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**REPORT TITLE: Ministry of Transportation Ontario Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan**

**FROM: Kealy Dedman, Commissioner of Public Works**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Region of Peel’s report from the Commissioner of Public Works, listed on the April 14, 2022 Regional Council agenda titled “Ministry of Transportation Ontario Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan,” be endorsed;**

**And further, that the Regional Chair, on behalf of Regional Council, send a letter to the Minister of Transportation Ontario requesting that the Ministry address the gaps as outlined in the subject report;**

**And further, that a copy of the subject report be forwarded to the Cities of Brampton and Mississauga, and the Town of Caledon.**

## **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- The Province has developed a regional transportation plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe region to accommodate future transportation demand which recommends infrastructure, service improvements, and various policies.
- The GGH Plan aligns with and satisfies a number of the Region of Peel’s transportation priorities including the widening of Highway 401, 410, 403, and QEW, the advancement of the preliminary designs for future higher order transit connections, and strategies for the efficient movement of goods.
- Notwithstanding, a number of Regional priorities are not adequately addressed including Council’s opposition to Highway 413, a commitment to extend Highway 427 to Highway 9, and a firm commitment on the timeline for two-way all-day 15-minute GO train services along the Milton GO line and the Kitchener GO line beyond Bramalea GO station.

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## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Background**

The Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region, shown in Appendix I, is an urban region in Southern Ontario. The GGH region includes the Greater Toronto Area and extends to Niagara, Brant, and the Waterloo Regions in the southwest. The Cities of Barrie and Peterborough represent the northeast limits of the region.

## Ministry of Transportation Ontario Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan

The Ministry of Transportation released *Connecting the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH): A Transportation Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* on March 10, 2022. According to the Ministry, the Plan sets out a path forward for a GGH transportation network to 2051 that strives to meet transportation demands that will come with forecasted population and employment growth. The Ministry indicates that the GGH Plan's focus is to develop an integrated transportation system to inform policy and investment decisions to create a globally competitive economy, support communities, and renew and expand modern infrastructure and foster a healthy environment.

According to the Ministry, the GGH Transportation Plan (GGH Plan) builds on and integrates all planning and related provincial policy work from the last two decades, including municipal official plans and transportation master plans.

### 2. Findings from the GGH Transportation Plan

The GGH Plan recommends infrastructure, service improvements, and policies under four inter-related themes:

- Fighting gridlock and improving road performance
- Getting people moving on a connected transit system
- Supporting a more sustainable and resilient Region; and
- Efficiently moving goods

The GGH Plan includes more than 100 immediate and near-term actions grouped under seven goals that set out the vision for mobility in the GGH region. The goals and actions that impact Peel Region are discussed below.

#### a) Fight Gridlock

Actions under this goal focus on building new and faster route alternatives and policies aim to provide additional capacity for people and goods movement. The infrastructure projects included in the GGH Plan within Peel Region include (see Appendix II):

- Highway 413
- The expansion of Highway 401 from the Credit River to Regional Road 25
- Targeted widening of other existing highways at bottlenecks across the Region, including improved connections to the outer ring on Highways 400, 401, 403, and the QEW
- The expansion of Highway 9 from Highway 10 to Highway 400
- The expansion of Highway 410 from Queen Street to Mayfield Road
- The expansion of Highway 403 from QEW to Highway 407

**Alignment/Gaps with Peel Region Position:** The expansion of Highway 401, Highway 9, Highway 410, and Highway 403 align with the Region's position with respect to the Provincial freeway network. However, the Plan's inclusion of Highway 413 contradicts Regional Council's strong opposition to construction of the highway.

#### b) Improve Transit Connectivity

The GGH Plan also includes transit-oriented infrastructure projects, services, and policies to allow people to travel across the region as shown in Appendix III. Transit initiatives in the GGH Plan that impact Peel Region are summarized below:

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- Expansion of frequent two-way all-day 15-minute services across the GO Transit rail network.
- Building of the Hurontario LRT.
- Advancement of the preliminary design for higher order transit connections including the Brampton-Queen Street/Highway 7-York BRT corridor, and the Dundas BRT corridor.
- Commitment to monitor transit demand and advance the business case for future rail service at the Bolton GO station in Caledon.
- Improving service integration and fare structures in the region in partnership with local transit agencies.

