Present were: Chair K. Seiling, L. Armstrong*, J. Brewer, D. Craig, R. Deutschmann*, B. Halloran, R. Kelterborn, G. Lorentz, C. Millar, J. Mitchell, S. Strickland*, C. Zehr

Area MPPs Present: C. Fife, M. Harris, J. Milloy, N. Woodfield on behalf of R. Leone

Area MPP Absent: R. Leone

Absent were: T. Cowan, T. Galloway, J. Haalboom, J. Wideman

Welcome

Chair Ken Seiling welcomed everyone and advised this meeting is being held at the request of Council. It is an open meeting between Councillors and Area MPPs and is an information sharing session.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Regional Issues

a. Transportation Issues:

Graham Vincent, Director Transportation Planning provided a powerpoint presentation, Connecting Waterloo Region to the GTA, Key Provincial Transportation and Transit Priorities. A copy is appended to the original minutes. He highlighted the transit links of the North Mainline and CP Rail, key Provincial Highway links, Highway projects including new Highway 7, widening of Highway 7/8, Highway 401, Highway 6 Morriston Bypass, Highway 7/8 (New Hamburg – Stratford), studies of Regional interest, and the study area. He provided explanations of the transit priorities and transportation priorities in Waterloo Region.

*L. Armstrong and R. Deutschmann entered the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

C. Fife inquired if the Region is supportive of HOV lanes and alternate revenue streams. G. Vincent advised staff are supportive of the concept of HOV lanes and have partnered with MTO for bus bypass shoulders on Highway 8. He noted there is a process underway with regard to the draft Provincial policy statement.

D. Craig expressed concern with the lack of GO train service to Cambridge and that future delays are not acceptable. He hoped the MPPs would be supportive of an accelerated timetable to bring GO trains to Cambridge or as an alternative bus lanes from Milton to Cambridge.
L. Armstrong expressed frustration that a plan still has not been finalized for Highway 7/8 to Stratford and it needs to be done.

There was discussion about the rail strategy and that the Province has not been as aggressive with the Federal government in terms of an overall strategy and the lack of a national strategy.

J. Milloy highlighted the number of transportation projects the Province has implemented and supported in the Region including Highway 8 improvements, GO transit, LRT, Highway 7 land acquisitions/engineering and planning design. He noted there are technical problems with GO transit and infrastructure upgrades are required. D. Craig stated the technical issues seem to change every couple of years.

b. Development Charges Act Amendments – Transit

M. Murray referenced the memo in the agenda package, reflecting the request for an amendment to the Development Charges legislation to allow permissive legislation so municipalities have the ability to raise additional revenue if they opt to do so.

J. Milloy provided an overview of the revenue charge that was implemented for Toronto and York Region and that it was a different process related to the GTA. There are challenges in the rest of the Province and they need to determine if a similar model would work in Ottawa or Waterloo Region. There will be another round of discussion in the coming months.

In response to a question how long this has been on the books, M. Murray advised it has been 4-5 years and it is broader than just transit.

c. Affordable Housing

S. Strickland advised the Region has played a leadership role with its community partners and it is important for the Federal/Provincial funding arrangements to continue in order to continue to build affordable housing. They need to renew the deal that expires in 2014 and the waiting list continues as there is a strong need in the community.

J. Milloy inquired if the CHIPI model has been of assistance. Rob Horne, Commissioner Planning, Housing and Community Services responded there has been a nominal improvement but the renewal of the Federal/Provincial agreement would be of a greater benefit.

d. Interest Arbitration

Chair Seiling stated interest arbitration is a topic of great concern to municipalities and there have been various efforts to try to deal with the issue. C. Zehr advised a change in regulation in the way the arbitration system works is required as municipalities cannot continue at the current levels. This is a non-partisan issue and all parties should work together to resolve this issue.

M. Harris noted this is not a partisan issue and referenced a recent AMO press release. He stated Bill 44 dealing with this matter was defeated. C. Fife advised the Bill did not go far enough and they need to look more broadly for solutions. J. Milloy stated arbitration is supposed to replicate what would happen in the collective agreements and the government tried getting provisions in the budget last year.
*S. Strickland left the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

Councillors expressed their concerns with the current system and that AMO has put forward good information related to this issue.

M. Harris inquired of the status of the Carpenters' Union certification and asked the Region to continue the fight.

e. Regional Official Plan (ROP) Verbal Update

R. Horne provided background information and an overview of the appeal of the Regional Official Plan. He advised a decision on the first phase of the appeals has been delivered and the Region requested a rehearing which was denied. The Region has also filed an appeal to Divisional Court and the Province has indicated its intention to also attend at Divisional Court by applying for status at the hearing.

Issues Raised by Individual Councillors:

f. The Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) formula

R. Kelterborn stated there is disparity between municipalities with the OMPF and provided details on recent funding from his municipality compared to others. He commented it is time for this formula to be reviewed.

g. Assessment of Agricultural Land

R. Kelterborn requested the current criteria for the assessment of agricultural land be redesigned to provide a fair tax return to the municipalities and this designation would be no added cost to the farmer. He stated this is for the land that farmers use to grow crops. A partnership needs to be established between the Federal and Provincial governments and a change in the assessment system. In response to a question, R. Kelterborn advised he has communicated these concerns to Harold Albrecht, M.P.

OTHER BUSINESS

M. Harris provided comments on the meeting and thanked Regional Council for the opportunity.

C. Fife requested Regional Council to provide feedback on the upcoming Provincial budget.

J. Milloy thanked Regional Council for this opportunity to meet.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

REGIONAL CHAIR, K. Seiling

REGIONAL DEPUTY CLERK, L. Wetzel
Connecting Waterloo Region to the GTA

Key Provincial Transportation and Transit Priorities

April 26, 2013
Key Provincial Highway Links
Highway Projects
Widen Highway 7/8
Highway Projects
Widen Highway 401
Transit Priorities

• Increase GO Train Service to 4 peak trains from Union Station to Kitchener and return
• Provide GO Train service from Union Station to Cambridge and return
• Provide morning train service from Union Station to Kitchener and return evening service
• Provide two-way all day rail passenger service to Waterloo Region (longer term)
• Establish Task Force to review potential for a broader interregional rail service
• Consider improved rail passenger service from Cambridge and Kitchener to GTA before widening Highway 401
Transportation Priorities

- Proceed with construction of Highway 7 from Kitchener to Guelph
- Amend the Provincial Policy Statement to permit transportation infrastructure planning for greater than 20 years
- Improve highway connections between Waterloo Region and the Niagara Gateway
- Consider highway connection north of Highway 401 connecting new Highway 7 to GTA
- Proceed with widening of Highway 401 between Highway 8 and Hespeler Road
- Proceed with the Waterloo Wellington Brant Interregional Transportation Study
- Work with the Region of Waterloo to plan and construct additional interchange connections to Highway 401
Thank you
Questions?