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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The existing 407 Transportation Corridor originates at the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) in Burlington and terminates at Brock Road in Pickering. In 2002, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) initiated a Provincial EA Study that, if approved, would see the 407 corridor extended from Brock Road to Highway 35/115 in Clarington, including two north-south links connecting Highway 401 to the proposed extension of the transportation corridor, one in West Durham (Whitby) and the other in East Durham (Clarington).

The need for an east-west transportation corridor, north of Toronto and connecting to Highway 35/115 in the Municipality of Clarington was initially considered in the 1950's and 1960's. Since the consideration of extending the corridor was first made, planning decisions related to land use and transportation in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) have included the extension of the 407 corridor.

Various planning studies were previously undertaken to determine the location of particular 'stretches' of the 407 corridor as it exists today. The portion of the 407 corridor between the QEW and Highway 5 was originally planned and approved as part of the Highway 403 corridor in the 1960's. A further section of the corridor was then planned to extend the 407 from Highway 5 to Highway 48/Markham Road in Markham and was approved as part of the Parkway Belt West Plan in 1978. The extension of the 407 from Highway 48/Markham Road to Highway 35/115 was again reviewed and presented in a 1989 Highway 407 Overview Study.

Subsequent to the Highway 407 Overview Study, MTO initiated route planning studies to extend the 407 corridor east of Highway 48 as two separate studies, each approximately 30 kilometres in length:

- From Highway 48 / Markham Road in Markham to the Whitby / Oshawa boundary; and
- From the Whitby / Oshawa boundary to the junction of Highways 35 and 115 in Clarington.

Route planning studies for two connecting highway links were initiated in 1990 to identify corridors to connect the proposed 407 corridor with Highway 401. Separate studies were initiated for a connection in the Pickering / Ajax and Whitby areas and for a connection in the Oshawa / Clarington area.

All the route planning / environmental assessment (EA) studies carried out in the early 1990's were designed and conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Provincial *Environmental Assessment Act* as they applied at that time. When these projects were initiated, the Canadian *Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) had not been enacted, although consultation with Federal regulatory agencies was extensive. Technically preferred routes for these facilities were identified and presented to the public. However, in 1994 all 407 route planning studies (four in total) were put on hold.

In 1997, in response to traffic related issues arising from the termination of the 407 at Highway 48 / Markham Road, the MTO completed the Highway 407/Transitway Markham Road Easterly to Highway 7 East of Brock

Road Environmental Assessment Report ('Highway 407 East Partial Extension'). The work associated with the East Partial Study included further consideration of the need for a transportation corridor east of Brock Road and concluded that there would be substantial deficiencies in transportation capacity east of Brock Road by 2011 and improvements to Highway 401 alone within Durham Region would not resolve east-west capacity constraints. The East Partial Study also recommended that significant improvements to transit infrastructure would be required to handle future travel demand and that a 407 corridor was a suitable location to accommodate higher-order transit service. The East Partial EA Study was approved by the Minister of the Environment in June, 1998.

In 1999, the Region of Durham also identified the 407 corridor as an essential future component in the provincial network in the Durham Mobility Study, a background study which led to the development of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP).

In 2002, MTO published the Central Ontario Strategic Transportation Directions Draft, which provided an overview of the transportation network for the geographical area from Peterborough in the northeast, Barrie in the north, Kitchener-Waterloo in the west and the Niagara Peninsula in the south. Once again, it was recommended that the Province "pursue the planning and development of 407 East Completion to Highway 35/115"¹ as part of the strategy for building system capacity to meet future travel demands.

The Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), 2008, identifies the 407 East Transportation Corridor within its 15-year Plan, amongst other transit initiatives.

In summary, a number of previous studies indicated a need to consider a new east-west freeway corridor (407 East) through Durham Region to Highway 35/115 with two new north-south freeway corridors connecting Highway 401 and 407, with preferred routes identified through several of the studies. A recommendation for the inclusion of a dedicated right-of-way for transit as part of the 407 East Transportation Corridor through Durham Region was also made previously through a variety of the studies.

