www.hwy401easttownlinetocranberry.ca

Highway 401
East Townline Road to Cranberry Road

Planning, Preliminary Design, and Environmental Assessment

GWP 4013-23-00
Public Information Centre 1
November 3rd, 2026

Ontario Stantec

Highway 401 Planning Study
East Townline Road to Cranberry Road
(GWP 4013-23-00)

Sign In

Chat with Project Team

Fill out a comment sheet

Let us know if you have any accessibility needs

Welcome to Public Information Centre 1

The purpose of this Public Information Centre (PIC) is to:

- Introduce the study and Class Environmental Assessment process
- Present existing conditions within the study area
- Present the preliminary alternatives being considered
- Present the proposed evaluation criteria and evaluation process
- Obtain input from the public, Indigenous communities, agencies, municipalities and stakeholders
- Answer questions about the study

The PIC displays can also be viewed on the project website and comments can be submitted at: www.hwy401easttownlinetocranberry.ca

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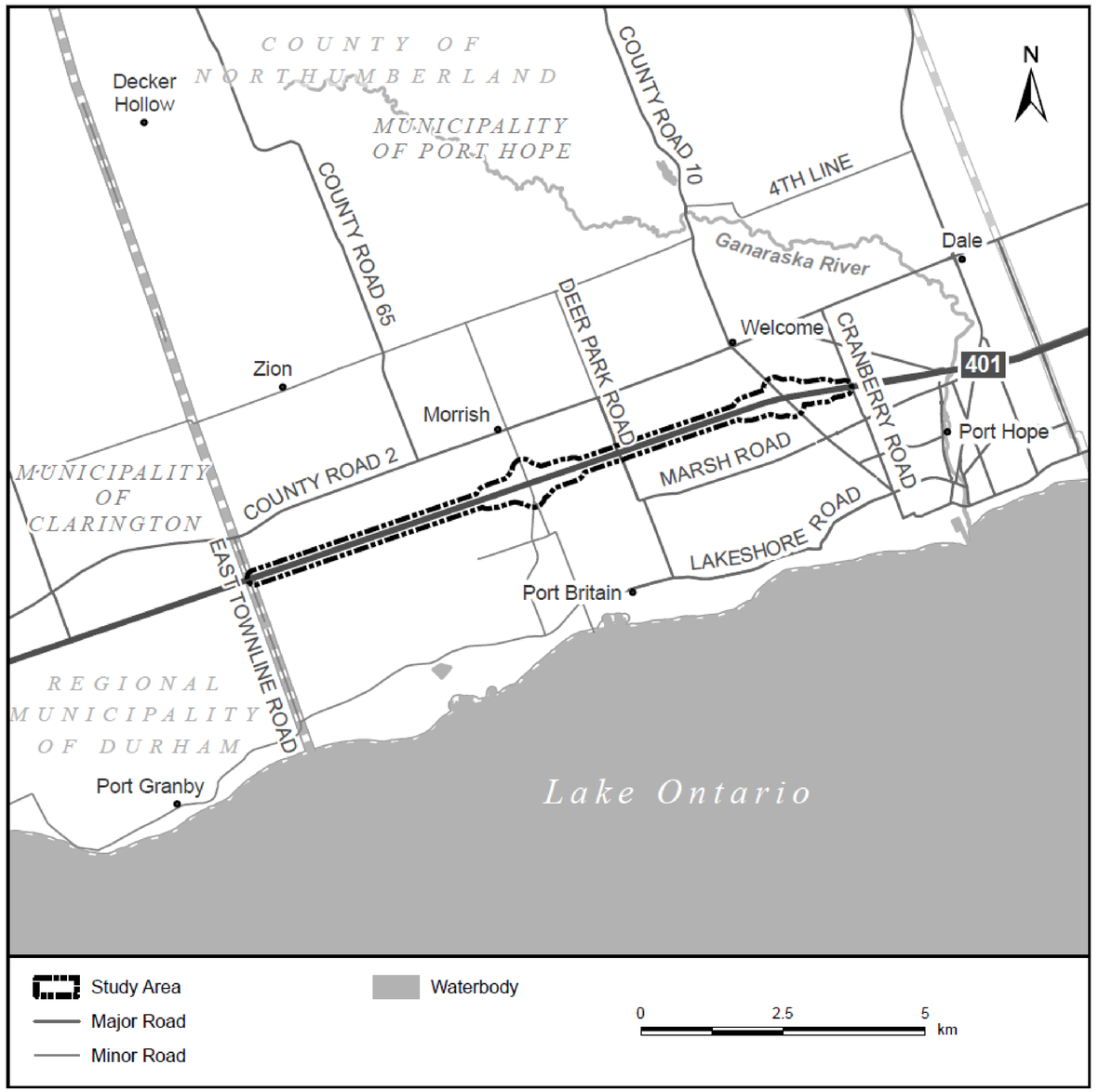
About The Project

