



### INTRODUCTION

This is the second in a series of seven newsletters that will be released over the course of the Highway 7 & 8 Transportation Corridor Planning and Class EA Study. During the lifespan of the Planning and Class EA Study, the newsletters will explain where we are in the study process, provide a status update, and describe the activities that are taking place. Each newsletter will also notify you of events and documents that will be available for review. Our study team appreciates your interest and we trust that you will find these newsletters to be a valuable information resource as the study proceeds.

### THE STUDY

The Highway 7 & 8 Transportation Corridor Planning and Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study will develop a plan that addresses:

- capacity, operation and safety needs along the 2-lane and 4-lane sections of Highway 7 & 8 between Stratford and New Hamburg and through the urban centres of Stratford, Shakespeare and New Hamburg for the movement of people and goods; and
- linkage needs within the Analysis Area for broader transportation connections to other regions in the province.

The study will also:

- prepare a preliminary design for the provincial roadway components of that plan;
- review and build on the findings of the Study Design Report completed by MTO in 2006;

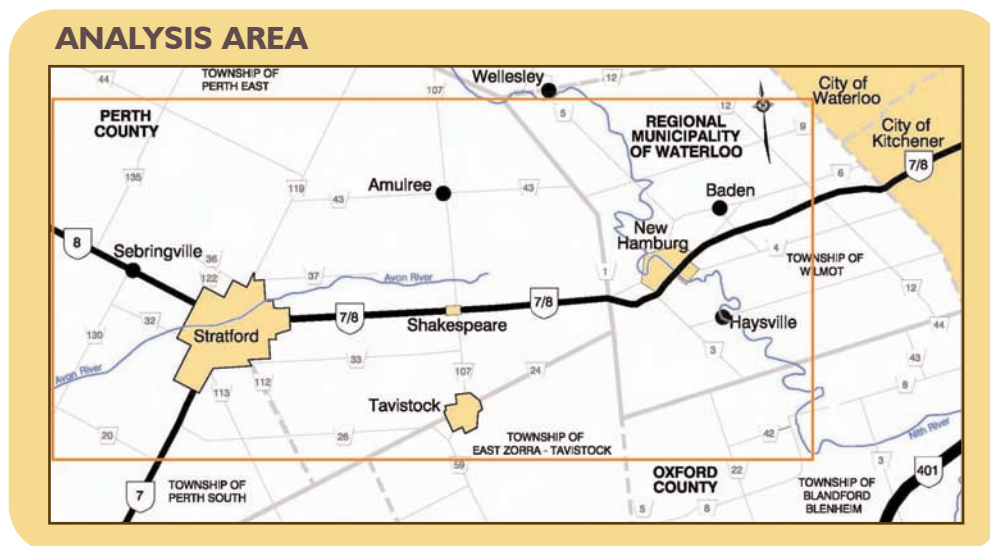
- address the policies and growth forecasts of the final Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, released by the province on June 16, 2006; and
- be documented in a Transportation Environmental Study Report for public review at study completion.

The study will be carried out as a Group 'A' project in accordance with the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities.

