

An Example of a Collaborative Multi-Stakeholder Approach To Transportation Master Planning - The Development of the Halton Region Transportation Master Plan (2031) – The Road to Change

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ABSTRACT

In recognition of the multi-jurisdictional nature of the transportation system serving Halton Region, the development of the Halton Region Transportation Master Plan (2031) - *The Road to Change*, was guided by a multi-discipline team from the Region and its Local Municipalities – the “Municipal Advisory Group” (MAG). In addition to the MAG, a “Technical Agencies Committee” (TAC) was established comprising members of the MAG, staff from adjacent municipalities and key stakeholder ministries and agencies. Further to the Municipal Advisory Group and the Technical Agencies Committee, an extensive consultation program involving well over 30 technical meetings which included multiple public information centres, and a public workshop comprised the development of this strategic long range transportation planning document. The technical analysis of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) was presented frequently to the MAG and TAC and the buy-in of these stakeholders was always sought before moving to the next phase of the study. Stakeholders had input at all milestones of the process.

Regional Council accepted the TMP on October 5, 2011. The success of the plan involved the implementation of many projects and services that are outside of the jurisdiction of Halton Region. To reach the objectives set out in the Region’s Official Plan and subsequently supported in the TMP, the Region, its Local Municipalities, the Ministry of Transportation – Ontario, Ministry of the Environment and Metrolinx will need to continue the dialogue established in the TMP study to jointly coordinate and implement the required transportation “system” to serve Halton Region to 2031.

The collaborative effort pursued in the development of *The Road to Change* broke down many of the jurisdictional barriers often encountered in strategic transportation planning exercises. A coordinated and unanimous buy-in to the plan was required and achieved, in part, as a result of the consultation program defined for this study.

INTRODUCTION

The Halton Region Transportation Master Plan (2031) – *The Road to Change* defines a sustainable, integrated transportation system that considers all modes of travel (automobiles, transit, cycling, walking) and supports the policies and objectives arising out of the Halton Region Official Plan Review to the year 2031 (ROPA 38).

The transportation system serving Halton Region is complex, comprising a network of infrastructure and services planned, constructed, operated, and maintained by Provincial, Regional and local municipal agencies. All elements of the system are interconnected and play a role in the provision of transportation services to the residents and businesses in Halton.

Halton Region

Halton Region is located at the western edge of the Greater Toronto Area, encompassing a land area of approximately 967 square kilometres with a 25 kilometre frontage along Lake Ontario. The Region comprises four municipalities that vary in size, population, and character: the City of Burlington, the Town of Oakville, the Town of Halton Hills and the Town of Milton. The current population of the Region is approximately 492,000 with employment of 262,000. The majority of the population resides within Oakville and Burlington, although growth within the period to 2031 will occur primarily in Milton and North Oakville.



THE CHALLENGE TO DEVELOPING *THE ROAD TO CHANGE*

The transportation system serving Halton Region comprises infrastructure and services provided by the Province, the Region, the local area municipalities and neighbouring local and regional municipalities, as presented in Table 1 and Figure 1. The development of an efficient and sustainable transportation system is dependent on the effective integration of all transportation infrastructure and services provided within Halton Region.

It was understood the success of the “Regional” plan depended on the realization of provincial projects and programs (freeway improvements as well as transit improvements) and enhancements to local municipality service provisions through transit service and active transportation.

Table 1 – Transportation Service Providers in Halton Region

Service Jurisdiction	Freeways and Highways	Roadways	Transit	Active Transportation
Halton Region		Major Arterials (1)	(3)	On-street
City of Burlington		√ (2)	√	√
Town of Halton Hills		√ (2)		√
Town of Milton		√ (2)	√	√
Town of Oakville		√ (2)	√	√
Ministry of Transportation – Ontario	√			
Metrolinx / GO Transit			Commuter	
Adjacent Municipalities			Mississauga Transit Hamilton Street Railway	

(1) Urban and rural major arterial roadways

(2) Urban and rural minor arterial, multi-purpose arterial, collector and local roadways