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has retained Stantec Consulting Ltd. to undertake a Preliminary Design and Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) study on Highway 401 for the replacement of three bridges and two structural culverts, determining the long-term interchange configurations at Wesleyville Road and County Road 2 (Toronto Road) and identifying the future Highway 401 footprint for an interim eight-lane and ultimate ten-lane cross-section from 100 m east of East Townline Road to 100 m west of Cranberry Road for a total length of approximately 11 km, in the Municipality of Port Hope and Northumberland County.

Highway 401 is a controlled-access 400-series provincial highway that connects southwestern Ontario (Windsor) to Quebec. The highway, and the structures along it, were built in the 1950s and 1960s.

The purpose of the study is to identify a Recommended Plan that addresses current and future transportation needs in the study area as part of the Ministry's ongoing review of safety and operational needs for the provincial highway network.

This study will include reviewing existing conditions, developing and evaluating alternatives, identifying appropriate improvements, and developing environmental protection and mitigation measures. A Recommended Plan will be confirmed and designated at the completion of the study.



ADJACENT STUDIES

There are Class EA Studies adjacent to this study area recently completed to the east:

- **Study #1 (Preliminary Design- GWP 4005-17-00)** includes structural needs of 3 bridges (Cranberry Road Bridge, Choate Road Bridge and Ganaraska River Bridge) and establishing the eight (8) and ten (10) lane future footprint of Highway 401 from 500m west of Cranberry Road to 450m east of County Road 28 (Ontario Street). Preliminary design completed April 2022.
- **Study #2 (Detail Design-GWP 4068-14-00)** Detail design for Choate Road and Ganaraska River Bridges. Completed October 2024.
- **Study #3 (GWP 4010-21-00)** includes future operational long-term needs at the County Road 28 (Ontario Street) interchange, and structural needs of 2 bridges (County Road 28 bridge and Hamilton Road Bridge). Completed December 2025.

Project Overview



For additional detail, view the full-size Project Overview drawing on the project website at https://hwy401easttownlinetocranberry.ca/documentation.html

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Class Environmental Assessment Process

Group ‘B’ Projects

Environmental Assessment Process

This study is being carried out under the requirements of the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities and Municipal Expressways (2024), which is approved under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act for provincial transportation projects of a defined scope and magnitude.

The MTO Class EA process is an approved process for highway planning, design, and construction projects. The study is following a Group ‘B’ process, which includes major improvements to existing provincial transportation facilities.

In 2019, modernization of the MTO Class EA (2000) was initiated to optimize the Class EA process by removing redundancies and expediting planning to facilitate a more streamlined implementation process. Amendments to the Class EA were approved in December 2023 and February 2024, and Class EA was renamed the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities and Municipal Expressways (2024). As part of the amendments, the EA process is now complete at the end of Preliminary Design, following the 30-day comment period for the Notice of Completion.

As part of the new MTO Class EA (2024), Preliminary Design is the primary opportunity to provide feedback on the project. The Preliminary Design phase serves as the initial opportunity for rights holders, the public and stakeholders to provide feedback. Opportunities for meaningful consultation in future stages of the project will be minimal. However, we will continue to meet all duty to consult obligations throughout subsequent stages of the project.

At the end of the study, a Transportation Environmental Study Report (TESR) will be prepared and made available for a 30-day comment period.

Ongoing Transportation Needs Assessment

Need Identified

Preliminary Design

Data Collection

Review available background information and conduct field investigations as required to identify existing conditions in the study area

Generate & Evaluate

Develop preliminary design alternatives to address structural needs, improve the highway safety and operations, and consider potential impacts to the existing natural, social, and cultural environment to identify a preferred plan

Select

Identify the preferred plan and mitigation measures to address potential impacts

Refine

Complete preliminary design of the preferred plan including a potential implementation strategy

Report

Document the process leading to the preferred plan

Clearance

The Class EA requirements are met, and the project is cleared to proceed to detail design

Future Stages

Detail Design

Construction

Ongoing Public Consultation

Consultation during Preliminary Design

- Notifications and project website
- Municipal Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #1 – May 13th, 2026
- Municipal Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #2 – October 28th, 2026
- Public Information Centre 1 **We Are Here**
- Municipal Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #3 – Fall 2027
- Public Information Centre 2 (tentatively scheduled for Fall 2027)
- Transportation Environmental Study Report 30-day comment period (tentatively scheduled for Spring/Summer 2028)

Problems And Opportunities

The purpose of the study is to identify a recommended plan that addresses current and future transportation needs in the study area as part of the Ministry's ongoing review of safety and operational needs for the provincial highway network. This study will include reviewing existing conditions, developing and evaluating alternatives, identifying a preferred plan, and developing environmental protection/mitigation measures.

