



REPORT

REPORT TO: Chair and Members of the Planning, Public Works, and Transportation Committee

REPORT FROM: Maureen Van Ravens, Manager of Transportation

DATE: April 29, 2019

REPORT NO.: TPW-2019-0014

RE: Trucking Strategy Study

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. TPW-2019-0014, dated April 29, 2019, regarding the Trucking Strategy Study, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve the Improvement Strategies recommended in the Trucking Strategy Study indicated in the Executive Summary in Attachment 1;

AND FURTHER THAT the Mayor write a letter to the Minister of Transportation advocating for the implementation of the Truck Inspection Station and Acton By-Pass Feasibility Study and necessary funding;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be authorized to initiate the improvement strategies in the Trucking Strategy Study;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be authorized to install truck permissive signs along designated truck routes utilizing funds previously approved in the 2018 capital budget;

AND FURTHER THAT the Trucking Strategy Study be forwarded to staff at the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario, Halton Region, Town of Milton, Town of Erin and County of Wellington, Ted Arnott, MPP Wellington-Halton Hills and Gary Carr, Chair of Halton Region for their information.

BACKGROUND:

Report No. INF-2014-0015 summarized specific truck traffic issues and efforts of staff and Elected Officials to address these issues at both the local level and through advocacy for a greater involvement from the Provincial Government.

Since 2014, the Town of Halton Hills has continued to experience significant truck traffic associated with local aggregate quarries and other quarries north and west of Halton

Region, as well as an increase in the volume of trucks hauling surplus fill material to construction sites outside of Halton Region. The resultant levels of truck traffic on the municipal roads and overall transportation network causes traffic congestion, safety concerns, and quality of life impacts associated with noise, dust, odour, and emissions.

Through report P&I-2016-0026 and subsequent report P&I -2016-0066, staff advised Council of the future development of a Trucking Strategy Study and the consultant, WSP Canada Inc., that would be undertaking the study.

The study continues the work identified in the Town's 2011 Transportation Master Plan which indicates that efficient and reliable goods movement is fundamental to maintain a strong economy and ensuring a healthy community. It also supports the implementation of the strategic actions under the priority of Transportation/Mobility as part of the 2014-2018 Top 8 Strategic Priorities which included the development of a long-term Truck Movement Strategy for the Town.

COMMENTS:

The Trucking Strategy Study as indicated in the detailed Executive Summary in Attachment 1 supports the economic development and employment opportunities while balancing the needs of the community in Halton Hills. Throughout the duration of the study, key areas such as Safety, Infrastructure, Environmental, Social, and Economic aspects were considered and balanced through a proactive consultation program used to engage residents, businesses, stakeholders, technical agencies, Senior Management, and Elected Officials.

Study Approach

The trucking concerns in the community generally relate to the movement of aggregates to construction markets located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and movement of fill from the construction markets to disposal sites located to the north and northwest of the Town.

The major roads through the Town are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) and Halton Region. These roads permit the movement of heavy trucks through the community, which restricts the Town's ability to control heavy truck movements. The highest volume roads located within the Town's municipal boundary include Highway 401 and Highway 7.

Highway 7 is under the jurisdiction of MTO outside of the urban areas of Acton and Georgetown, and is designated as a Connecting Link through the urban areas. The Connecting Link designation requires the Town to maintain and operate the highway; however the operation of vehicular traffic including truck movements is still controlled and permitted by MTO.

The trucking issues are most evident along the Highway 7 corridor, in particular through the urban areas, including Acton, Georgetown, and Norval.

The urban area of Acton and its downtown core is not suitable for the movement of heavy trucks. Highway 7 (Connecting Link) through the downtown core has narrow travel lanes, residential dwellings and curb-faced sidewalks that service high pedestrian volumes. Heavy trucks traversing through Downtown Acton frequently encroach onto the opposing travel lanes and mount curbs at the Main/Mill intersection. These issues reduce the safety of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists.

As in Acton, many of the same geometric conditions exist in Norval making it challenging for trucks to navigate the main intersection of Highway 7/Bovaird Drive and Winston Churchill Boulevard/Adamson Street. To alleviate some of the issues the Region of Peel and Halton Region will be implementing truck turning restrictions. In addition, Halton Region will be initiating the Norval West By-Pass environmental assessment to provide a new road connection between Highway 7 and 10 Side Road, west of Norval.

The noise, vibration, and pollution impacts generated by heavy trucks negatively impact the quality of life within the community. Without alternative routes around the urban areas, heavy trucks continue to negatively affect these heavily populated urban areas.