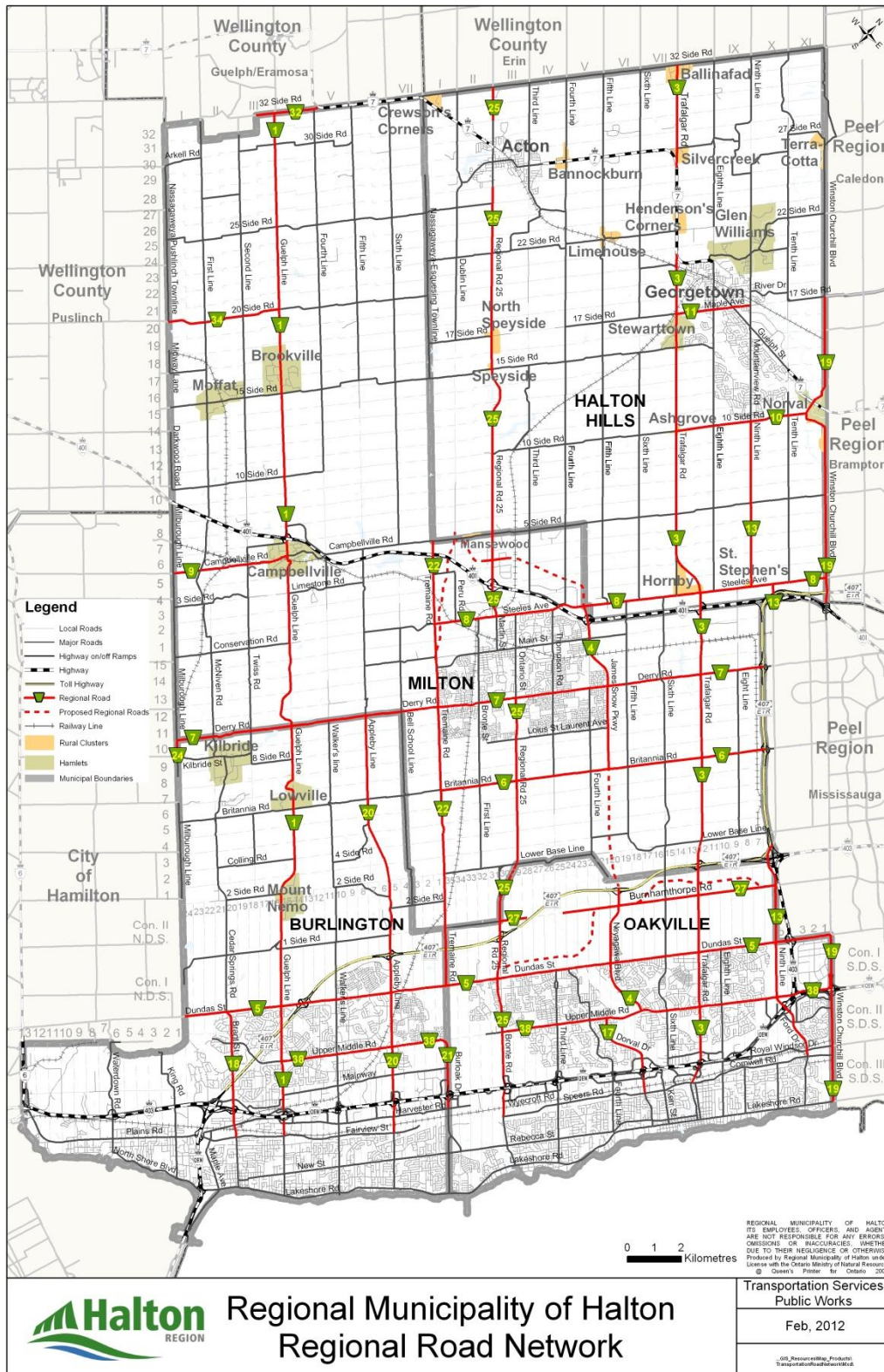
(3) Halton Region provides infrastructure on Regional roadways for transit services (i.e. transit signal priority, exclusive bus lanes)

A coordinated approach to transportation planning was, therefore, required and full buy-in from all of these transportation service providers was essential.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The Region, as a matter of course, always involves stakeholders in its projects through a comprehensive consultation program. In this particular project, however, the involvement of certain stakeholders such as internal departments and the local municipalities was more in-depth given the jurisdiction of transportation service providers and the role their individual service would play in the development of a region-wide strategic transportation master plan.

Figure 1 – Halton Region Road Network



Municipal Advisory Group

In recognition of the multi-jurisdictional nature of the transportation system serving Halton Region, The Road to Change was guided by a multi-discipline team from the Region and the Local Municipalities of Oakville, Burlington, Milton and Halton Hills.