This study has been initiated to address the following problems and opportunities:

Problems

- Many of the structures in the study area are nearing the end of their service life and require rehabilitation or replacement
- The existing Highway 401 platform cannot accommodate the traffic staging required to rehabilitate or replace the structures in the study area
- The existing interchanges require improvements to accommodate the structural rehabilitations or replacements, the ultimate footprint of Highway 401, and to address the current and future operational and geometric conditions

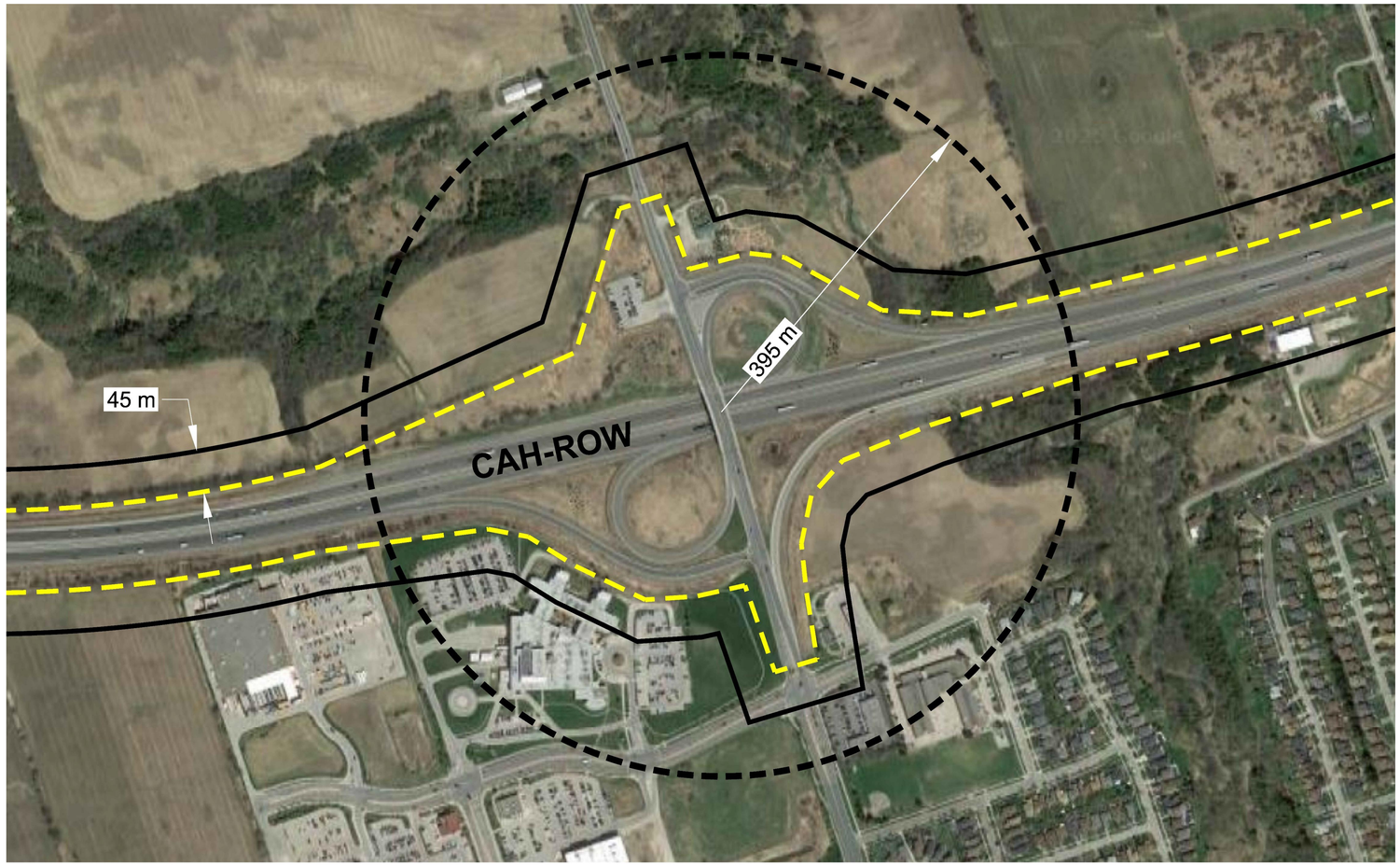
Opportunities

- Develop appropriate rehabilitation or replacement strategies to maintain the safe operation of the highway corridor for the current and future planning horizons
- Identify the interim footprint (8 lanes) and the ultimate footprint (10 lanes) for the Highway 401 corridor to address current and future transportation needs
- Develop appropriate interchange improvement alternatives to accommodate the structural rehabilitations or replacements, the ultimate footprint of Highway 401 and to address current and future operational and geometric needs

