental impacts and developed avoidance and mitigation strategies to lessen any adverse impacts. Both the MTO Class EA and MCEA processes enables the planning of infrastructure to be undertaken in accordance with an approved procedure designed to protect the environment. The work done in support of the proposed Bradford Bypass is very similar to the work the City undertakes.

Concerns with Recommendations in Motion 21-G086

1) Federal Environmental Assessment – Motion Item 1

The proposed Bradford Bypass project is subject to a Group 'A' project under the MTO Class EA for Provincial Transportation Facilities, which is an extensive and comprehensive process. The Bradford Bypass' potential impacts within federal jurisdiction are limited and can be managed through the principle based MTO Class EA. As noted in this memo, the MTO is undertaking a comprehensive range of environmental studies to thoroughly assess adverse impacts and develop avoidance and/or mitigation strategies to lessen adverse impacts.

Both the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury (refer to Attachment "A") and the Region of York (refer to Attachment "B") have written to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada stating that they are satisfied with the MTO Class EA process in response to the letter prepared by Ecojustice to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Canada to designate the Bradford Bypass Project under the federal Impact Assessment Act.

Supporting the request for Federal involvement could set a precedent that affects future City projects, requests action on a matter that does not directly affect the City and seeks to advance an action that our neighbour municipalities do not support.

2) Environmental Studies – Motion Item 2 and 3

The MTO is undertaking an update to all environmental studies following industry best practices and current regulations.

Supporting a request for additional study could set the stage for similar expectations on City-led projects.

3) Resolution to Federal and Provincial Ministries / MPPs / MPs – Motion Item 4

Working collaboratively with our neighbouring municipalities is critically important as we collectively develop the required infrastructure to support planned growth.

ATTACHMENT "A" – TOWN OF BRADFORD WEST GWILLIMBURY LETTER TO IMPACT
ASSESSMENT AGENCY OF CANADA



Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury
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Fax: 905-775-0153
www.townofbwg.com

March 2, 2021

Anjala Puvananathan
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
Ontario Region
600-55 York Street
Toronto ON M5J 1R7

Sent via email: conor.anderson@canada.ca

Dear Ms. Puvananathan

**RE: Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury Comments – Designation Request for the
Proposed Bradford Bypass Project under the Impact Assessment Act**

We are in receipt of your letter dated February 12, 2021, regarding the designation request for the proposed Hwy 400-404 Link project (Bradford Bypass), under the federal Impact Assessment Act. The following provides the town's comments on the matter.

The proposed Hwy 400-404 Link is a long-planned transportation corridor that will provide a critical inter-regional link between Simcoe County and York Region. The Link is an integral component of the official plans for both regions, the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, Town of East Gwillimbury and other nearby municipalities. This much-needed addition to inter-regional highway capacity will improve the movement of goods, including agricultural products, grow and retain business investments, and create new investment opportunities throughout the regions.

The Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury has consistently supported the Hwy 400-404 Link project and has long advocated for its advancement. Much of the inter-regional traffic noted above presently travels through BWG and overwhelms our local road network. With the advent of the highway we anticipate a significant reduction in traffic congestion, carbon-dioxide emissions, traffic accidents, property damage and health costs.

Staff have reviewed the designation request letter submitted by Ecojustice. The town shares their interest in ensuring that environmental impacts are appropriately mitigated. The town also has an interest in ensuring that the project addresses social, economic and health impacts and that a meaningful public consultation program is conducted.

With those interests in mind, the town is entirely satisfied that all relevant matters will be thoroughly addressed through the work currently being undertaken by the Ministry of Transportation. As very clearly stated on MTO's project website, this work includes:

- an update to the previously-approved Environmental Assessment through the preparation of a preliminary design;
- undertaking a minimum of 15 detailed environmental studies;
- a public consultation program with at least two Public Information Centres and the engagement of local Indigenous Communities; and,
- the issuance of a Transportation Environmental Study Report that will be available for public review.

In our view the provincial process is comprehensive and sufficiently covers the necessary reviews requested by Ecojustice.

We recommend that the Minister not order the designation of the project as it will result with a duplication of work already being undertaken and would unnecessarily delay this critical infrastructure investment.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geoff", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Geoff McKnight, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT "B" – YORK REGION LETTER TO IMPACT ASSESSMENT AGENCY OF CANADA



March 19, 2021

Anjala Puvananathan, Director
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
Ontario Region
600-55 York Street
Toronto ON M5J 1R7

Dear Ms. Puvananathan,

Re: Designation Request for the Ministry of Transportation Ontario's proposed Bradford Bypass Project under the Impact Assessment Act

On February 12, 2021, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada requested input from York Region regarding the designation request submitted by Ecojustice on behalf of Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition and Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition for the proposed Ontario Bradford Bypass Project.