### STUDY UPDATE

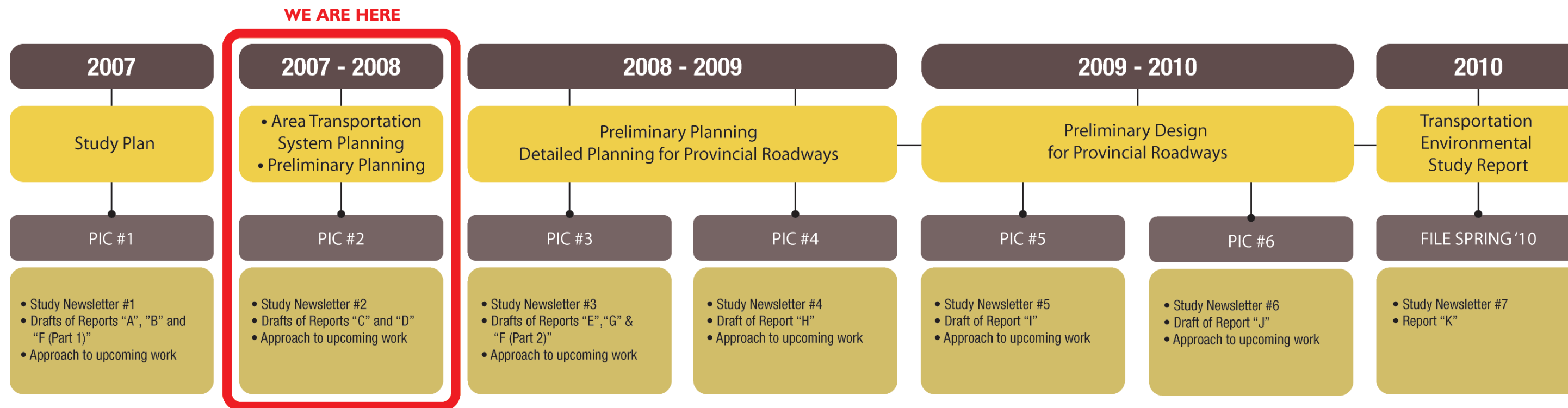
Since Public Information Centre #1 (PIC#1), the study team has done the following:

- Updated Draft Reports A - Study Plan, Report B - Overview of Transportation, Land Use and Economic Considerations within the Analysis Area, and Report F (Part 1) - Environmental Conditions and Constraints to include input received from the public, agencies and municipalities;
- Identified area transportation system problems and opportunities as described in Draft Report C - Area Transportation System Problems and Opportunities;
- Identified area transportation system alternatives, determined the degree to which these alternatives address problems and opportunities and identified the alternatives that will proceed to preliminary planning as described in Draft Report D - Area Transportation System Alternatives;
- Generated preliminary planning alternatives (corridors) that will be evaluated following this round of PICs.



## STUDY PROCESS

Major study phases, reports and formal points of contact are shown in the following diagram:



### DRAFT REPORT C: AREA TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Report C documents the Area Transportation System needs within the Analysis Area, including:

- Process overview for the development, assessment and evaluation of Area Transportation System alternatives;
- Population and employment growth in the Analysis Area;
- Existing transportation issues;
- Transportation problems; and
- Transportation opportunities.

The transportation problems which were identified for the Analysis Area and the opportunities that may be available to address these issues and improve the transportation system within the Analysis Area are as follows:

#### Transportation Problems:

- There is inadequate transportation capacity to meet current and projected needs (to 2031) for the efficient movement of both people and goods along the 2-lane and 4-lane sections of Highway 7&8 between Stratford and the New Hamburg area and on Highway 7&8 through the urban centres (Stratford, Shakespeare and New Hamburg).
- Capacity constraints result in trip diversion to parallel rural roadways in the Analysis Area. Such routes are generally not designed to accommodate high traffic volumes. These routes also travel through rural communities where through traffic results in safety and operational concerns.
- Provincial / inter-regional traffic through urban centres along Highway 7&8 interferes with their "downtown / historic crossroads" function.
- Geometric and traffic safety characteristics along Highway 7&8 are not appropriate to address forecasted needs in a manner that

facilitates their safe and efficient use for the movement of people and goods.

- There is currently no comprehensive highway access management plan for Highway 7&8 from Greater Stratford to New Hamburg to protect highway function/operation/safety, and to discourage inappropriate highway-related land development/growth.
- The connection of the Analysis Area to transportation corridors serving other regions in the province may be inadequate for long-term transportation and economic development needs.
- Limited inter-city transit service is available so the majority of trips are auto-based.
- Truck trips in the corridor have limited route choice and are subject to either traffic congestion in Stratford and/or New Hamburg or connecting roadways that are inadequate or not intended for commercial vehicle activity.