Designation and MTO Permit Control Areas

Once a Technically Preferred Alternative has been identified, the Ministry of Transportation may designate lands as highway and acquire property prior to EA process completion. A designation enables the Ministry to provide route/corridor protection through the application of development control measures along the corridor and in the vicinity of the designated lands. This type of designation is most often used where lands are still under private ownership, sometimes years in advance of intended property acquisition and construction. For more information about highway corridor management, please visit: https://www.ontario.ca/page/highway-corridor-management.

Example of MTO Permit Control Areas: Controlled-Access Highways (CAH)



Any work on private property that is within 45 metres of the highway property or 395 meters from the centrepoint of an intersection or interchange requires approval from the MTO.

Any work on private property that is within 800 metres of the highway property and that may have a large impact on traffic, is also subject to approval from MTO.

For more details on requirements for permits, please visit: https://www.Ontario.ca/page/highway-corridor-management or make an inquiry regarding a specific property: https://www.hcms.mto.gov.on.ca/

Note: Limit of the MTO right-of-way shown on the figure is for illustrative purposes only.

Alternatives to the Undertaking

The Class EA requires that ‘reasonable alternatives’ be considered to address identified problems. This involves two levels of analysis. The Alternatives to the Undertaking considers a broad range of alternatives that could address the project needs. Once the best alternative is selected, the Alternative Methods of Carrying out the Undertaking can be studied.

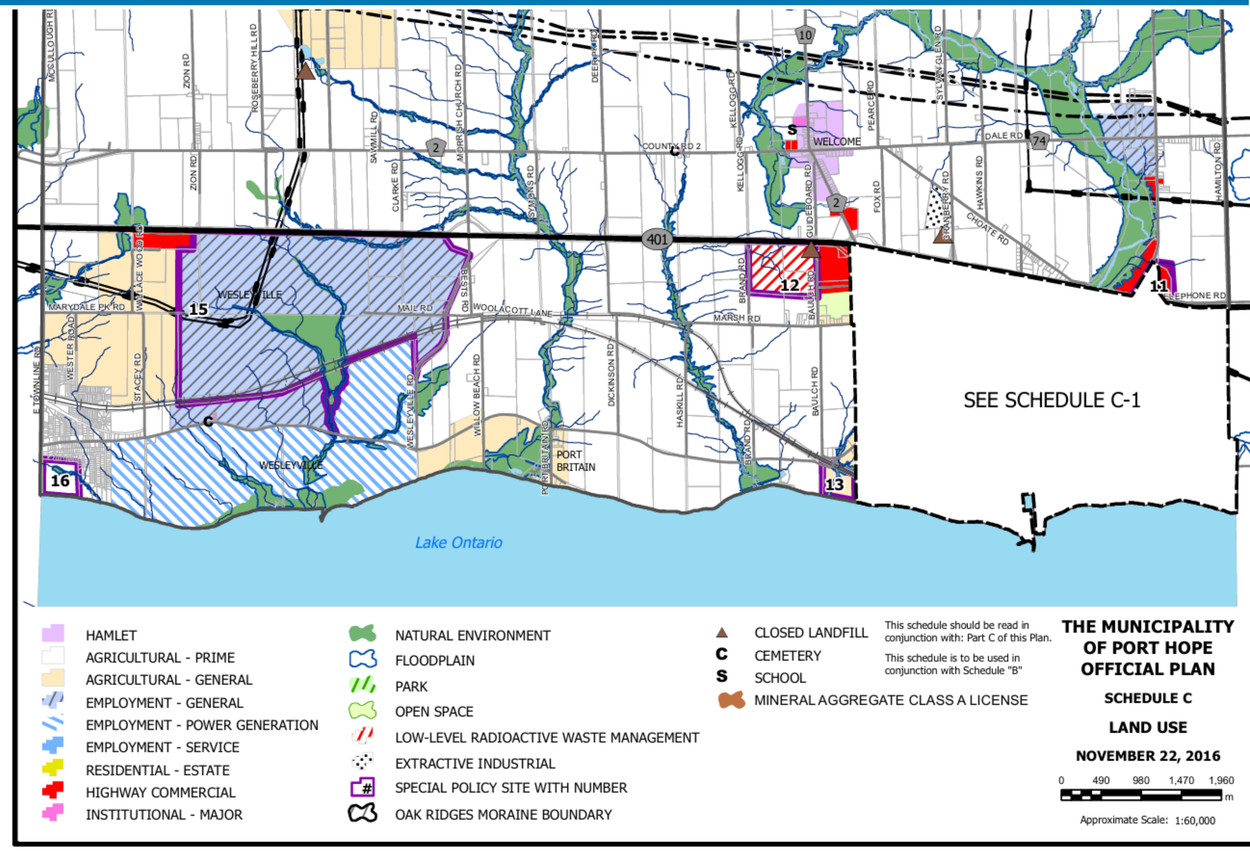
The Alternatives to the Undertaking identified for this study are listed below.

