

**Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge**

**Questions from Kakabeka Falls By-Pass Committee Meeting – December 1, 2010**

<b>GENERAL QUESTIONS</b>		
1.	Why spend money on rehabilitation of a highway that will ultimately be by-passed?	The Ministry has a mandate to maintain existing provincial highways until a new route is required. The rehabilitation of Highway 11/17 that is planned between 2012 and 2014 and is included in the MTO <i>Northern Highways Program</i> , as part of the Ministry’s ongoing maintenance program. This work will include: pavement rehabilitation, culvert replacement/repair/cleanout, guiderail replacements/adjustments, treatment of frost heaves, ditch cleanout, and shoulder reinstatement.
2.	Will the existing highway be transferred to the municipality?	Any transfer would be subject to discussions and negotiations with the respective municipality.
3.	Why are we planning for future expansion – with the price of energy / gas and Peak Oil there won’t be a need to expand highways. It will be cheaper to ship products by rail.  Do not support the need for the study.	Highway 11/17 in the study area is a significant provincial transportation corridor in Northwestern Ontario that provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods between Thunder Bay and Manitoba; and it forms a vital link in the Trans-Canada Highway system. The Ministry of Transportation is committed to preserving the safety and efficiency of Ontario’s provincial highway network and the Ontario government’s investment in the highway infrastructure. For these reasons the ministry has initiated a planning study to identify the long-term needs for Highway 11/17 between Kakabeka Falls and Shabaqua Corners.  The purpose of this study is to identify and designate property for a future four-lane Highway 11/17 between Kakabeka Falls and Shabaqua Corners. Designating a future four-lane highway now will assist the Ministry, local municipalities, utilities, the resource management industry, and private land owners with planning and development within the study area.

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4.	Why is there an MTO priority where there is only an undivided highway with no alternate route?	<p>Part of the benefit of the four-lane divided Controlled Access Highway is the potential to be able to use the other lanes in case of emergency. Closures on the section of Highway 11/17 between Shabaqua Corners and Highway 102 can lead to significant delays or out-of-way travel since there are no alternate provincial routes between these points. The alternate route to Highway 11/17 in this section of the study area can require detours through the USA. This issue was recently highlighted by the Northern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce (NOACC) in a document outlining their positions on 2009 provincial and federal issues. The document noted that when <i>'the section [of Highway 11/17] between Sistonens Corners and Shabaqua, west of Thunder Bay is shut down, nothing moves between Manitoba and Southern Ontario, unless they [travel] through the United States...some Canadian commercial traffic is prohibited from traversing USA highways due to local State restrictions.'</i></p> <p>Improvements to the transportation system have the potential to improve safety and operations so that the movement of people and goods in the corridor meets public expectations. Separating highway traffic by a median can address the safety concerns by reducing potential conflicts, which in turn contribute to economic and social growth in the region.</p>
5.	Where is the existing designation?	<p>The previous planning study for Highway 11/17 from Thunder Bay westerly to Shabaqua Corners, WP 7 74 00, resulted in the selection of a preferred route (E3A) from Thunder Bay to Kakabeka Falls.</p> <p>The designation of the proposed route from Thunder Bay to Kakabeka Falls, including a route for a two-lane interim connection from existing Highway 17 at Kakabeka Falls easterly, connects at approximately the intersection of Pole Line Road / Spence Road. A dashed black line on the PIC displays available on the project website identifies the existing designation.</p> <p>A portion of the route (i.e. between Thunder Bay and Vibert Road) was subsequently constructed in 2005.</p>

