

Information Report



Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Friday, February 12, 2021
Subject	Interregional Transportation Update

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the various projects planned or underway related to interregional transportation to and from the city of Guelph.

Key Findings

The projects summarized in this report and listed below are being undertaken by Guelph's surrounding municipalities or by Provincial agencies. These projects include:

- New Ontario Provincial Highway 7
- Hanlon Expressway Feasibility Study
- Hanlon Expressway South Guelph Grade Separation Project
- New Ontario Provincial Highway 6
- Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO)/Metrolinx Greater Golden Horseshoe 2051 Regional Transportation Plan
- Metrolinx Rail
- Other passenger rail
- Canadian National (CN) Rail switching activities
- County of Wellington transportation update
- Transit connections

City staff are monitoring these projects and are advocating for transportation improvements that align with the City's Strategic Plan, specifically the Navigating our Future goals of improving local transportation and interregional connectivity. As projects move forward, City staff will provide technical information as it relates to Guelph's systems and advocate for improvements that support the Guelph community.

Financial Implications

Existing capital projects are forecasted to support the various projects identified within this report. The capital forecast will continued to be prioritized to align with these projects where appropriate as Guelph continues to focus on being Future Ready.

Report

Details

There are numerous initiatives planned or underway to improve and enhance interregional transportation to and from the city of Guelph. This report highlights significant projects and next steps affecting the City.

City staff is monitoring these projects and are advocating for transportation improvements that align with the City's Strategic Plan, specifically the Navigating our Future goals of improving local transportation and interregional connectivity.

As the City pursues interregional transit projects, staff are working on building and strengthening relationship with partner stakeholders—putting into practice the Working Together for our Future strategic priority. City staff and their counterparts at the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) are currently improving communications processes between agencies in aid of work plan alignment and better informing the Guelph community of transportation-related operations. City staff are both pleased and supportive of the MTO's focus on strategic relationship management with municipalities and a new dedicated resource on their team to facilitate increased collaboration.

New Ontario Provincial Highway 7

The construction of a new 18 kilometre controlled access [Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph](#) has begun with bridge replacement work in Kitchener. In July 2020, the Provincial government provided an update that procurement for construction of the highway could begin in 2021.

Based on existing plans, this new Highway 7 will connect to the Hanlon Expressway with an interchange being constructed at Woodlawn Road, with the northbound/westbound ramps connecting to Silvercreek Parkway. There is also an interchange planned at the new Highway 7 and Wellington Road 86 (Elmira Road North), just north of the city limits.

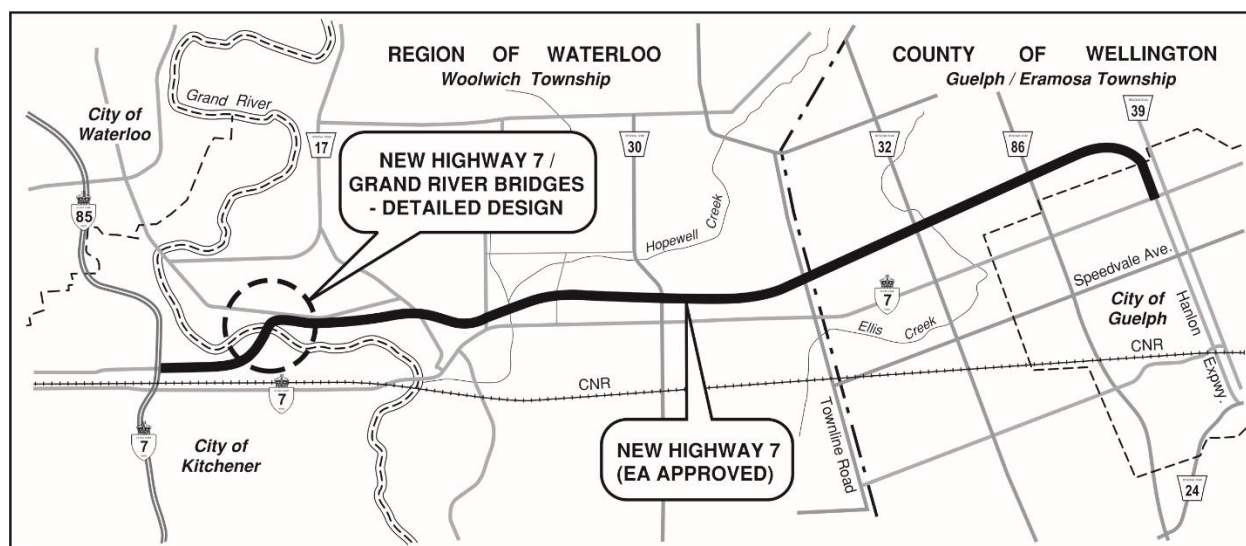


Figure 1 - Map of proposed route of New Ontario Provincial Highway 7

Source: https://newhighway7.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Hwy-7_Kitchener-to-Guelph-key-plan-.jpg

The Province made no commitments or timelines for construction and completion of this project.