A “Municipal Advisory Group” (MAG) established at the outset of the study served as the project steering committee and guided the study team in the development of the TMP.

The MAG included:

- Halton Region staff from Public Works, Legislative & Planning Services, Health, and Corporate Services Departments;
- City of Burlington staff from Engineering, Transportation Services, Burlington Transit, Roads and Parks Maintenance, and Planning and Building Departments;
- Town of Milton staff from Engineering Services, Planning and Development Services, and Community Services Departments;
- Town of Oakville staff from the Infrastructure and Transportation Services Commission, Engineering and Construction, Development Engineering, Planning Services, Parks and Open Space and Oakville Transit Departments; and
- Town of Halton Hills staff from Infrastructure Services, Planning, Development and Sustainability Departments.

Commencing in January 2010 the MAG met a total of eight (8) times to review project information and work in progress, and provide feedback and information. The MAG committee members also reviewed feedback obtained through public consultation (two sets of public meetings were held in each of the local municipalities) to ensure public concerns, issues and ideas were appropriately considered in the development of the TMP.

Local Municipality Workshops

In addition to the MAG meetings, special working sessions were held with the Local Municipalities at two key decision points in the study process. The first set of meetings were held in June 2010, when the study team met one-on-one with each Local Municipality to discuss potential solutions to provide additional capacity identified through the technical analysis. The second meeting was held in October, 2010 to discuss enhanced transit opportunities within the Regional and local road networks.

Technical Agencies Committee

A “Technical Agencies Committee” (TAC) was established comprising members of the MAG, staff from adjacent municipalities and key stakeholder ministries and agencies. The TAC met three times at key study milestones to discuss the study principles, the consultation program, alternative solutions (the evaluation framework) and the draft preferred solution to the 2031 Regional Transportation System.

MANDATORY MEETINGS

The development of *The Road to Change* adhered to the planning and design process of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) (October 2000, as amended in 2007) and incorporated key principles of successful environmental planning under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. This process requires a mandatory two meetings with the public during specific milestones of the study process.

Public Information and Consultation Sessions

Two rounds of Public Information Centres (PICs) were held to provide information to the public, gather feedback, and respond to questions. Each round of PICs comprised a series of meetings held in each of the four local municipalities.

At this stage, the Region had satisfied the minimum consultation requirements. However, numerous additional meetings and presentations were held above and beyond the minimum requirements, to ensure a successful master plan.

DISCRETIONARY MEETINGS

A number of additional consultation sessions were held with numerous stakeholders as briefly described below.

Public Workshop

In addition, to the mandatory meetings, a Public Workshop was held following PIC 1 to provide a more detailed and interactive forum to obtain feedback on the concepts and alternatives being considered through the development of the TMP.

Regional Council Workshop

A special meeting of the Planning and Public Works (PPW) Committee was held early on in the study process to receive input from Committee members on their vision for the Region's transportation system to 2031. This was an interactive workshop style meeting where Committee members as well as other members of Regional Council were able to discuss technical issues and suggest direction for the study.

Meeting with Ministry of Transportation - Ontario

The TMP analysis concluded the need for new roadway capacity under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation – Ontario (MTO). Consultation with the MTO took place in various forms including the TAC meetings, individual meetings and through their review of the TMP final document.

Meeting with Conservation Authorities

Conservation Halton and the Niagara Escarpment Commission manage environmentally sensitive lands as designated in the Regional and Provincial policy documents and legislation. There are numerous sensitive areas in the Region. Meetings were held with each of Conservation Halton and the Niagara Escarpment Commission to present preliminary recommendations and discuss specific items of interest and concern.

Regional Cycling Advisory Committee

Regional Council approved the creation of the Halton Regional Cycling Advisory Committee from a recommendation of the Region's 2004 Transportation Master Plan. The goal of the Halton Regional Cycling Advisory Committee was to promote cycling in the Region as a healthy, safe and environmentally friendly activity through educational, encouragement and engineering initiatives.

As the advisory group on cycling, the study team consulted with this Committee with an emphasis on the active transportation component of the study.

The importance of Active Transportation to *The Road to Change* was recognised by Regional Council by dissolving the Regional Cycling Advisory Committee and establishing a new Halton Active Transportation Advisory Committee. The purpose of this Committee is to advise and assist the Region in the development of policies and plans for an integrated active transportation system within Halton Region, accommodating self-propelled modes of travel such as cycling, walking, in line skating and skateboarding.