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6.	The numbers used for the Park Study were for the Province of Ontario in general – what are the local numbers?	The Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park visitation data provided at the December 1, 2010 meeting was summarized from the results of a Camper Survey carried out by Ontario Parks for Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park in the summary of 2008. Although the survey was carried out Province-wide, the results provided were from an appendix that contained the results for Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park only.
<b>Consultation</b>		
7.	Did not receive Canada Post mailings Project notices were not clear / not widely distributed	<p>This study is being carried out as a 'Group A' project under the <i>Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for Provincial Transportation Facilities (2000)</i>. Notification of the study has been carried out accordance with the requirements of the Class EA document through a variety of methods including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Notices of the commencement of the study placed in the Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal, the Conmee Chronicle, and the Oliver-Paipoonge News (delivered to all ratepayers in the municipality); and sent to all residents in postal codes P0T 1W0 and P0T 1X0</li> <li>▪ Notices of the first and second rounds of Public Information Centres placed in the Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal and sent to all residents in postal codes P0T 1W0 and P0T 1X0</li> </ul> <p>Notices of opportunities for public input will continue to be mailed directly to the project mailing list, sent to all residents in the listed postal codes, and sent to ratepayers via the municipal newsletters, when possible. Residents who are aware of residents who are not familiar with the study can direct them to the project website (<a href="http://www.hwy11-17kakabeka.ca">www.hwy11-17kakabeka.ca</a>) or to contact one of the Project Mangers.</p> <p>At the recent (December 1, 2010) meeting, it was brought to the project team's attention that some residents have not been receiving the Canada Post Unaddressed Ad Mailings. During the study, the project team makes every effort to contact directly affected property owners. In response to this new information, the Canada Post Unaddressed Ad mailing will be</p>

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		expanded to include the residents in postal area POT 2G0.
8.	Have emergency response providers been contacted?	<p>Yes. The project mailing list includes representatives from local ambulance, fire, and police services, and each agency has been invited to attend External Agency Meetings in advance of each Public Information Centre.</p> <p>In addition, an Emergency Services Questionnaire was distributed to local Emergency Service Providers in the spring of 2010. The purpose of the questionnaire was to confirm locations of existing emergency facilities and current average response times to and from the facilities and local residential areas. This information was considered during the development of the access points for each Feasible Route Alternative.</p> <p>Emergency access will generally be provided via the at-grade intersections during the Initial Stage, and via the interchanges during the Ultimate Stage. Additional provisions for emergency vehicles will be considered through consultation with emergency service providers, when the Preferred Plan has been selected. Since the existing highway network will remain, with grade-separations or interchanges at municipal roads, it is expected that there will be minimal changes to emergency response times in the study area as a result of the proposed improvements.</p>

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Study Process		
9.	Who makes the final decision about the location of the Recommended Plan?	<p>This study is being carried out as a Group ‘A’ project following the <i>Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for Provincial Transportation Facilities</i> (2000), which includes major realignments and by-passes to existing provincial highways/freeways and transitways that do not substantially follow the existing right-of-way.</p> <p>The Class EA process requires a comprehensive planning process that involves identifying and evaluating project alternatives, identifying associated environmental impacts and developing a plan for a solution that minimizes impacts, while addressing the identified transportation problem.</p> <p>During the study, the decision making process will be clearly documented to provide a traceable process and that is easily understood by the public, agencies, and stakeholders involved in the study.</p> <p>An evaluation process has been developed to consider a range of engineering and environmental (natural, social, economic and cultural) factors in the study area. Each stage of the evaluation process will be based on the results of the previous stage and assesses the alternatives in greater detail. It is important that the evaluation criteria capture the key issues related to the decision-making process.</p> <p>The goal of the evaluation process is to identify a Preferred Plan for a future four-lane Highway 11/17 that is cost-effective, provides safe operations and reasonable local access, while minimizing effects on the environment. The Preferred Plan will be confirmed through the data gathering, analysis, evaluation, and consideration of input received from the public and external agencies.</p> <p>At the end of the study, the Recommended Plan will be documented in a Transportation Environmental Study Report (TESR) that outlines the planning, preliminary design, and environmental process. The TESR will be made available for a 30-day public review period.</p>

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		<p>If there are no significant concerns following the 30-day Public Review Period, Environmental Clearance for property acquisition and designation of the future highway will be provided for the study in accordance with the Class EA. At that time, the MTO will be in a position to designate (protect) the new right-of-way.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Detailed information about a by-pass should have been made available when the study was initiated. Is MTO prepared to ‘restart’ the study?</p>	<p>This Route Planning and Class Environmental Assessment Study involves a comprehensive process that involves developing more detailed plans as additional information becomes available from engineering and environmental specialist studies, and based on information received from the public, stakeholders, and external agencies. The project team will continue to provide the public with information and background reports as they become available.</p> <p>A consultation plan has been developed to facilitate input from the Kakabeka By-Pass Committee, which represents residents and members of the Kakabeka Falls business community in the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge.</p>