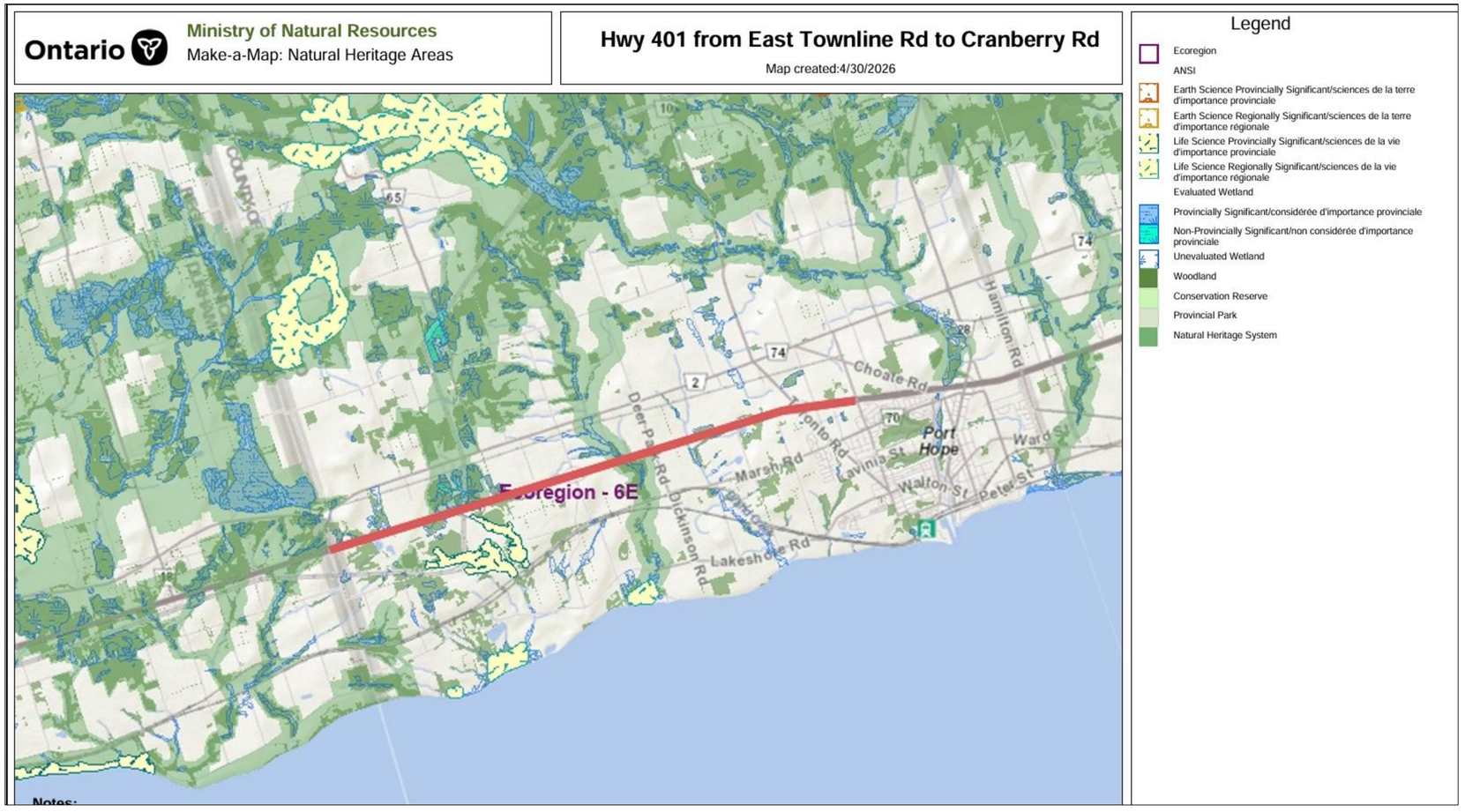
Alternatives to the Undertaking	Does it address the problems?
Do Nothing Rehabilitate existing bridges and culverts or replace existing structure with no accommodation for the Highway 401 footprints for interim eight and ultimate ten lanes. The configuration of the existing interchanges would be maintained.	☒ **Does not** address structural replacement needs and anticipated future growth needs. Do not carry forward.
Transportation Demand Management (TDM) TDM shifts demand on the highway network by shifting demands to the time periods outside of the critical congestion periods and shifts demand to alternative modes of transportation.	☒ **Does not** address structural replacement needs. Do not carry forward.
Improve Adjacent Road Systems Expansion of existing municipal and regional road networks.	☒ **Does not** address structural replacement needs. Do not carry forward.
Improved Provincial Transportation Facility Replace existing bridges and culverts to accommodate the Highway 401 footprints of interim eight and ultimate ten lanes. Modify configuration of existing interchanges.	☑ **Addresses** structural replacement needs and anticipated growth needs. **Carry forward.**

