

Milton to Vaughan highway under consideration

By Tim Foran

CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

A new four-lane highway running from Hwy. 401 in Milton to Hwy. 400 north of Vaughan, cutting through Halton Hills and Peel Region, is one alternative being considered to handle future congestion in the northwest GTA.

There are two starting spots in Milton for the new transportation corridor, according to a report released as part of the Province's GTA West Planning and Environmental Assessment Study.

The first Milton option is to start the road west of Regional Road 25 where a realigned Tremaine Road interchange is already planned, said Milton Regional Councillor Colin Best, one of Halton's representatives on an inter-municipal task force reviewing the Province's plans for the GTA West transportation corridor.

A second option is to begin the new road at the Hwy. 401 and Hwy. 407 junction east of Trafalgar Road at the border of Peel and Halton regions.

If starting from Tremaine, the road would snake northeast, bypassing Georgetown to the south and skirting northwest Brampton before connecting with Hwy. 410 and Hwy. 427 and terminating at Hwy. 400 north of Maple, according to a rough map of the route included in the Provincial report.

Best said he doesn't support this option.

"One, it takes up a lot of industrial land that we need," he said. "And two, it goes through a lot of farmland that is very productive through the Milton and Halton Hills corridor."

He said he has less of a problem if the road starts near Hwy. 401 and Hwy. 407 and runs north of Brampton before turning east

toward Hwy. 400.

"As long as it's on the Brampton side (of the border with Halton Hills — Winston Churchill Boulevard)," Best clarified.

Much of Halton Hills north of Hwy. 401 has been designated for future employment areas and the Region is concerned about losing them to a Provincial road.

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette, who sits on the task force with Best, declined to comment on any specific route, stating in an email it was premature to do so since the Province is still evaluating alternatives.

However, he noted his town's council has endorsed a Halton-Peel study that proposed a freeway from Mayfield Road in Brampton to the Highway 401/407 interchange along with a number of other infrastructure improvements including a Norval bypass as part of a system to manage future traffic along the regional boundary.

The Province's Ministry of Transportation, which began the

GTA West study in 2007, is considering three other possible routes for the new transportation corridor.

One would see a short corridor connecting Hwy. 410 to Hwy. 400, alleviating pressure on Hwy. 401 to the south. The second would run from Guelph to Hwy. 400 via north Halton and Peel region. The last is a similar route but beginning south of Guelph at Puslinch on Hwy. 6.

Despite the latter two having to cross the Niagara Escarpment and the Provincial Greenbelt, Best said he favours one of those options. Such a route would take some commuters from west of Milton off Hwy. 401, he said. It would also provide an alternative to Hwy. 7, allowing a bypass around Acton and Georgetown.

The various routes will be measured for their impacts on the community, economy, environment and transportation.

The transportation corridor could be a highway, transitway, or

dedicated truckway, or a combination of the three, according to the Provincial report.

Whatever its ultimate configuration, the new corridor would only be a complement to transit initiatives and widening of existing 400 series highways, including Hwy. 401 from Milton/Halton Hills to Mississauga, the report notes.

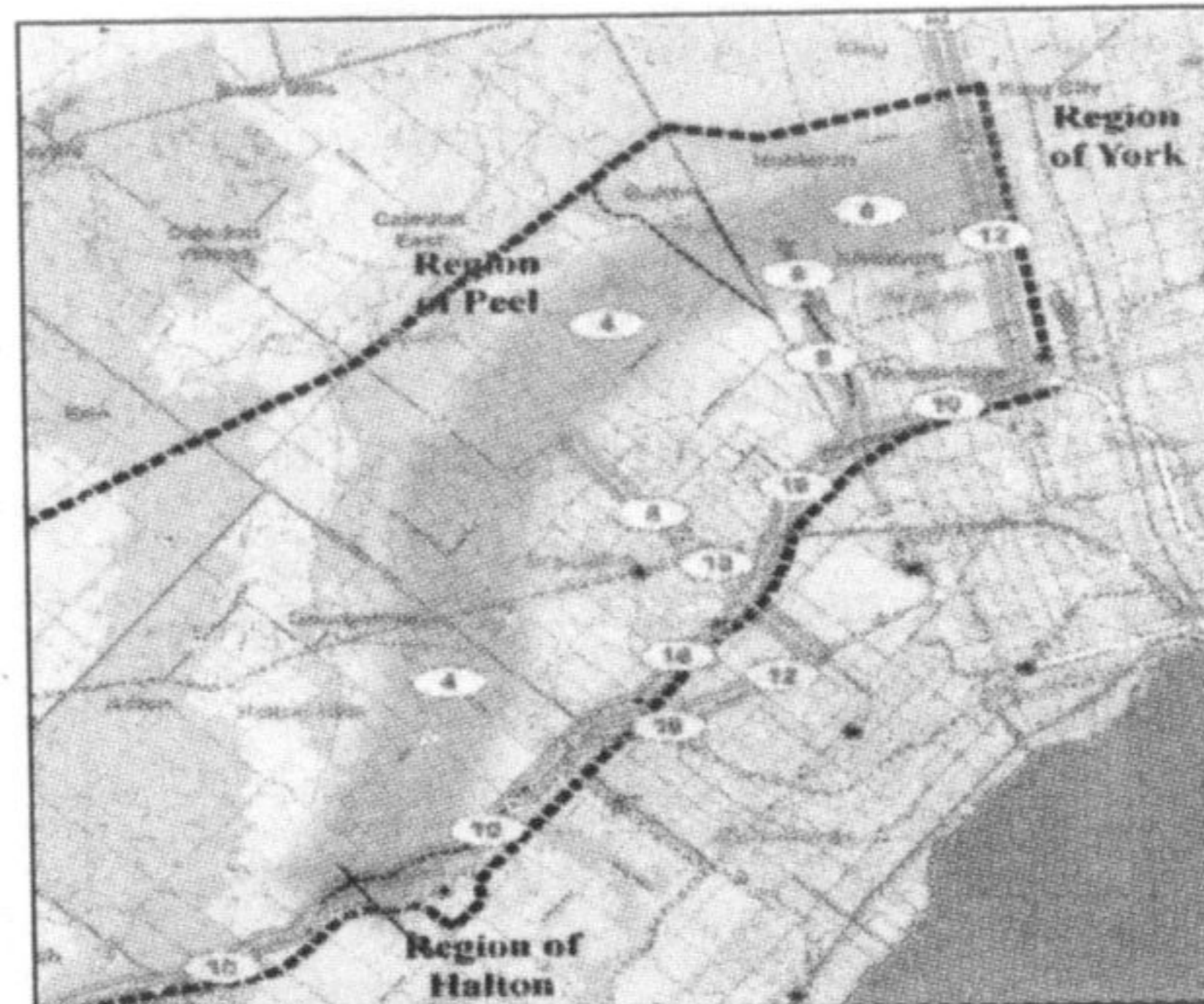
Indeed, it's possible the new corridor might never be built. The alternative is for the Province to widen existing arterial roads between Guelph and York region, including highways 24 and 7 and Trafalgar and Mayfield roads.

The ministry will release its decision on whether it wants to go ahead with the new corridor at a series of open houses later this month.

The only one in Halton will take place in Georgetown Wednesday, June 16 at the Mold-Master Sportsplex, Ice Pad A, located at 221 Guelph St. The drop-in session will run from 4 to 8 p.m. with brief overview presentations at 5 and 7 p.m.

The information that will be presented at the open houses will be available online Monday at www.gta-west.com.

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