The Committee's key objective in 2012 is the undertaking of a region-wide Active Transportation Master Plan, as recommend by *The Road to Change*.

Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs)

Consultation with the area CAOs was made on a number of occasions to test the direction of the TMP at key stages in the context of Local Municipal Council perspective and receive feedback on specific issues from a local municipality point of view. These meetings proved critical to the endorsement of *The Road to Change* at the Local Municipal Council level as issues or concerns were identified well in advance and such matters addressed prior to presenting the final master plan to Local Municipal Councils.

Local Municipal Council Presentations

One of the final steps of the study was to present the master plan to each of the Local Municipal Councils prior to introducing the plan to Regional Council for approval. This approach ensured a "bottom up" endorsement of the overall plan and helped Regional Council with its deliberation of the final strategy.

On-going Correspondence

During the course of the study, correspondence was exchanged with agencies, residents and representatives of the development community.

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

When all of these key consultation sessions are presented in the context of the technical activities undertaken in the development of the TMP, it is clear the development took into account many differing interests and points of view throughout the study process and successfully consolidated these into *The Road to Change*. Figure 2 illustrates the chronology of the TMP technical activities and the level of consultation undertaken throughout the study. Not included in this figure are the numerous internal meetings held among the study team and the project management team to brainstorm and consolidate the input and desires expressed through the consultation process.

