

## Hamilton Chamber of Commerce Mid Penn Trade (Niagara-to-GTA) Corridor

### Issue:

The need to move ahead with the Mid-Peninsula Trade (“Niagara to GTA”) Corridor, which includes an essential highway component, is critical and urgent in order to meet the evolving needs of residents, industry, tourism, transportation, and governments.

### Background:

Background:

The Mid Peninsula Trade (or Transportation) Corridor (MPC) (now referred to provincially as the “Niagara to GTA Corridor”) is, in part, a proposed new Provincial highway. As the MTO has repeatedly stressed that all options are being studied, the principal goal of the proposed project is the development of an effective trade and transportation corridor between the border crossings on the Niagara Frontier, South-western Ontario, the GTA, and a vital link with the proposed “Continental One” Highway in the USA.

Although the Chamber generally supports due process, including the MTO’s EA process, it is the Chamber’s position that a Highway is the focus of any infrastructure expansion, and that is urgently needed. Thus, the Ministry should as much as is possible expedite the EA process where possible, as it has recently done for Public Transit.

Further, the Wilbur Smith Associates report conducted an independent study titled “Niagara to GTA Corridor: Opening New Economic Opportunities (June 2007).” The Niagara Economic Development Corporation, Niagara Region, and the City of Hamilton commissioned it. This Wilbur Smith study looked exclusively at the economic opportunities of a new highway in the NGTA Corridor study area and concluded (in part) that:

- Global and domestic trends include a shifting focus of freight transportation needs;
- There will be an increase in demand for package, air freight, and customer-direct truck services
- There will be an emphasis on reliability and predictability of transportation services
- That economic development will be dependent on high quality, multimodal transportation services
- That all industries require a multi-modal transportation system
- And that the Niagara to GTA Corridor would not only address capacity deficiencies but would also complete a multi-modal system for port, airport, and US border crossings including connections from east to west as well as to the north

\*\* The full PowerPoint presentation can be viewed at:

<http://www.niagaracanada.com/documents/egs/pauladowell.pdf>

Lastly, as most the most pressing need for this project in Southwestern Ontario and the Niagara/Hamilton Region, and whereas frankly most of the opposition to the project is focused in the Halton area, i.e. between Hamilton and the GTA; we are of the opinion that similar to the Lincoln Alexander Expressway and Red Hill Creek Parkway in Hamilton, the project be studied and completed in two stages; the first being the Niagara Frontier to Hamilton and then the Halton to GTA sections.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce recommends, that the Provincial Government:

1. Expedite the EA process for this project to ensure that Construction can commence in 2010, or earlier. 2. Acknowledge that the revised ToR recognizes the greater urgency that exists in the Niagara-Hamilton areas for immediate transportation capacity relief in keeping with long-term strategic plans for this area; i.e. Construct the Mid Peninsula Trade ("Niagara to GTA") Corridor project in two stages, after the EA process has been complete: build the Niagara-Frontier to Hamilton area portion first, before proceeding with the Hamilton to GTA portion.

3. Consider other Alternatives to the Undertaking, the operation of a commercial vehicle-only lane(s) (trucks, delivery vehicles, and buses) along a new mid peninsula corridor.

4. Consider the Public Health impact of both operating a new Mid Peninsula Trade Corridor, but also the impact of not operating such a corridor.

5. Broaden the study area to include viable connections from the Niagara-Hamilton highway to the Brantford, Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Cambridge areas.

6. Rely on accepted scientific principals of urban transportation planning and Human Factors science rather than the "reasoned argument method."

7. Implement a stakeholder identification and accreditation process that includes resident and non-resident stakeholders in the consultation process and assigns appropriate weight to stakeholder input.

8. Implement the Wilbur Smith report recommendations generally as above; but especially:

- The development of a market vision for the study area that engages civic leadership, policymakers, and planners to ensure that the wider community is equipped to take advantage of the opportunities that the corridor presents

- Encourage all regional leadership structures including all levels of government, business leaders, and economic and social institutions to become champions to ensure the success of the corridor project.

- Encourage the business community to establish effective alliances and collaborate to give voice to the needs of transportation employers and service providers.