

Background and Purpose

Over the last several decades Central Ontario has evolved from a Toronto-based employment centre to a large geographic area with many centres of economic activity and concentrations of employment and population. Travel demand is now more dispersed, moving between employment areas and residential nodes within and outside the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Future population and employment growth in major urban centres will result in an increase in inter-regional and inter-nodal travel demand across the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH).

To meet the challenges of future growth in the GGH, the Province released the [Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#) in February 2006. The Growth Plan outlines a set of policies for managing growth and development and guiding planning decisions in the GGH over the next 30 years. A GTA West Corridor is identified in the Growth Plan as part of the policies for infrastructure to support growth.

Prior to the Province's Growth Plan, a number of studies, including MTO's Central Ontario Strategic Transportation Directions (Draft 2002) indicated that MTO should examine the long-term transportation needs to address future growth in the GTA from Highway 400 westerly to the Guelph area. The GTA West Corridor, identified in the Growth Plan as a "Future Transportation Corridor", represents a strategic link between The City of Guelph and the *Urban Growth Centres* in the west of the GTA (e.g. Downtown Milton, Downtown Brampton, Vaughan Corporate Centre).

As the economic activities in the GGH evolve from a Toronto Central Business District (CBD) base to an economy of multiple centres, the Guelph-Kitchener/Waterloo-Cambridge triangle is becoming an important centre in addition to Toronto's CBD. The concentration of population and employment in the Guelph-K/W-Cambridge area introduces new transportation challenges in the western portion of the GGH. This is true not only for the continuing needs of commuter travel due to the proximity to the GTA, but also for the increasing need for goods movement between multiple centres.

It is important that MTO takes a comprehensive and long-term approach in planning for future transportation infrastructures to meet the anticipated challenges. The system planning approach must also reflect the government policy objectives as outlined in the Growth Plan. These policy objectives identify and support a transportation network that links *Urban Growth Centres* through an extensive multi-modal system anchored by efficient public transit, together with highway system for moving people and goods.

This EA Study will support the transportation objectives of the provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe by providing for the efficient movement of people and goods within the corridor.

The purpose of this EA Study is to examine long-term transportation problems and opportunities and consider alternative solutions to provide better linkages to *Urban Growth Centres* within the GTA West Corridor. The Preliminary Study Area for the corridor is shown on [this map](#).