The Provincial 407 East Environmental Assessment (EA) Study was conducted as an Individual EA, in accordance with the Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act* (OEAA) and the 407 East Terms of Reference (ToR) dated November 2004, which was approved by the Ontario Minister of the Environment on January 17, 2005. The ToR was the first step of a two-step EA approval process for proposed Undertakings in the Province of Ontario, with the second step being the completion of an Individual EA. The work associated with this Provincial EA Study involved updating the work of previous studies using recent data in the context of applicable Federal, Provincial and municipal policies, additional and new fieldwork studies and review of existing and future traffic and land use conditions.

1.2 The Undertaking and Projects subject to Federal EA

As noted above, the proposed 407 East Transportation Corridor from Brock Road easterly to Highway 35/115, including two links to Highway 401 (i.e., the West Durham and East Durham Links) is referred to as

1. Ministry of Transportation. *Central Ontario Strategic Transportation Directions (Draft)*. December 2000. Page 18.

the ‘Undertaking’ that is the subject of an Individual EA under the OEAA. As part of this Provincial EA Study, however, it was not until the 407 East EA Study reached a point in the process where a Recommended Design was determined that the Federal EA process could commence. It was in January, 2009 that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency confirmed that the Federal EA would be conducted by way of a screening (i.e., this Environmental Screening Report).

For the purposes of the Federal EA in relation to MTO’s Undertaking, the Federal government determined that the scope of project will include all components of the Undertaking which are directly related to the regulatory and land triggers exercised by the Federal Responsible Authorities (RAs). The Federal government also concluded that any issues of Federal interest and jurisdiction related to non-triggered components would be dealt with adequately and most efficiently through the co-ordinated EA process with the Province of Ontario.

Therefore, the Federal EA process for the proposed 407 East Undertaking considered 28 individual “projects” that represent components of the Undertaking, but do not necessarily comprise the entire Undertaking, as proposed by MTO.

To this end, this Environmental Screening Report documents the EA undertaken in accordance with the Canadian *Environmental Assessment Act* for the 28 Projects identified in relation to the 407 East Undertaking proposed by MTO, referred to as the “407 East Transportation Corridor”.

1.3 The Proponent

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is the project proponent for the 407 East Transportation Corridor Undertaking. The MTO contact is:

Mr. Dan Remollino, P. Eng.
Project Manager
MTO, Planning & Environmental Office
Building “D”, 3rd Floor
1201 Wilson Avenue
Downsview, ON M3M 1J8
Email: dan.remollino@ontario.ca
Tel: (416) 235-5576

MTO retained the following multi-disciplinary team of experts to carry out the project on their behalf:

- **AECOM** (formerly TSH and Gartner Lee Limited) – responsible for:
 - ▶ overall project management, engineering and for leading the Canadian *Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) and Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act* (OEAA) processes;
 - ▶ the Technical and Landscape Composition investigative studies
 - ▶ the Hydrogeological and Natural Environment investigative studies.

- **McCormick Rankin Corporation** – responsible for engineering and Technical investigative studies
- **URS Canada Inc.** – responsible for engineering and Technical and Archaeological and Cultural Heritage investigative studies
- **Ecoplans Limited** – responsible for the Property Contamination and Waste, Natural Environment and Landscape Composition investigative studies
- **RWDI** – responsible for the Air Quality and Noise investigative studies for the entire corridor
- **Meridian Planning Consultants** – responsible for the Socio-economic and Land Use investigative studies
- **DBH Soils** – responsible for the Agricultural investigative study for the entire corridor
- **ASI** – responsible for the Archaeological investigative study
- **Unterman McPhail** – responsible for the Cultural Heritage investigative study

1.4 The Environmental Screening Report Organization

This Environmental Screening Report has been organized according to the following sections:

- **Section 1, *Introduction (This Section)***, provides an overview of the 407 East Transportation Corridor study process; makes a distinction between the “Undertaking” and the “Projects subject to Federal EA”; and identifies the proponent and the EA study team.
- **Section 2, *Environmental Assessment Requirements***, describes the Federal and Provincial EA requirements in general terms.
- **Section 3, *Overview of the Federal EA Process***, describes the process undertaken to complete this Environmental Screening Report and describes the roles and responsibility of the Responsible Authorities and expert Federal Authorities.
- **Section 4, *Permits and Approvals***, identifies the Federal and Provincial permits and approvals required in order to implement the Undertaking.
- **Section 5, *Consultation***, provides an overview of the consultation activities undertaken during the preparation of the Provincial EA and other activities relevant to this Environmental Screening Report.
- **Section 6, *Overview of the Undertaking***, provides a summary description of the purpose and rationale for the Undertaking, a summary of the process used by MTO as part of the Provincial EA to identify and evaluate alternatives to the Undertaking and alternative means of carrying out the Undertaking. This Section concludes with an overview of the Undertaking in terms of its current design elements, project works and activities.

- **Section 7**, *Federal Environmental Assessment Framework*, identifies and describes the Projects subject to Federal EA, and the environmental components, temporal boundaries and geographic study areas used for the purposes of this Environmental Screening.
- **Section 8**, *Description of the Environment Potentially Affected*, provides an overview of the environmental conditions in the study areas for each environmental component. These descriptions vary in terms of level of detail as the descriptions for some environmental components either focus on the 407 East Transportation Corridor as a whole and/or on the Projects subject to Federal EA.
- **Section 9**, *Likely Environmental Effects*, identifies and describes the likely environmental effects, mitigation measures and residual effects, focused either on the 407 East Transportation Corridor as a whole or on the Projects subject to Federal EA.
- **Section 10**, *Likely Cumulative Effects*, identifies and describes the likely cumulative effects of the Projects subject to Federal EA in combination with other certain or reasonably foreseeable projects and activities. This Section also includes a discussion of key implications of the Undertaking on human health.
- **Section 11**, *Significance of Residual Adverse Cumulative Effects*, provides an opinion on the significance of the cumulative environmental effects.
- **Section 12**, *Environmental Monitoring and Follow-up* for the Undertaking, summarizes the commitments made by MTO as part of the Provincial EA process towards environmental monitoring, EA compliance and other follow-up commitments.
- **Section 13**, *Environmental Assessment Determination*, provides MTO's overall conclusion regarding the Projects subject to Federal EA and makes a recommendation on whether or not these Projects and the Undertaking as a whole should proceed or not.

This Environmental Screening Report has included the following appendices:

- **Appendix A**, *Federal Environmental Assessment Guidelines Under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act for the 407 East Transportation Corridor*, contains the final EA Guidelines issued by Transport Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, along with two tables that link Sections of this Environmental Screening Report to the EA Guideline requirements.
- **Appendix B**, *Protocol for Engaging First Nation Communities in Archaeology*, provides a procedure that will be followed in conducting archaeological studies in a manner that is appropriate for and respects First Nations interests.
- **Appendix C**, *Responsible Authority Correspondences*, provides key letters and other communications from the Responsible Authorities regarding the Federal EA Process.
- **Appendix D**, *Projects Subject to Federal EA Local Study Area (LSA) Maps*, provides aerial photos of the Projects subject to Federal EA on which both the Site Study Areas (SSA) and Local Study Areas are depicted.

- **Appendix E**, *Fish and Fish Habitat Impact Summary Tables*, provides detailed descriptions of existing environmental conditions, proposed water crossing designs, effects and site specific mitigation and enhancement opportunities for each of the Projects subject to Federal EA. A residual effects summary and a representative photograph is provided for each.
- **Appendix F**, *Species List*, provides a list of terrestrial species identified through field studies as part of the Provincial EA.