



**Credit Valley
Conservation**
inspired by nature

August 21, 2020

Ms. Antonia Testa
Special Project Officer
Project Coordination – Team 2
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
135 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, ON M4V 1P5

Dear Ms. Testa,

Re: ERO 019-1882 Proposed regulation for a streamlined Environmental Assessment process for the Ministry of Transportation's Greater Toronto Area West Transportation Corridor project

Established in 1954, Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) is a community-based environmental organization, and one of 36 Conservation Authorities in Ontario, with a mandate dedicated to protecting, restoring and managing the natural resources of the Credit River Watershed.

CVC appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed regulation for a streamlined Environmental Assessment process for the Ministry of Transportation's Greater Toronto Area West Transportation Corridor project. CVC has been participating in the GTA West project from the onset and considerable time and effort have been spent starting in Stage 1 and through the EA process by both the Province and affected agencies, including CVC, to ensure that the proposed Environmental Assessment evaluation process provides an appropriate level of assessment, consultation and opportunities for input and to ensure that agency comments and concerns are incorporated into the evaluation of project options.

CVC staff are supportive of improving and enhancing legislative and regulatory processes and requirements to modernize and improve efficiencies related to service delivery and issuing approvals while ensuring a high level of environmental protection. However, CVC staff have the following comments on the proposed streamlining of the current EA process and proposed new regulation:

1. It is unclear how the proposed streamlined approach allows for an appropriate level of evaluation of the proposed project components, as well as, an appropriate level of public/agency participation in the process during the decision-making stages. Appropriate levels of technical and field study along with agency and public input are critical components of successful EA projects. The proposed changes to the process, including the provision of an early works process, should maintain the same level of agency and public involvement and be evaluated using information from complete comprehensive technical studies as in the current process. A chart or graph showing the steps of the proposed streamlined process versus the current process would be a helpful tool to understand the proposed changes to the process and how it affects agency and public consultation and completion of technical study steps prior to

making decision. CVC is hopeful this will be further clarified once the regulation has been drafted and provided for review and comment.

2. It appears the proposed regulation will shift the approvals process to the Ministry of Transportation (the project proponent). It is not clear if there are any changes to the mechanism to create and enforce conditions of approval as part of the conclusion of the EA portion of this project. Typically, conditions of approval have been used to ensure various aspects of the project were formally carried to the detailed design stages and provide agencies, including CVC, a vehicle to ensure our program interests continue to be considered and addressed. More clarity should be provided on any proposed changes. This may complicate/frustrate the proposed process and should be further clarified once a draft of the regulation has been provided for review and comment.
3. The proposed streamlining includes the creation of an issues resolution process to be administered by the Ministry of Transportation. CVC has concerns that an issues resolution process which is administered by one of the parties that may be in conflict can lead to, at minimum, the appearance of inappropriate bias in the decision or outcome. CVC recommends that any issues resolution process continues to be administered by MECP. Again, CVC is hopeful this will be further clarified once the regulation has been drafted and provided for review and comment.

The future draft regulation will outline specifics of the currently proposed changes to the EA process. CVC requests that an opportunity to review and comment on draft regulation is provided to gain a better understanding how the proposed changes and our comments and concerns noted above are being incorporated into the proposed streamlined process.

CVC looks forward to an opportunity to review the proposed regulation and to working with the MECP and MTO to ensure that the proposed changes to the EA process continue to provide appropriate opportunities for input from CVC.

Sincerely,



Jakub Kilis
Manager, Infrastructure and Regulations