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Business Impacts		
11.	The business study was ineffective.	<p>Local business owners were invited to participate in a Business Study that was initiated during the information stage of the study, in conjunction with the first round of Public Information Centres. The purpose of the Business Survey was to understand local customers and suppliers; identify local and regional business conditions; identify safety and other concerns; and to understand how / where future access would best serve the majority of businesses.</p> <p>Information provided was used to consider alternatives for locations for future access to and from the village of Kakabeka Falls. It should be noted that the Business Survey is not the only point of consultation for local business owners. Businesses were also invited to attend and provide input at Public Information Centres and to submit their comments in writing to the project team.</p> <p>Recent comments by local business owners who would now like to participate in the Business Survey have been noted. All submitted surveys will be reviewed by the project team and appended to the Business Study.</p>
12.	Does the Ministry of Transportation provide a marketing plan for businesses?	<p>The Ministry of Transportation does not provide marketing plans for businesses owners. However, there are a number of Ministry of Transportation signage policies in place to help municipalities and businesses advise travellers on the provincial highway network of services available in their municipality.</p>
13.	Recent tourism studies have shown business in Kenora fell by 40 % when the town was by-passed. How can MTO make sure that this doesn't occur in Kakabeka Falls?	<p>It is expected that truck traffic will ultimately decrease through the village of Kakabeka Falls, since all of the feasible Route Alternatives provide a by-pass of the village. Removing high speed truck traffic from the village of Kakabeka Falls will significantly improve safety for local travelers, tourists, cyclists and pedestrians. The municipality of Oliver-Paipoonge could consider new planning and zoning policies to help promote development that is compatible with the improved traffic conditions and the adjacent Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park.</p>

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14.	Do not believe comment in business study that many local businesses are closed in the winter.	<p>The Business Study was carried out for the Highway 11/17 study area from Kakabeka Falls to Shabaqua Corners, including businesses in the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge, Township of Conmee, and unorganized Dawson Road Lots.</p> <p>The Business Study identified 13 businesses in the study area that were either seasonal (i.e. closed during winter months) or could not be contacted. This number was identified to provide information regarding the difference between the number of businesses who were contacted during the study, and the number of survey responses that were received.</p>
Access		
15.	<p>Communities will require easy access to the future provincial highway to draw tourists and other customers to local businesses.</p> <p>Concerned about out-of-way travel: people driving through and past the village often stop at local businesses.</p>	<p>Access will generally be provided at existing major crossing roads. As a general guide in rural areas, access points for a Controlled Access Highway (CAH) are normally spaced at between 3 km and 8 km.</p> <p>There are a number of Ministry of Transportation signage policies in place to help municipalities and businesses advise travellers on the provincial highway network of services available in their municipality.</p>
16.	Ultimately will all at-grade intersections be closed?	<p>The Recommended Plan will likely be constructed in stages.</p> <p>The Initial Stage will include a four-lane divided highway with at-grade intersections. Safety and design requirements permitting, all existing entrances within twinning sections (i.e. new lanes adjacent to existing highway, separated by a wide median) will remain with right-in, right-out access. No entrances will be permitted within sections of new alignment.</p> <p>In the Ultimate Stage, Highway 11/17 will become a fully Controlled Access Highway (CAH) with access restricted to interchange locations only. All at grade access points will be removed.</p>