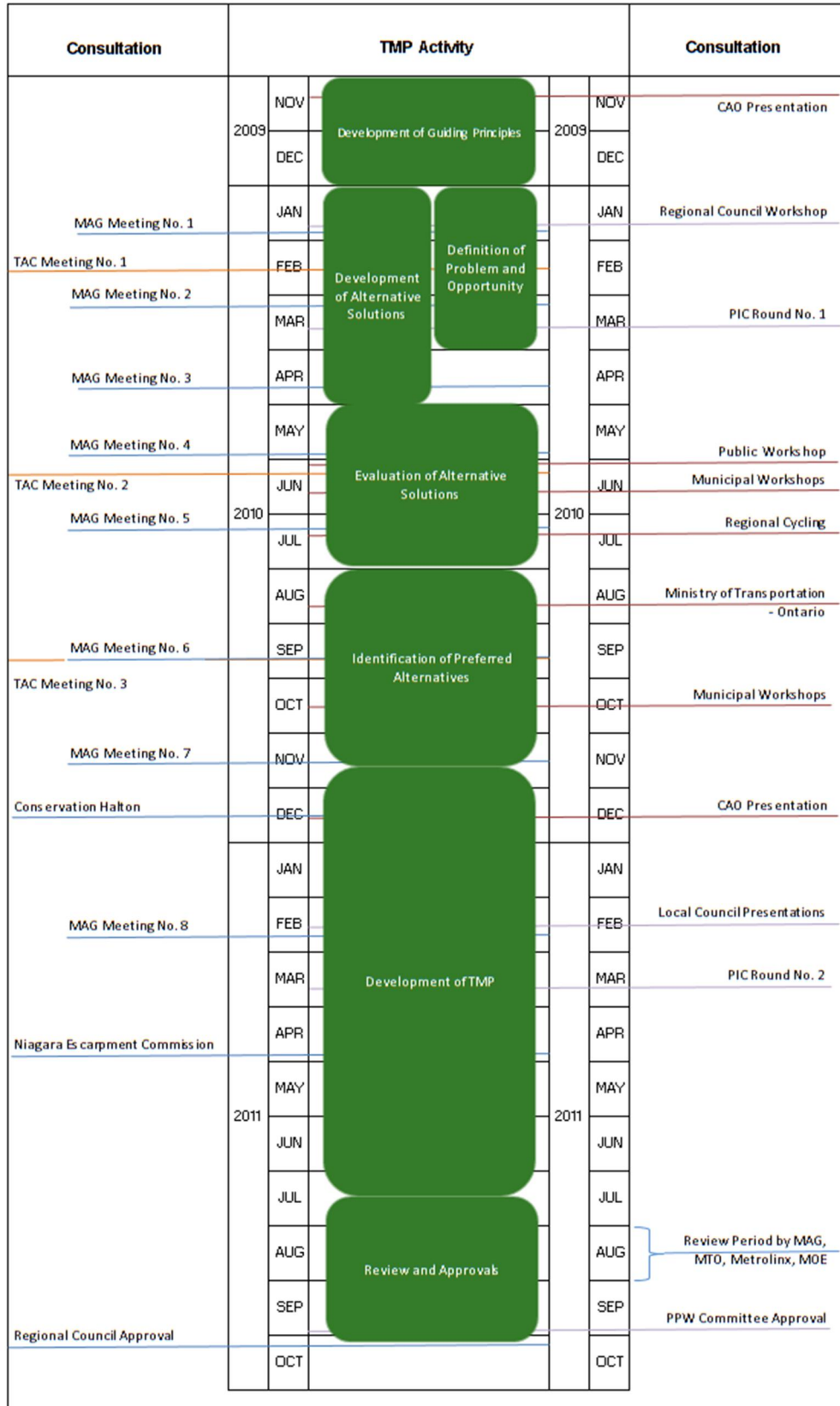
THE NUMBERS

The objective of the TMP was to develop a sustainable and integrated plan that considers all modes of travel to accommodate growth in the Region to the year 2031, as established through Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 38.

As presented in the introduction, transportation services in Halton Region are provided by various jurisdictions and levels of government. Without a coordinated approach to the development of the TMP through a multi-stakeholder consultation process the plan's success would be in question. The reason is simple. The plan called for transportation capacity improvements at all jurisdiction levels and service types:

- Regional Roadway improvements between 2021 and 2031 are estimated at \$1.13 Billion
- Local Municipality transit service must improve to shift the current region-wide average peak period transit mode split from 5% to approximately 20%.
- The Region and Local Municipalities need to expand their Active Transportation infrastructure to accommodate a 5% mode split
- The Region and Local Municipalities need to expand their TDM initiatives to accommodate a 3% mode split
- The Ministry of Transportation - Ontario is expected to make major freeway capacity improvements throughout Halton Region including new freeway to freeway interchange ramps, new freeway corridors and widening of existing facilities
- Metrolinx, through the "Big Move" has plans for major service improvements in Halton through improved headways, service hours and new technology. This is a major contributor to the Region's target transit mode split of 20% by 2031
- The above present the anticipated needs for a 2031 forecasted growth in Halton Region of approximately double the current jobs and population.

Figure 2 – Study Process and Consultation Milestones



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Aspects of the implementation of the Region's TMP rely on other jurisdictions. The collaborative implementation of transportation capacity improvement via transit, active transportation or additional roadway capacity for automobile travel is required to support growth in the Region to 2031.

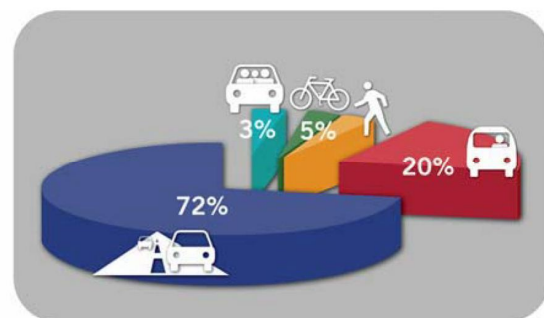
If people are part of a process, it provides sense of ownership and purpose. Great ideas were provided throughout the consultation process by technical and non-technical participants.

There is no question the “above average” level of stakeholder participation in the development of *The Road to Change* made the approval process for Council – both at the Regional level as well as the Local Municipality level, much easier as council members and staff from all jurisdictions had all been part of the plan development either throughout the study or at key stages of the study. This familiarisation of the study development, the issues and how these were incorporated or addressed in the master plan, assisted decision makers in the final approval process.

At this stage, *The Road to Change* has been approved by Halton Region Council and endorsed by the Local Municipalities as well as received by Metrolinx and the Ministry of the Environment.

As the Region moves into the next stages of project development, it will continue its multi-stakeholder approach in dialogue with all jurisdictions to continue this coordinated effort and ensure the appropriate sustainable transportation system is in place to support regional growth objectives to 2031.

- Active Transportation (cycling, walking)
- Travel Demand Management (carpooling)
- Transit
- Road Network Improvements



Halton Region 2031 Target Mode Splits

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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REFERENCES

- Halton Region Transportation Master Plan (2031) – The Road to Change, September 2011 (www.halton.ca/htmp)
- Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) (October 2000, as amended in 2007)

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