Existing Study Area Conditions

Existing land uses within the study area include:

- Highway
- Commercial
- Employment
- Prime Agricultural
- Port Hope Area Initiative





Key natural environment features within and adjacent to the study area include:

- Wooded Areas
- Watercourses
- Provincially Significant Wetlands
- Records of Species at Risk
- Wesleyville Ravines Life Science ANSI of Provincial Significance

Existing Structure Conditions



Site 21X-0199/B0

Wesleyville Road Underpass

- Single-span (31 m), concrete, rigid frame bridge with box girders
- Constructed in 1958
- Spans over six lanes of Highway 401
- Accommodates two lanes of traffic on Wesleyville Road
- Fair condition based on visual inspection



Site 21X-0227/B0

Deer Park Road Underpass

- Single-span (31 m), slab-on-girder (precast concrete girder), semi-integral abutment structure
- Constructed in 1959
- Spans over six lanes of Highway 401
- Accommodates two lanes of traffic on Deer Park Road
- Fair condition based on visual inspection



Site 21X-0228/B0

Toronto Road (County Road 2) Overpass

- Single-span (24 m) variable depth concrete T-beam, rigid-frame bridge
- Constructed in 1959
- Spans over Toronto Road (County Road 2) and carries six lanes of Highway 401
- Good condition based on visual inspection



Site 21X-0369/C0

Morrish Creek Culvert

- Twin-cell (4.6 m span each) concrete rigid frame box culvert
- Constructed in 1957
- Carries six lanes of Highway 401
- Fair condition based on visual inspection



Site 21X-0465/C0

Culvert (0.7 km east of Deer Park Road Underpass)

- Open footing concrete rigid frame culvert with 3.1 m span
- Constructed in 1959
- Carries six lanes of Highway 401
- Fair condition based on visual inspection

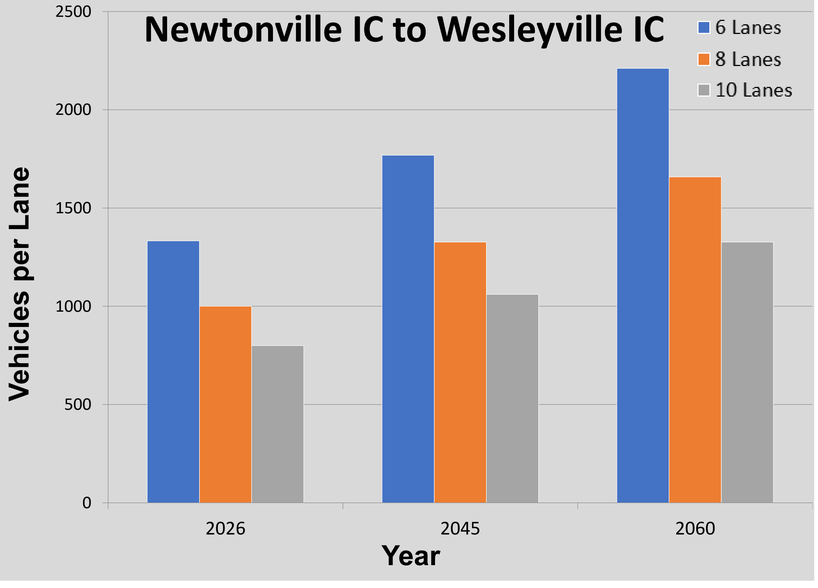
Highway 401 Existing and Future Traffic Conditions

As part of this Planning and Preliminary Design Study, a traffic study is being undertaken to determine existing and future traffic conditions. One of the measurements considered as part of the traffic modelling study is Level-of-Service (LOS), which is a measure of the free flow of traffic on a highway. The six Levels-of-Service are described below:

Level of Service (LOS)	Description
A	Little to no congestion, with high speeds and low traffic volumes
B	Minimal congestion, with speeds beginning to be restricted
C	Moderate congestion, with reduced freedom for drivers to choose their speeds
D	Heavy congestion, with limited freedom for drivers to choose their speeds
E	Severe congestion near roadway capacity, with little room to maneuver between lanes
F	Extreme congestion, with traffic breakdown and bottleneck-related delays

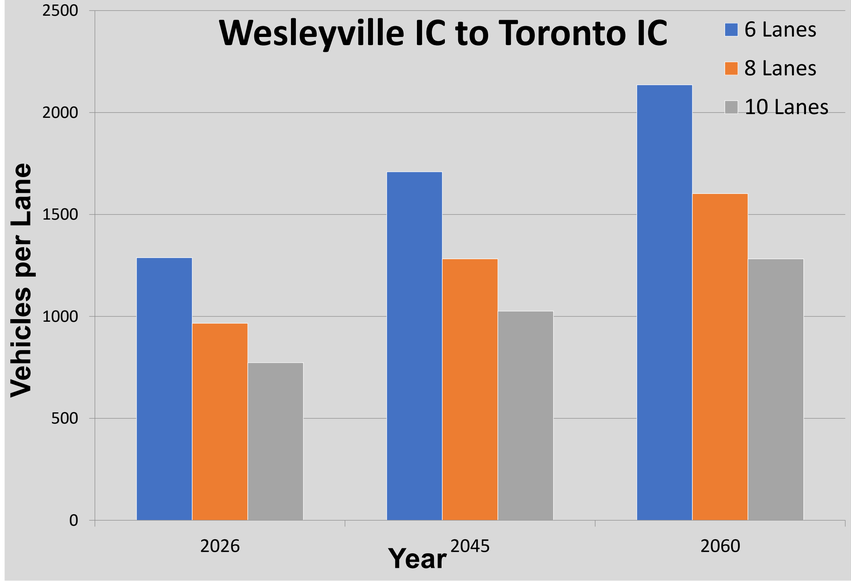
Newtonville Road Interchange (IC) to Wesleyville Road IC

- Highway 401 is currently operating at a level of LOS “**C**” between Newtonville Road IC to Wesleyville Road IC
- By 2060, mainline segment is expected to perform at LOS “**F**” with existing Highway 401 footprint (6-lanes)



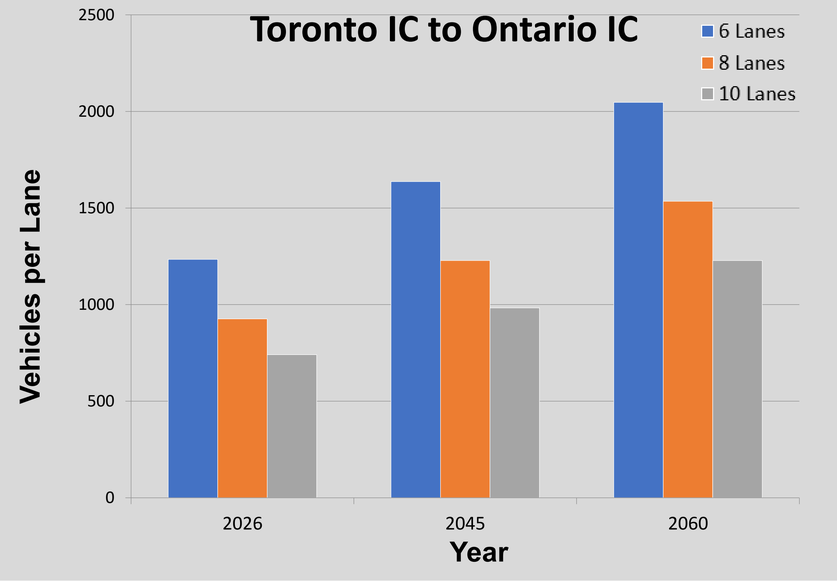
Wesleyville Road (IC) to Toronto Road IC

- Highway 401 is currently operating at a level of LOS “**C**” between Wesleyville Road Interchange (IC) to Toronto Road IC
- By 2060, mainline segment is expected to perform at LOS “**F**” with existing Highway 401 footprint (6-lanes)



Toronto Road IC to Ontario Street IC

- Highway 401 is currently operating at a level of LOS “**C**” between Toronto Road IC to Ontario Street IC
- By 2060, mainline segment is expected to perform at LOS “**F**” with existing Highway 401 footprint (6-lanes)



Alternatives

Detailed alternatives drawings are available separately on the project website at https://hwy401easttownlinetocranberry.ca/documentation.html

The following drawings are available:

- Highway 401 Alternatives: West Section
- Highway 401 Alternatives: East Section
- Interchange Alternatives: Wesleyville Road
- Interchange Alternatives: Toronto Road (County Road 2)
- Bridge Improvement Alternatives: Deer Park Road

Drainage Improvements

There are two structural culverts in the study area. The following improvement strategies will be considered for both structural culverts:



369



Morrish Creek Culvert
Site 21X-0369/C0

Replace with new culvert:

- ⊕ Long-term strategy
- ⊕ Accommodates interim (8-lane) Highway 401
- ⊕ Accommodates ultimate (10-lane) Highway 401
- ⊖ Requires significant excavation

465



Culvert (0.7 km east of Deer Park Road Underpass)
Site 21X-0465/C0

Replace with bridge:

- ⊕ Long-term strategy
- ⊕ Accommodates interim (8-lane) Highway 401
- ⊕ Accommodates ultimate (10-lane) Highway 401
- ⊖ Not economical for small embankments

Evaluation Process

Identify Criteria

Evaluation Criteria are established through:

- public input
- similar projects
- provincial guidelines
- existing conditions

Weigh Criteria

Each criterion is assigned a weight factor that best reflects its relative importance.

Evaluate Alternatives

All feasible alternatives are measured and given a score based on how well each is judged to satisfy the evaluation criteria

Rank Alternatives

The sum of the weighted scores provides a total score for each alternative. This is the basis for ranking the alternatives and identifying the Preferred Plan

How is the Preferred Plan Selected?

A detailed evaluation of the alternatives will be carried out to identify an improvement plan that addresses structural and future transportation needs and provides safe operations, while minimizing the impacts to the natural, social and cultural environments. This is accomplished by identifying evaluation criteria along with their relative importance, and then ranking the overall scores of the design alternatives.

The Preferred Plan

The concluding step in the analysis and evaluation process is the selection of a Preferred Plan.

This process includes:

- Reviewing the results of the analysis and evaluation based on specialist work and input received during the study
- Determining which criteria have the most influence on the outcome of the evaluation process
- Considering the sensitivity of the weightings
- Confirming the ranking of the alternatives
- Considering public/stakeholder response to the evaluation process

Preliminary Evaluation Criteria

Highway Engineering

Geometrics & Safety
- Design standards for provincial highways
- Potential for collisions on Highway 401
- Crossing road grades
- Pedestrian and cyclist accommodations

Constructability
- Construction techniques
- Traffic flow and operations, including local access and out-of-way travel (detours)

Utilities
- Impacts to utilities

Cost
- Consider total cost including utility relocations and property acquisition

Community

Property
- Impacts to private property

Noise & Air Quality
- Proximity to residences

Built & Cultural Heritage
- Impacts to potential cultural heritage resources

Archaeology
- Impacts to areas of archeological potential

Contamination
- Potential to encounter contaminated soils/groundwater

Groundwater
- Potential to impact groundwater recharge areas and highly vulnerable aquifers

Natural Environment

Terrestrial Ecosystem
- Impacts on wildlife habitat and provincially significant wetlands
- Impacts on significant trees and vegetation

Fish & Fish Habitat
- Impacts to watercourses and fish and fish habitat

Species of Conservation Concern
- Impacts to Species-at-Risk and habitat associated with Species-at-Risk

Designated Areas
- Impacts to Significant Ecological Area

Bridge Improvements

Culvert/Drainage Improvements

Highway Improvements

Investigations

In accordance with the MTO Class Environmental Assessment process, this study includes engineering and environmental specialists who are carrying out background studies and site-specific investigations to support the development and the evaluation of alternatives, and identify potential impacts and mitigation measures. The investigations for this study include, but are not limited to, the following:



Engineering Investigations

- Highway
- Traffic and Safety
- Bridge
- Drainage and Hydrology
- Geotechnical
- Foundations
- Electrical



Environment Investigations

- Terrestrial
- Aquatic
- Species at Risk



Community

- Noise and Air Quality
- Groundwater
- Archaeology
- Cultural Heritage
- Landscape Composition
- Contamination

Thank you for participating in this PIC

NEXT STEPS FOLLOWING THIS PIC:

- Review, consider and respond to the comments received
- Complete the evaluation of alternatives
- Select the Preferred Plan
- Identify the potential impacts and mitigation measures
- PIC 2

Visit the Project Website:

Ways to provide your comments:

- Fill out a comment sheet and place it in the box
- Email comments@hwy401easttownlinetocranberry.ca
- Contact the Project Team:

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We would appreciate receiving your comments by December 7th, 2026

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Comments and information regarding this study are being collected to satisfy the requirements of the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act, and in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.