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Property Impacts																																	
17.	What are the property impacts for each route?	<p>The following is an overview of the Ultimate Stage property impacts for each Route Alternative.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Alternative</th> <th colspan="2">Entire Route</th> <th colspan="2">Oliver-Paipoonge</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Residential</th> <th>Commercial</th> <th>Residential</th> <th>Commercial</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BCD1</td> <td>15</td> <td>1</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BCD2</td> <td>44</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BCD3</td> <td>28</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BCD4</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Alternative	Entire Route		Oliver-Paipoonge		Residential	Commercial	Residential	Commercial	BCD1	15	1	4	1	BCD2	44	5	3	1	BCD3	28	1	3	0	BCD4	7	0	3	0
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18.	What is the MTO process for property acquisition?	<p>MTO will present an offer to purchase property based on a market value appraisal. If an amicable agreement of sale cannot be reached, the ministry may choose to acquire the property under the <i>Expropriations Act</i>.</p> <p>Generally, the ministry will not initiate the property acquisition process until the project is approved for construction.</p> <p>For additional information regarding property acquisition, please refer to the attached pamphlet: Highway Property Purchasing – Information for Property Owners.</p>																															
19.	What price does the Ministry pay for private property?	<p>Compensation is based on the market value of the property or the loss in market value to the property in the case of a partial purchase. Whether the ministry acquires the land amicably or by expropriation, compensation is determined in accordance with Section 13 of the <i>Expropriations Act</i>. Market Value is defined under Section 14 and Business Loss is addressed in Section 19 of the Act.</p> <p>For additional information regarding compensation, please refer to the attached pamphlet: Highway Property Purchasing – Information for Property Owners.</p>																															
20.	Which is the plan with the least property impacts?	Alternative BCD 4 has the least property impacts overall.																															

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21.	What happens to property values based on similar MTO projects? What does “protected” mean for residents in a practical sense?	<p>Upon completion of this study, the ministry will designate (i.e. protect) the property required for the Recommended Plan.</p> <p>Development within and adjacent to the designated corridor will be controlled in accordance with the ministry’s policies and controlled access highway criteria under the authority of the <i>Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act</i>. In summary, the ministry will exercise this control through the issuance of permits, including conditions, if necessary to control development.</p> <p>Generally, the ministry will not initiate the property acquisition process until the project is approved for construction. Typically, route planning studies are undertaken 10 to 25 years in advance of actual construction.</p> <p>The ministry may consider acquiring land under its Advance Purchase Policy once the highway corridor has been selected and designated. Typically, advance purchases are related to “hardship” cases. These are situations where permits for development or redevelopment, which would have otherwise been approved, are denied, or when a potential sale of the property fails as a direct result of the ministry’s proposed plans. Both of these situations are dealt with on a willing seller/buyer basis and are subject to regional priorities and available funding. For more information regarding advance purchase, please refer to the paragraph entitled “What if my property is required for a major project that will not begin for a number of years?” in the attached pamphlet: <i>Highway Property Purchasing – Information for Property Owners</i>.</p>
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Traffic Study	
<p>22. Where is the traffic information coming from? Don't believe the results of traffic predictions / studies. There are currently no traffic delays travelling through the village of Kakabeka Falls. The Ministry indicated that four-lane highways are generally not required until the volume reaches 10 000 vehicles per day (vpd). There are currently only 3200 vpd, so why is this study being undertaken?</p>	<p>The ministry continually monitors traffic volumes and traffic operations throughout the provincial transportation network, which includes undertaking traffic counts from time to time.</p> <p>The traffic information presented is based on recent Ministry of Transportation traffic counts, which indicate that the average daily traffic volumes through the village of Kakabeka Falls is approximately 5000 vehicles per day.</p> <p>The traffic analysis completed as part of this study concludes that there are no existing major operational concerns within this area. However, traffic volumes are expected to increase at a rate of approximately 1.0% per year based on historical growth rates for this section of Highway 11/17.</p> <p>Although the Ministry of Transportation considers 10,000 vehicles per day (vpd) as a rule of thumb for expansion to a Controlled Access Highway, there, are also other safety and operational factors that are considered.</p> <p>The long-term vision for the "Shabaqua Highway" is a four-lane, fully controlled-access highway from Thunder Bay to the junction known as Shabaqua Corners. Four-laning Highway 11/17 will improve highway safety by separating eastbound and westbound traffic by a wide median, providing safe passing opportunities, and removing vehicle conflicts associated with at-grade intersections. The four-laning of Highway 11/17 will also provide benefits to local residents and business owners, other Ontario motorists, and visitors to the area. Overall, the modifications will also improve travel times and improve access to areas that are already developed.</p>