Hanlon Expressway Feasibility Study (Woodlawn Road to Wellington Street)

The MTO has retained Stantec Consulting to undertake a feasibility study for the conversion of the Hanlon Expressway to freeway standards between Woodlawn Road and Wellington Street. This portion of the Hanlon Expressway are Provincial Highways 6 and 7. The study is needed to address the new Highway 7 and planned improvements south of Guelph to Highway 6 (future Morriston By-pass and Highway 401 widening). This updates a previous study that was undertaken for this work in 1994.

City of Guelph staff is in consultations with MTO to discuss the scope and preliminary design options of the feasibility study. Consistent with our Strategic Plan, staff continue to advocate for grade separations, interchanges, active transportation facilities and public engagement. As the MTO is at the very early stages of this work, it is anticipated that more information, including a potential MTO-lead public meeting will occur later in 2021 or beyond. Upon completion of the feasibility study, the next stage of the project is to move to detailed design and an Environmental Assessment (EA).

There are no timelines for the EA or construction at this time.

City of Guelph Capital project TF0020 will reconstruct the intersection of Speedvale Avenue at Silvercreek Parkway in 2024 to ensure the City's road network is prepared for the Hanlon detour and future traffic volumes.

Hanlon Expressway South Guelph Grade Separation Project (Speed River to Maltby Road)

The MTO is moving forward with the Preliminary Design Review, Detailed Design and Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for Hanlon Expressway grade separations and interchanges between the Speed River and Maltby Road. The Preliminary Design received EA clearance on November 17, 2009. Staff were contacted by the MTO in February 2020 to discuss integrating the City's activities in the vicinity of the Hanlon Expressway.

Consistent with our Strategic Plan, staff continue to advocate for grade separations, interchanges, active transportation facilities and public engagement.

The MTO has not identified timelines for public meetings or construction at this time.

New Ontario Provincial Highway 6 (Morriston By-pass)

The MTO is in the [design phase](#) of a new Highway 6 project south of the existing Hanlon Expressway/Highway 401 interchange that will by-pass Morriston and connect with the existing Highway 6 near the village of Puslinch. This project is entirely outside of Guelph city limits, however it is anticipated this project will alleviate some north/south traffic volumes on Gordon Street as interregional traffic will use the Hanlon Expressway.

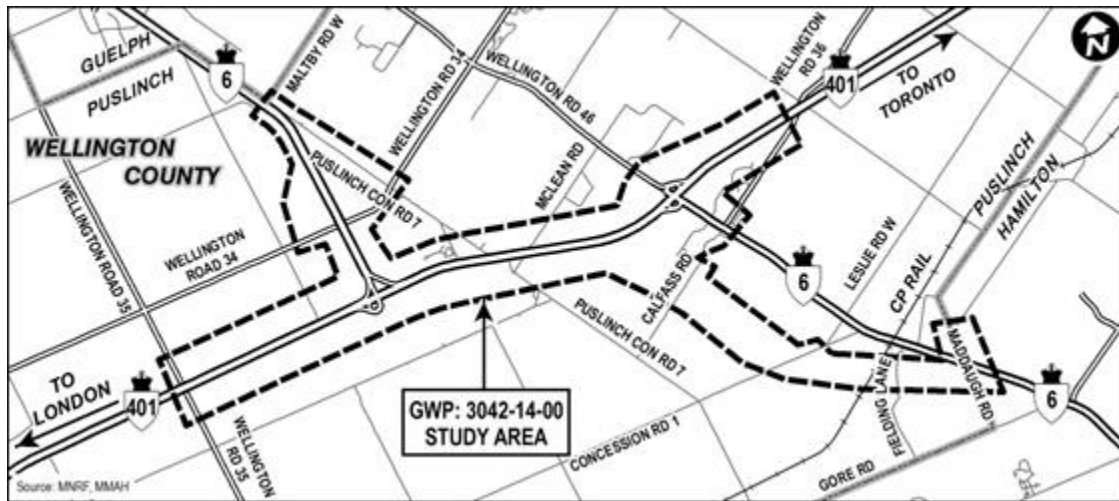


Figure 2 - Study Area of Morriston By-pass

Source: <http://highways6and401hamiltontoguelph.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/home-map2.jpg>

The MTO has not identified timelines for public meetings or construction at this time.

MTO/Metrolinx Greater Golden Horseshoe 2051 Regional Transportation Plan

The MTO and Metrolinx are undertaking a [2051 regional transportation plan](#) that includes provincial highway, road, goods movement and transit initiatives within the Greater Golden Horseshoe, including Guelph and the Region of Waterloo. The City of Guelph is a municipal stakeholder on the Technical Advisory Committee; City staff are providing input and advocating for our community's interregional transportation needs throughout this project, such as two-way all-day GO rail service.