On March 18, 2021, Regional Council endorsed submission of the attached draft letter by a unanimous vote of Council members in attendance. The attached letter represents York Region's input on the designation request for the Bradford Bypass Project.

Given that the deadline for submission of input is today, a link to the formal meeting minutes will be provided once they are available.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75901 or Brian.Titherington@york.ca.

Sincerely,



Brian Titherington
Director, Transportation and Infrastructure Planning
Transportation Services

Copies to:
Regional Chair Emmerson
Bruce Macgregor, Chief Administrative Officer
Paul Jankowski, Commissioner of Transportation Services
Cameron Bevers, Project Manager, Ontario Ministry of Transportation



ATTACHMENT 1

March 3, 2021

Ms. Anjala Puvananathan, Director
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
Ontario Region
600-55 York Street
Toronto ON M5J 1R7

Dear Ms. Puvananathan,

Re: Designation Request for the Proposed Bradford Bypass Project under the *Impact Assessment Act*

Thank you for your February 12, 2021 correspondence regarding the designation request submitted on February 3, 2021 by Ecojustice on behalf of Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition and Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition. The Ecojustice submission has requested the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Canada designate the proposed Ontario Bradford Bypass Project under subsection 9(1) of the *Impact Assessment Act*.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation is proposing a new four-lane highway, connecting Highway 400 and Highway 404. The proposed Bradford Bypass Project (also commonly known as the Highway 400-404 Link) will connect Highway 400 in Bradford West Gwillimbury (Simcoe County) to Highway 404 in East Gwillimbury and crossing King Township (York Region).

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation completed an Individual Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Highway 400 – 404 Link concurrent with the EA for the Highway 404 extension in 1993 and was granted approval by the Ministry of Environment for both EA's on August 28, 2002. In 2004, the Province designed the approved alignment for the Highway 400 – 404 Link as a Controlled Access Highway Corridor under the Public Transportation and Highways Improvement Act, thereby protecting the route from development until the highway is constructed. As a condition of the EA approval, the design and construction of the highway became subject to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation's Class EA process for Provincial Transportation Facilities, as a "Group A" project.

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has invited affected municipalities to provide input on the Bradford Bypass Project to inform the Agency's analysis of the designation request. In particular, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada is seeking input on:

- Whether any York Region requirements apply to the Project?
- Would any of those involve consultation with the public and Indigenous groups?
- What environmental, social, economic or health issues would those requirements address?
- Whether the Ontario Ministry of Transportation is addressing the interests and issues of importance to York Region.

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has requested municipal responses by March 3, 2021.

York Region has long supported the Bradford Bypass Project

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation received EA approval for the Bradford Bypass Project in 2002. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation also undertook the Simcoe Area Multimodal Transportation Study in support of the Provincial Growth Plan (Simcoe Sub-Area Growth Plan Amendment 1 – January 2012). The study was completed in March 2014 and reaffirmed the need for the Bradford Bypass Project.

The Ministry of Transportation consulted York Region throughout these studies. York Region staff have reported to Council at key milestones through the provincial study process and York Region Council has consistently supported the Bradford Bypass Project as highlighted below.

York Region Council March 2008 resolved:

Regional Council request the Regional Chair to present a brief to the Ministers of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Transportation and Municipal Affairs and Housing on the urgent need for action on the Bradford Bypass, including adding the Bradford Bypass into the Provincial Growth Plan and committing to develop an implementation schedule with York Region.

York Region Council September 2009 resolved:

Regional Council request the Province to expedite its review and study of the following facilities with funding commitments:

- a. Yonge Street Subway
- b. Bradford Bypass
- c. Highway 427 extension to Major Mackenzie Drive
- d. Completion of the GTA West Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA) study

York Region Council June 2011 resolved:

Council endorse this staff report and Attachment 1 as the Region's official comments on the Provincial Proposed Amendment No. 1 to the Growth Plan: An Amendment and Implementation Tools for the Simcoe Sub-Area. [Staff comments attached to the Council Report: York Region Council had repeatedly expressed the opinion that investment in transportation infrastructure was required to accommodate the Provincial 2031 growth allocations. Critical road investments needed include extended Highways 404 and 427, constructing the Bradford Bypass and capacity improvements to the existing 400-series highways. York Region Council has taken the position that the Bradford By-pass extension is an immediate need.]