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Project Alternatives		
23.	<p>Why not consider a long-term highway alignment through the village of Kakabeka Falls.</p> <p>Maybe a 30 metre median is not required through this section.</p> <p>Why not build a two-lane truck by-pass?</p>	<p>The long-term vision for the “Shabaqua Highway” is a four-lane, fully controlled-access highway from Thunder Bay to the junction known as Shabaqua Corners. A four-lane divided highway through Kakabeka Falls is not feasible due to property impacts.</p> <p>Four-laning Highway 11/17 will improve highway safety by separating eastbound and westbound traffic by a wide median, providing safe passing opportunities, and removing vehicle conflicts associated with at-grade intersections.</p> <p>A two-lane truck by-pass does not meet the long-term provincial transportation needs for Highway 11/17, which includes separating traffic with a wide median, and removing the at-grade intersections.</p>
24.	<p>There is already an alternate route (Highway 102) for trucks that would like to by-pass this section of Highway 11/17.</p>	<p>The previous (1979) <i>Route Planning Study</i> considered several options for expanding the Highway 102 corridor as an alternative to expanding Highway 11/17 between Sistonen’s Corners and Thunder Bay. The Highway 102 options were removed from further consideration in advance of the detailed evaluation process since the traffic analysis indicated that improving the Highway 102 corridor would not attract a high volume of traffic, and that four-laning of Highway 11/17 would still be required in the future. Expanding the Highway 102 corridor is not being carried forward for further consideration. However, improvements to existing Highway 102 are proposed under the ministry’s <i>Northern Highway Program</i>  <a href="http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/pubs/highway-construction/index.shtml">http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/pubs/highway-construction/index.shtml</a>) as a separate study.</p>
25.	<p>MTO should pave all shoulders and provide passing lanes to improve highway safety?</p>	<p>Paving shoulders provides minimal safety benefits and does not meet the long-term provincial transportation needs for Highway 11/17, which includes separating traffic with a wide median, and removing the at-grade intersections.</p>

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26.	There is a greater need for highway expansion / improvements elsewhere.	<p>This study is one of Northwestern Region’s long-range transportation planning initiatives to address future highway needs on Highway 11/17.</p> <p>The existing two-lane undivided highway does not meet the long-term safety and operational needs of the provincial and Trans-Canada highway systems. The purpose of the study is to identify and designate (protect) a corridor for a future four-lane divided Highway 11/17 between Kakabeka Falls and Shabauqa Corners.</p> <p>In Northern Ontario, the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry (MNDMF) works jointly with the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to identify priorities for the Northern Highway Program (NHP). The current (2010 to 2014) NHP identifies a number of planned highway improvements, including improvements to existing Highway 102; four-laning the Highway 11/17 corridor between Thunder Bay and Nipigon, and four-laning the Highway 17 corridor between Kenora and the Manitoba border.</p> <p>The NHP is available at <a href="http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/pubs/highway-construction/index.shtml">http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/pubs/highway-construction/index.shtml</a>.</p> <p>The ministry will continue investing in northern highway infrastructure to improve safety, to promote business development, to create jobs and to keep people and goods moving.</p>
27.	The Thunder Bay Expressway was only constructed with two-lanes. Why does this highway have to be widened to four-lanes?	Highway 11/17 from Thunder Bay to Vibert Road was initially constructed as a two-lane highway. However, there are future plans to expand this section of Highway 11/17 to a four-lane divided controlled access highway.

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Other MTO projects		
28.	<p>The four-lane transition should be located past Pole Line Road.</p> <p>Concerned with the existing transition east of Kakabeka Falls</p>	<p>The Recommended Plan for this study will connect to the west limit of the existing designated route in the vicinity of Pole Line Road. The location of the four-lane transition will be confirmed during Detail Design, which will be initiated when construction timing is known.</p> <p>The existing transition from four to two lanes was recently reviewed by the Ministry of Transportation as part of the Preliminary Design Study for the rehabilitation of Highway 11/17 from Oliver Road to Highway 130 (GWP 544-00-00). The study included a geometric review for Highway 11/17 within the study area, which resulted in extending the transition area by approximately 180 metres in each direction. This work is expected to be completed in 2011.</p>
29.	<p>Turning lanes are required at the MTO weigh scales.</p>	<p>Comment has been noted and forwarded to the Ministry of Transportation. MTO noted at the December 1, 2010 meeting that they are conducting a study to review the existing and future needs of Truck Inspection Stations in the region.</p>