**Alignment/Gaps with Peel Region Position:** Regional priorities align with advancing higher order transit connections including the business case for future rail service at the Bolton GO station. The Region also supports an integrated transit fare system. The Region is further pleased to see the expansion of frequent two-way all-day 15-minute services planned across the GO Transit rail network. However, the Plan lacks a firm timeline commitment, in particular for the Milton GO line and the Kitchener GO line beyond Bramalea GO station. Further, staff note that the Plan does not include dedicated transit connections to Toronto Pearson International Airport which are necessary to improve access and address the needs of existing and future residents and businesses of Peel Region.

### c) Keep Goods Moving

The GGH Plan put forward a Strategic Goods Movement Network which identifies key goods movement corridors across the GGH region. The existing Peel Strategic Goods Movement Network has been incorporated to the GGH Network. Further action items cited in the plan include:

- Work with municipalities and indigenous communities to integrate considerations of the Strategic Goods Movement Network into the municipal land use plans to protect capacity, corridors, and facilities.
- Support the accommodation of trucks at strategic goods movement locations by expanding locations that can feature both truck parking and truck inspection, including through ongoing provincial and national truck rest area infrastructure work and development.
- Promote Ontario's Freight Supportive Guidelines, which provides municipalities with guidance in planning for safe and efficient movement of goods.
- Encourage the use of off-peak delivery in municipalities across Ontario (i.e., nighttime delivery of goods to preserve capacity on the road network during daytime hours).

**Alignment/Gaps with Peel Region Position:** The GGH Plan actions in relation to goods movement are in alignment with the Region's priorities related to safe and efficient movement of goods but the Plan lacks mention of providing truck parking and truck inspection facilities. In addition, the Plan is missing a commitment towards the efficient use of the existing Provincial Freeway Network, including Highway 407, to facilitate the movement of people and goods.

### d) Be Future Ready

Actions under this goal are intended to create a more resilient and environmentally sustainable transportation system by leveraging emerging transportation technologies and innovation. Strategies include:

- Support the adoption of low- and zero-carbon modes including active transportation and the adoption of electric and hydrogen-powered cars, trucks, and transit vehicles.
- Explore the use of Automated Vehicle technologies for easy access to GO stations and other rapid transit stations.
- Explore opportunities to support the adoption of emerging technologies that improve efficiency and resiliency of the multimodal freight system.

**Alignment/Gaps with Peel Region Position:** The strategies captured under this goal are all in alignment with the Region's positions with respect to transit investments, active transportation, goods movement, and climate change priorities. However, the Plan does not consider reinvestment of Highway 413 funds towards more environmentally sustainable alternatives. Furthermore, staff note that the Plan is missing a commitment to provide tools to municipalities to help plan for and integrate connected and autonomous vehicles and other emerging transportation technologies.

### 3. Summary of GGH Plan Impacts to the Region of Peel

The Ministry indicates that the GGH Plan sets out a vision and framework for a connected transportation system to provide safe, efficient, and convenient options for people and businesses. According to the Ministry, it strives to support the well-being and economic prosperity of the GGH region into the future. Overall, the GGH Plan aligns with a number of the Region's advocacy positions, but gaps remain.

The following is a summary of the Region of Peel's priorities that remain unaddressed in the GGH Plan:

- Regional Council's opposition to the construction of Highway 413 and request for reinvestment in sustainable transportation modes.
- Plan for the extension of the Highway 427 to Highway 9.
- Firm commitment on timing for two-way all-day 15-minute services along the Milton GO line and the Kitchener GO line beyond Bramalea GO station.
- Dedicated transit connections to Toronto Pearson International Airport.
- Provincial truck parking and truck inspection facilities in Peel Region.
- Commitment for efficient use of the existing Provincial Freeway Network, including Highway 407, to facilitate the movement of people and goods within Peel.
- Additional tools for municipalities to plan and integrate connected and autonomous vehicles for future travel.
- Promotion cross-border and seamless accessible transit services in the GGH region (for example, fare integration) as part of the goal to give users more choice under the GGH Plan.

Finally, as a general comment, the GGH Plan does not specify timing commitments for various investments, and the Region encourages the Ministry to consult with municipalities in prioritizing these investments.

## **CONCLUSION**

A connected and sustainable transportation network across the GGH is essential to the Region to accommodate existing and future population and employment growth. The Region is pleased to see the completion of the GGH Plan, however, the Ministry is requested to address the gaps identified in the GGH Plan as outlined in the report. These gaps related to Regional priorities and must be undertaken to ensure the sustainable movement of people and goods across Peel Region and to support a thriving economy.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix I – Map of the GGH Region

Appendix II – Map of the Highway Projects from the GGH Plan

Appendix III – Map of the Transit Projects from the GGH Plan

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