#### Transportation Opportunities:

- Policies and objectives of the Provincial Growth Plan promote opportunities to:
  - Provide for "transit-first" initiatives that support the provision of transit service between urban growth centres; and
  - Recognize the importance of balanced investment in the road and highway system, to better serve goods movement and the needs of the travelling public.
- Area transportation system planning and local land use planning in the analysis area need to be co-ordinated, in order to ensure new/intensified development associated with forecasted population and employment growth in the Analysis Area does not negatively affect or even preclude alternatives to address transportation problems and opportunities.
- The local transportation network is an integral part of the overall

transportation network within the Analysis Area. The planned road programs of the area municipalities as identified in the Official Plans and Transportation Master Plans aim to preserve, improve and maximize use of the existing infrastructure.

- Implementation of alternative mobility strategies will assist in managing growth and congestion, provide a framework for increased transit use, provide opportunities to consider car pool, HOV and other transportation options, and optimize the current system through continued and necessary infrastructure investment.
- The provision of regular transit service between communities would provide an alternative to the auto in the Highway 7&8 corridor.
- Opportunities for use of the rail corridor to improve passenger travel connections between the Analysis Area and urban centres to the east.
- A new transportation corridor has the potential to avoid overloading existing urban arterials and parallel rural roadways.
- A new transportation corridor linking Greater Stratford and the New Hamburg area would improve reliability and redundancy in the area transportation system.

### DRAFT REPORT D: AREA TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM ALTERNATIVES

Report D documents the Area Transportation System alternatives, including:

- Long list of Area Transportation System alternatives and their assessment;
- Combination Area Transportation System alternatives and their assessment; and
- Summary of assessment results.

#### Long List of Area Transportation System Alternatives:

- Do Nothing
- Local Transit
- TDM (Transportation Demand Management)
- TSM (Transportation System Management)
- Freight Rail
- Air Service
- Marine Service
- Inter-regional Transit and Passenger Rail
- Municipal Roads
- Provincial Highways/Transitways

#### Combination Area Transportation System Alternatives:

- Do Nothing
- Combination 1: Optimize existing network
- Combination 2: New/expanded non-road infrastructure + elements of Combination 1
- Combination 3: Widen municipal roads and/or provincial highways + elements of Combination 2
- Combination 4: New provincial roadways + elements of Combination 3

#### Summary of Assessment Results:

- Individual Area Transportation System Alternatives do not address identified problems and opportunities
- Two combination alternatives have the potential to address the identified problems and opportunities and were carried forward for further review:
  - Combination 3, consisting of TDM, transit improvements and widening existing Highway 7&8
  - Combination 4, consisting of TDM, transit improvements and local by-passes or a new transportation corridor north or south of existing Highway 7&8
- Other combination alternatives do not address the identified problems and opportunities



## PRELIMINARY PLANNING ALTERNATIVES (CORRIDORS)

Three groups of preliminary planning alternatives (corridors) were generated, specifically an existing corridor alternative, by-pass corridor alternatives and new corridor alternatives. The by-pass and new corridor alternatives are illustrated below.

By-Pass  
Corridor  
Alternatives



New  
Corridor  
Alternatives



## PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR COMMENTS

Reports C and D have been prepared in draft in order to obtain information and comments from stakeholders. The PICs provide the first opportunity to review and comment on these reports. Your input is requested by **August 15, 2008** so the reports can be finalized.

Your input is also requested on the proposed approach to the following upcoming work:

- process, factors and criteria for assessing and evaluating preliminary planning alternatives (corridors)
- process for generating detailed planning alternatives (routes)

## HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION OR COMMENT ON THE STUDY?

Your comments and questions are always welcome and can be submitted at any time during the Class EA process. Your interest in this study is greatly appreciated.

All stakeholders and interested members of the public who are on our contact mailing list will receive a mailed invitation to attend PICs. If you are new to the area or know someone who would be interested, please contact the study team. Please watch for upcoming information on the study.

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Visit our study website for regular updates and notices of events: [www.7and8corridorstudy.ca](http://www.7and8corridorstudy.ca)

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