Metrolinx (Go Transit) Rail

Metrolinx continues to upgrade infrastructure along the Guelph Subdivision rail corridor to permit two-way all-day train service. There are numerous infrastructure projects planned for 2021:

- Installation of a second track between Silvercreek Parkway and Guelph Central Station; this will require separate weekend closures of Alma Street, Edinburgh Road, Yorkshire Street and Glasgow Street to complete this work.
- Rehabilitation of the Norfolk Street overpass; this work will require a lane closure of Norfolk Street.
- Rehabilitation of the Wellington Street/Speed River/Arthur Street overpass; this work will require periodic weekend closures of Wellington Street, Macdonell Street and/or Arthur Street in the second half of the year.
- Replacement of the Wilson Street overpass; this work will require the closure of Wilson Street for one weekend.
- Construction of the south platform at Guelph Central Station.

The City is undertaking a study of all level crossings (Alma Street, Edinburgh Road, Yorkshire Street, Glasgow Street and Watson Road) along the Metrolinx corridor to determine what infrastructure improvements are required to adhere with Transport Canada's "Grade Crossing" and "Grade Separation Assessment Guidelines". This work

will include extensive public engagement and consideration of pedestrian and cycling connections. The study is in the consultant procurement stage and is anticipated to begin in Q1 or Q2 2021.

Metrolinx began a planning assessment (TPAP) for electrifying the rail line between Kitchener and Georgetown in 2019. On January 21, 2021 Metrolinx announced they will definitively not be using Margaret Greene Park to locate a power substation and have paused their TPAP project at this time.

The City continuously updates the status of all Metrolinx projects on our [webpage](#).

Other passenger rail

The Region of Waterloo begun work on the feasibility of passenger rail service between Cambridge and Guelph Central Station. Guelph Transportation staff is included as a stakeholder on this project. It is expected that this report will be finalized in 2021 and will be shared with Council when available.

In VIA Rail's 2020-2024 [Corporate Plan](#) it is noted VIA plans to explore "expanding services in Southwestern Ontario, with particular emphases on the Toronto-Kitchener, Toronto-London markets, as well as to explore furthering its partnership with Metrolinx" (page 6).

CN switching operations

Guelph City Council passed this motion at their meeting of July 20, 2020:

"That Council recognizes the importance of Community Road Safety Strategies and requests CN to take immediate action within their control to mitigate and or stop all shunting delays over allowable and/or reasonable limits experienced within the City of Guelph, and that staff report back to Council and the Public as soon as possible with information and expected timelines. And that, this motion be sent to MP Longfield."

City and CN staff is discussing options to reduce the impact on Guelph's road network. CN is constrained to switch cars in both Kitchener and Guelph because the mainline tracks are owned by Metrolinx and CN doesn't control the times they are allowed onto Metrolinx tracks for their operations.

There are limited immediate options CN can implement to reduce the frequency of their switching. Other longer-term options are in the early stages of being explored, but improvements may take years to complete at a significant expense.

Council will continue to be updated on progress between CN and the City on this matter.

County of Wellington transportation plan

The County of Wellington recently initiated its Wellington Road Action Master Plan update. The primary purpose of the plan is to identify the long-term County road network required to support population and employment growth. The plan also intends to identify opportunities to better connect to neighboring municipalities and the broader region through an integrated transportation planning approach. The City of Guelph will be a stakeholder for this work and will provide technical input aligned with the Strategic Plan.

Other Interregional Transit

The City of Guelph will be issuing a Request for Proposal for a Transit Signal Priority feasibility study in Q1 2021. Although primarily focused on Guelph Transit, Metrolinx and other intercity transit agencies will be included as stakeholders in this study.

Guelph Transit identified as part of the 2021-2030 Capital Budget submission possible future route expansions to the Region of Waterloo (Fairview Park Mall and Downtown Kitchener) and Aberfoyle GO station, beginning in 2023.

The City of Guelph continues to monitor the ongoing [Ride Well interregional transit pilot project](#) of Wellington County, which provides on-demand transit between Wellington County and Guelph. The five-year pilot project is now in its second year.

Financial Implications

There are existing capital projects forecasted to support the various projects identified within this report. The capital forecast will continued to be prioritized to align with these projects where appropriate as Guelph continues to focus on being Future Ready.

Consultations

Jennifer Juste, Manager, Transportation Planning

Strategic Plan Alignment

This work supports the City's Navigating our Future Strategic Plan pillar by improving transportation connectivity and safety within city limits, while also advocating for better regional connectivity with public transit and rail service.

Attachments

None

Departmental Approval

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