The study approach included the Five E's: Engagement, Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Evaluation.

Engagement was undertaken through a comprehensive consultation program that engaged decision makers, residents, businesses, stakeholders, and technical agencies. Engineering included identification of infrastructure improvements to support truck movements on a preferred truck route network. Enforcement focused on the opportunities to construct a truck inspection station and increase the number of truck safety blitzes in the community. Education identified methods to educate road users about the truck network. Evaluation process includes monitoring and management of short-term and long-term improvement strategies.

Recommended Improvement Strategies

The Trucking Strategy Study developed a series of improvement strategies and recommendations that can be implemented in the short term, medium term, and long term. These improvement strategies focused in the Five (5) E's and have been based on extensive public consultation. The recommended list of improvement strategies are indicated as follows:

- Establish Trucking Advisory Committee for 2 years (include Police Services, road authorities, major trucking companies, and Council members)
- Continue Engagement with Halton Region, Province and Federal Government (Road transfers and infrastructure funding)
- Install Truck Permissive Signage (preferred Truck route network)
- Review truck routes through the Road Rationalization process

- Review Bypass Options on New and Existing Corridors (i.e. identify study areas to be reviewed, as per the attached map in the Executive Summary)
- Establish Truck Network Maps (i.e. use of GIS and GPS technologies)
- Implement a Permanent Inspection Station at the Highway 7/Sixth Line northeast corner (i.e. MTO engagement)
- Increase Truck Safety Blitzes (i.e. additional Commercial Motor Vehicle Enforcement Officers)
- Educate all users of the Truck Route Network
- Streamline Oversize/Overweight Heavy Truck Permit Process (i.e. inter-jurisdictional cooperation with road authorities)
- Establish a Performance Measurement System (i.e. tracking system for trucking related projects and issues)

Public and Technical Agency/Stakeholders Consultation Summary

The Trucking Strategy consultation and engagement plan was developed to obtain input from the public and over the duration of the study. The input received established realistic and feasible recommendations which are reflective of the interests and priorities within our community.

Throughout the duration of the study, extensive consultation took place that involved the public, businesses, technical agencies, key stakeholders, and Elected Officials. Staff and the consulting team used a variety of options to highlight the project and gather information such as a project webpage, project email, social media, promotional materials, local signage, and electronic signs.

At the onset of the project, the project webpage was created which provided information about the study and opportunities for the public to provide feedback or ask questions either through email or an online survey. The online survey was available to the public between March 2017 and August 2017. The survey focused on questions related to the trucking issues. There were 291 responses received, 87 percent (%) of the respondents were residents, while 5 percent (%) were local business owners. The trucking concerns identified by the community include speed, volume, road safety, noise and vibrations, time-of-day restrictions, environment, congestion, and quality of life.

The project team held two (2) public open houses in May 2017 and another two (2) public open houses in November 2017 to gather the public's input.

The project team engaged the technical agencies which included the Halton Regional Police Services, Halton Region, Halton School Boards, Local municipalities within Halton Region, surrounding Municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Transport Canada, CN Rail, Metrolinx, and MTO. The project team also engaged key Stakeholders which included the BIA, local businesses, aggregate companies, and local and surrounding trucking companies. Two (2) workshops were held in May 2017 and November 2017.

In addition, on February 28, 2019 staff met with Wellington County and the Town of Erin to discuss the proposed recommendations and implementation strategies within the Trucking Strategy Study and the next steps in the process to initiate the Acton By-pass Feasibility Study.

MTO Advocacy and Consultation

For many years, prior to the commencement of the Trucking Strategy Study, the Town has advocated to the MTO to address the traffic congestion and, in particular, trucks in the urban and hamlets communities in Halton Hills within the Connecting Link along Highway 7.

Staff along with our Elected Officials have met and presented to various Ministers and MTO staff on the on-going safety concerns as it relates to truck traffic in our urban and hamlet areas in the community. In addition, numerous letters have been provided advocating for a long term solution to address truck traffic. The Town's 2011 Transportation Master Plan and Halton Region's Transportation Master Plan indicated the need for a by-pass in Acton to address both capacity and truck issues.

Through the development of the Terms of Reference for the Truck Strategy, the Town of Halton Hills requested both participation and financial support from the MTO. At the time it was the MTO's position that staff would participate and comment on the study but would not provide any financial support.

Throughout the duration of the study, MTO staff attended the technical agency workshops and was provided presentation materials.

