



Staff Report

Administration

Report To: Committee of The Whole
Meeting Date: October 23, 2017
Report Number: FAF.17.133
Subject: Ministry of Transportation Delegation Request
Prepared by: Shawn Everitt, Acting CAO

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report FAF.17.133, entitled “Ministry of Transportation Delegation Request”;

AND THAT Council direct staff to request a delegation with the Minister of Transportation at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference to discuss advancing the Highway 26 Corridor Environmental Assessment;

AND THAT Council direct staff to request a delegation with the Minister of Transportation at the Ontario Good Roads Association Conference to discuss advancing the Highway 26 Corridor Environmental Assessment.

B. Overview

This report will direct staff to make a formal request to meet with the Minister of Transportation at the upcoming Rural Ontario Municipal Association and Ontario Good Roads Association Conferences to advocate that the Ministry of Transportation immediately advance the Environmental Assessment for the future configuration of the Highway 26 Corridor through the Town.

C. Background

Annually the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (RMOA) and Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) provide opportunities for municipalities to raise concerns and issues within their communities directly with provincial ministers or their representatives.

In recent years, the Town has requested the following delegations:

2014 – Highway 26 within The Town of The Blue Mountains

Use of Roundabouts as Gateway Features and Traffic Calming Measures

2015 – Clarksburg Servicing*

33rd Sideroad Construction Project*

2016 – No Delegation Request

*Delegation request accepted

The Town has recently received an invitation from ROMA to request delegations at their January 21 – 23, 2018 conference with a deadline for submission of Thursday November 2, 2017. The OGRA conference will take place February 25 – 28, 2018 with a submission deadline of Monday January 15, 2018.

D. Analysis

Many concerns have been raised by the public regarding the future configuration of the Highway 26 corridor through Craigleith and along the shoreline to Thornbury in reaction to the findings of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO)'s Highway 26 Transportation Study – Georgian Triangle Area – Needs Assessment Report, May 2015 (revised Oct 2015). Of most concern was the recommendation that the portion of Highway 26 between Craigleith and Thornbury be widened to 4 or 5 lanes. Figure ES-8 from the Needs Assessment Report is provided below. The Town requested and was granted the inclusion of Grey Road 19 and Grey Road 2 as a potential alternate route in the final report.

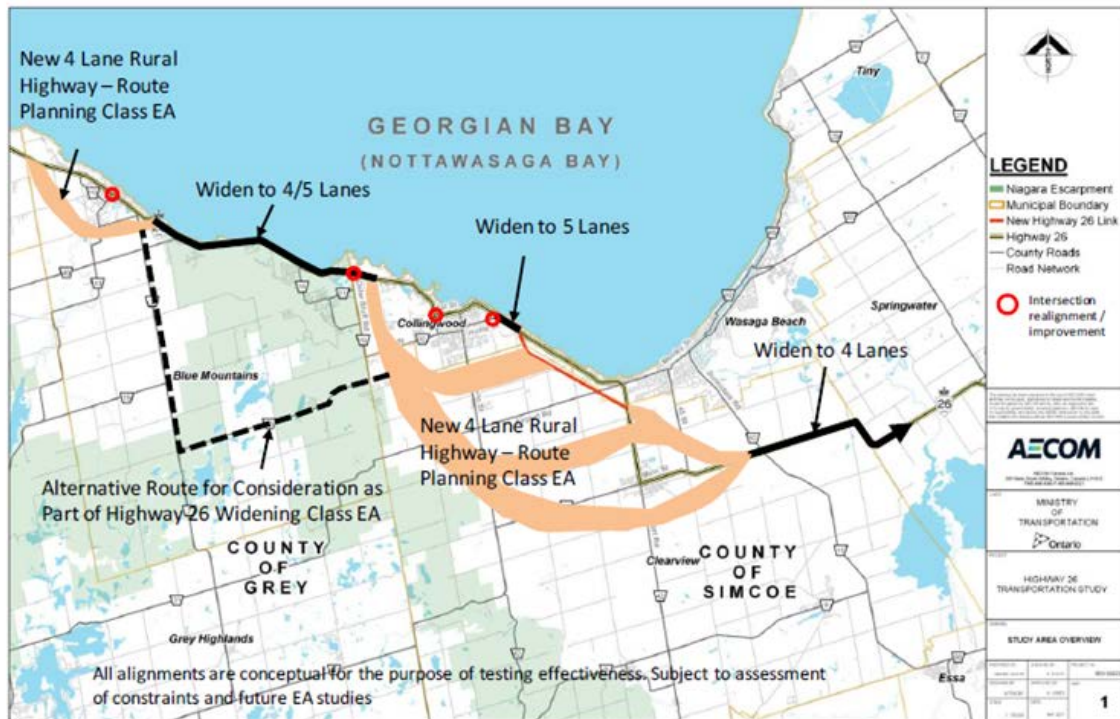
Until the MTO completes the Environmental Assessments (EA's) to define the land requirements and works required, the future of this portion of Highway 26 will remain unresolved. Therefore, it is important that the MTO advance the initiation of an EA to study the options and potential improvements. There are no immediate plans to undertake the EA. Staff currently understand the EA to be potentially 10 – 15 years away. In the meantime, MTO corridor management staff are acting on the findings of the Needs Assessment to sterilize lands by requesting additional building setbacks to enable the future construction of a widened road platform.

The MTO in partnership with the County of Grey and the Town have recently completed two Municipal Class EA's on Highway 26 – namely at the Grey Road 2 and the Grey Road 40 Intersection Areas. A third EA partnership is still underway in the Craigleith Area. These EA's however are not studying the long range future of Highway 26 but instead are considering improvements over the next 10 – 20 year time frame to support growth. An overall EA for the Highway 26 corridor will have a 20+ year timeframe from now and may extend outside of Town limits.

The potential of the Highway 26 Corridor developed as a four or five lane highway is a significant concern for the affected community and the Town as a whole. It is anticipated that a significant number of homes will be removed or drastically affected. The Georgian Trail lands will be also be threatened.

Staff recommend that it is timely and necessary to request the delegation with the Minister of Transportation to express the importance of completing a fulsome Highway 26 Corridor Environmental Assessment that provides the future strategic direction of how Highway 26 will function.

Figure ES-8: Recommended Roadway Improvements and New Corridors



E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational and Operational Excellence

F. Environmental Impacts

None

G. Financial Impact

Funds may be expended to prepare a quality delegation submission to the MTO.

H. In consultation with

Reg Russwurm, Director of Infrastructure and Public Works

I. Attached

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawn Everitt
Acting CAO

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