York Region Council June 2012 resolved:

Council direct staff to work with Simcoe County, Bradford West Gwillimbury, East Gwillimbury and Newmarket to develop a joint communication strategy to advocate for the Highway 400-404 Link and to report back to Council by the end of 2012 with an update on the progress.

York Region Council June 2019 resolved:

Council support a robust highway network to move people, goods and services and achieve provincial Growth Plan population and employment objectives in York Region and encourage:

- a. The resumption of Environmental Assessment for GTA West Highway for near-term inclusion in the Southern Highways Program*
- b. The inclusion of the Highway 400-404 Connecting Link and the Highway 404 Extension to Highway 12 in the next Southern Highways Program*

The Bradford Bypass Project supports York Region's Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan

With a population of 1.2 million residents, The Regional Municipality of York is one of Canada's largest municipalities and the second largest business centre in Ontario. Ranked as Ontario's fastest growing large municipality, managing growth over the coming decades is important. York Region is forecast to reach approximately 2.02 million people and 990,000 jobs by 2051.

The York Region Official Plan 2010 describes how York Region plans to accommodate future growth and development while meeting the needs of existing residents and businesses in the Region. It provides directions and policies that guide economic, environmental and community planning decisions.

The Bradford Bypass Project is identified as a planned transportation corridor in the York Region Official Plan (Map 12 Street Network) and included in policy 7.2.56:

To work with the Province and local municipalities to plan and protect for the following corridors and facilities:

- a. Highway 427 north to the GTA West Corridor*
- b. Highway 404 north beyond Ravenshoe Road*
- c. the Bradford Bypass (Highway 400-404 Link)*
- d. the GTA West Corridor*

The York Region Transportation Master Plan 2016 establishes the vision for transportation services, assesses existing transportation system performance, forecasts future travel demand, and defines actions and policies to address road, transit and active transportation needs in York Region to 2041.

The Bradford Bypass Project is identified as an integral component of the transportation network required to service York Region residents and businesses (Map 8 Proposed 2041 Road Network) and described in section 5.2.1 Provincial Infrastructure Plans:

Highway 400/404 Link: This would provide a connection between Highway 400 and Highway 404 in East Gwillimbury. Its benefits include creation of a more resilient network by connecting the two major north-south highways. It would reduce the need for the Region to expand Queensville Sideroad and would reduce traffic congestion on Regional roads, including Highway 9, Green Lane and Yonge Street. An Environmental Assessment for the Highway 400/404 Link was approved in 2002 and designated as a Controlled Access Highway under the Public Transportation and Highways Improvement Act. It is not identified in the current Provincial Growth Plan for 2031. Given the project's benefits to the Regional network, this TMP assumes it will be in place by 2041.

Both York Region's Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan were developed with extensive consultation, including the public, stakeholders, government agencies and Indigenous groups.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation has consulted York Region throughout the Bradford Bypass Project

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation has consulted York Region throughout the planning for the Bradford Bypass Project. Through the Individual EA process, Simcoe Area Network Study, and ongoing Preliminary Design/Class EA for the Bradford Bypass Project, York Region has been consulted and actively engaged. At key milestones, York Region staff will continue to report to Council, including highlighting issues or concerns for consideration in the provincial Preliminary Design/Class EA process.

The provincial EA process provides for a robust level of environmental assessment and stakeholder consultation. The Region expects the current provincial environmental process will continue to address environmental, social, economic and health issues as well as the necessary public consultation to balance the needs of all project stakeholders.

Specific Input to the Federal Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

Specific responses for the input questions posed by the Federal Impact Assessment Agency are summarized in the table below:

Impact Assessment Agency Question	Regional Response
Whether any York Region requirements apply to the Project?	The Region requires conformity with the Region's Official Plan as well as the Transportation Master Plan.
Would any of these involve consultation with the public and Indigenous groups?	The Region consulted extensively for the Official Plan and the Transportation Master Plan and would expect the Province to duly consult all stakeholders as required in the Provincial Environmental Assessment process.
What environmental, social, economic or health issues would those requirements address?	The Region would expect the Provincial Environmental Assessment process to address all relevant environmental, social, economic or health issues as raised by community stakeholders.
Whether the Ontario Ministry of Transportation is addressing the interests and issues of importance to York Region?	The Ontario Ministry of Transportation is addressing the interests and issues as identified by the Region through the completed Individual Environmental Assessment process as well as the ongoing Class Environmental Assessment.



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Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Brian Titherington, Director of Transportation and Infrastructure Planning at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75901.

Sincerely,

Paul Jankowski
Commissioner of Transportation Services

12602084