On January 17, 2019, staff met with the MTO to discuss the proposed recommendations and implementation strategies within the Trucking Strategy Study and the next steps in the process. In particular, the Town staff focused on the implementation of a truck inspection station on Highway 7 and the continual need for an Acton By-pass and the initiation of a feasibility study. Staff requested MTO's participation and financial commitment to initiate the study.

In addition, a letter was sent by the Commissioner of Transportation and Public Works to the Regional Director at the MTO with a final hard copy of the Trucking Strategy Study and further requesting the MTO to consider their role in the next phase of the study as it relates to the Acton By-pass. An electronic copy of the study was provided to MTO staff.

Next Steps

Following Council approval of the Trucking Strategy Study, staff will develop a work plan and necessary budget implications that addresses the list of improvement strategies within the Trucking Strategy Study. It is anticipated that staff will continue working with Halton Regional Police Services on Truck Safety Blitzes.

In addition, staff is requesting that the Mayor send a letter to the Minister of Transportation requesting the initiation of the Acton By-Pass Feasibility Study and partnership with a Truck Inspection Station on Highway 7.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Supports the strategic direction to Provide Sustainable Infrastructure and Services and aligns with the following Strategic Objectives:

H.1 To provide infrastructure and services that meets the needs of our community in an efficient, effective and environmentally sustainable manner.

H.4 To partner with other orders of government, and the private sector, to plan and finance infrastructure expansion and improvements.

Transportation/Mobility was identified as one of the Top 8 priorities within the 2014-2018 Strategic Action Plan. The following Strategic Action was identified:

E. Develop a long-term Truck Movement Strategy for the Town.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The Town's financial portion of the Acton By-pass Feasibility study has been previously approved through the 2018 capital budget; however the study was contingent on the outcomes of the Trucking Strategy Study before moving forward. Staff will continue to advocate and request that the MTO provide the necessary funding towards the cost of this study. The cost to implement truck permissive signing along the designated routes will be funded through the previously approved 2018 capital budget. All other costs to initiate and implement the improvement strategies within the Trucking Strategy Study will be requested through the 2020 capital and operating forecasted budget and considered through Budget Committee.

CONSULTATION:

Throughout the study, extensive consultation took place with Senior Management and the Elected Officials. A Council presentation was provided on May 9, 2017 to advise on the purpose and anticipated outcomes of the trucking strategy. In June 2017, individual interviews by Ward were held with each member of Council to receive input into the study. In November 2017, a presentation was made to Council on a proposed suite of strategies to address trucking concerns.

On March 4, 2019 and March 6, 2019, staff arranged meetings with the Mayor, Ward 1 and Ward 2 Councillors to provide an update on the Trucking Strategy Study. The meeting focused on the implementation of a truck inspection station and the continual need for the Acton By-Pass.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public engagement included the public, local businesses, technical agencies, and key stakeholders.

Staff held four (4) Public Information Centres throughout the duration of the study and two (2) Technical Agency and Stakeholders meetings. Overall, these sessions were well attended.

In addition, the “Let’s Talk Halton Hills” online platform was used to provide a survey to engage residents and receive their input.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life.

The recommendation outlined in this report advances the Strategy’s implementation.

This report supports the Social Well-being pillar of Sustainability and in summary the alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is excellent.

COMMUNICATIONS:

A project webpage and Let’s Talk Halton Hills platform was created for the project and used to provide communication to the public. In addition, an online survey was created and input was received from the public.

All Public Information Centre details were posted on the Town’s webpage and advertised in the local newspapers. Notification of the report and final Trucking Strategy Study to the community will be undertaken via Council agenda and the Town’s website.

A copy of the Council report and final Trucking Strategy Study will be forwarded to the MTO, Halton Region, Town of Milton, Town of Erin, and County of Wellington.

CONCLUSION:

The Trucking Strategy Study supports the economic development and employment opportunities while balancing the needs of the community and improving the quality of life in Halton Hills.

The Trucking Strategy Study developed a series of improvement strategies and recommendations that can be implemented in the short term, medium term, and long term. These improvement strategies focused on the Five (5) E’s: Engagement, Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Evaluation.

Following Council approval of the Trucking Strategy Study, staff will develop a work plan and necessary budget implications that address the list of improvement strategies within the Trucking Strategy Study.

As part of staff's revised work plan for 2019, staff will initiate the implementation of truck permissive signs this year. It is anticipated that it will take approximately 2 years to complete, subject to budget approval.

Reviewed and Approved by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Mills", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chris Mills, Commissioner of Transportation and Public Works

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Marshall", written in a cursive style.

Brent Marshall, Chief Administrative Officer