



# MEMO

**To:** Mayor & Members of Council

**Date:** September 14, 2017

**From:** Don MacLeod, Chief Administrative Officer

**Number:** 2017-132

**Subject:** High Speed Rail Proposal

**File:** T13 Railways/High Speed Rail

**Council Meeting Date:** September 5, 2017

**Agenda Item:** 7(d)

## RECOMMENDATION:

**For Council's information only.**

## BACKGROUND:

As Council is aware, the Province is moving ahead with preliminary design work on a high speed rail (HSR) project and investing \$15 million in a comprehensive environmental assessment. This project was announced on May 19, 2017, and follows the recommendations in a report filed with the Province prepared by a Special Advisor tasked to review alternatives for the delivery of HSR in Ontario. A full copy of the Special Advisor's report can be found at <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/publications/high-speed-rail-in-ontario-final-report/pdfs/high-speed-rail-in-ontario-final-report.pdf>.

During the yearlong engagement of the Special Advisor consultations were held with private stakeholders, Indigenous communities and the four main station area communities (Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, London and Windsor). The four municipalities along the proposed KW – London corridor (Wilmot, East Zorra-Tavistock, Zorra and Thames Centre) were not consulted in this process even though Recommendation 15 suggests a new, dedicated HSR line be constructed adjacent to an existing Hydro One corridor.

## COMMENTS:

CAOs from Wilmot, East Zorra-Tavistock, Zorra and Thames Centre met on September 13, 2017, to discuss this project and how the municipalities can engage the Province to begin consultations on addressing municipal concerns. At this point in time, very little is known about next steps in the project and when the environmental assessment will actually commence. It was felt that an exploratory meeting with the lead government agency, Ministry of Transportation, would be a logical first step to establish a dialogue.

Even though the Special Advisor's report has identified a recommended corridor, the environmental assessment will have to identify optional routes prior to selecting the

preferred alternative. For this reason, the group felt that discussions with MTO regarding a specified route would be premature. However, there is merit in discussing a framework for consultation and other pertinent matters. A list of discussion points is noted below.

1. Create a website specifically dedicated to this project as the main means of disseminating information to all stakeholder and the general public. This would increase transparency for all parties.
2. Stand-alone consultations with corridor impacted municipalities similar to those being recommended to Indigenous communities. Corridor impacted municipalities and landowners will provide the conduit for this driver of economic growth and deserve a special consultation process.
3. The Province must provide capacity funding to corridor impacted municipalities in the study area to facilitate engagement on the HSR project. To fully understand and assess all impacts on corridor impacted municipalities, specific expertise across a wide range of disciplines will be required. Tax payers of local municipalities should not be expected to pay for these costs on a project that is provincially and nationally significant.

This initial approach will hopefully establish linkages with MTO and open dialogue for what will likely be a long and complicated environmental assessment process. Should this approach not be successful staff would report back with another strategy.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

N/A.

#### **LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

N/A

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

Respectfully submitted by:



Don MacLeod  
Chief Administrative Officer