

North Halton Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) Public Information Centre #1 – Steeles Avenue (Video 3) – Text Description

Slide 1 (Steeles Avenue Introduction)

Welcome to the Steeles Avenue corridor of the North Halton Coordinated Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study (or “MCEA”) Study. This video will discuss information that pertains specifically to this section of the study area. For an overview of the study as a whole, including the purpose of the study, study process and schedule, and overall study area, please view Video #1 – Introduction. To learn about the James Snow Parkway corridor, please view Video #2. To learn about the Regional Road 25 corridor, please view Video #4. For next steps, including evaluation frameworks and PIC #2, please view Video #5 – Next Steps.

Slide 2 (Study Overview)

This MCEA Study is considering a range of options for improvements to Steeles Avenue from Regional Road 25 (Martin Street) to Trafalgar Road (7.7 km in length) in the Towns of Milton and Halton Hills. These options include road widening, cross-sectional requirements, active transportation, transit supportive infrastructure, intersection improvements, and overall traffic operation improvements.

Slide 3 (Existing Cross Section)

Steeles Avenue is a major arterial between Regional Road 25 and Trafalgar Road.

The speed limit of Steeles Avenue is 50 km/h from Regional Road 25 to Ontario Street North, 60 km/h from Ontario Street North to James Snow Parkway, and 70 km/h from James Snow Parkway to Trafalgar Road. There are four vehicle lanes, sidewalks and multi-use paths vary throughout the corridor with some gaps. There are bus stops approximately every 500 metres on Steeles Avenue in both eastbound and westbound directions within the study area, and hydro poles are alternating between the north and south side of the road.

Slide 4 (Existing Land Uses)

According to the Region’s 2022 Official Plan, Steeles Avenue falls mostly in the Regional Urban Area. Portions of the corridor are located within the employment area and built boundaries.

According to the Town of Milton’s 2023 Official Plan and the Town of Halton Hill’s 2020 Official Plan, lands adjacent to Steeles Avenue are mainly residential and commercial west of James Snow Parkway and mainly industrial and commercial east of James Snow Parkway.

Slide 5 (Existing Natural Heritage)

From a Natural Heritage perspective, Steeles Avenue intersects the Regional Natural Heritage System (or NHS) and the Greenbelt NHS, which is made up of watercourses, wetlands, woodlands, potential wildlife and fish habitats, and other natural areas that have ecological significance. There are seven watercourse crossings, including Middle Sixteen Mile Creek and its tributaries. One watercourse provides habitat for Species at Risk. Wetlands, watercourses and floodplains are all regulated by Conservation Halton.

Slide 6 (Existing Cultural Heritage)

A Cultural Heritage review was undertaken and identified the following cultural heritage resources:

- 5 known Built Heritage Resources were identified,
- 5 potential Built Heritage Resources were identified, and
- 1 potential Cultural Heritage Landscape was identified.

A Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment was undertaken which identified 29 previously registered archaeological sites within 1 km of the study area, one of which is located within 50 metres. Parts of the study area have archaeological potential. If lands are proposed to be impacted, a Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment will be required.

Slide 7 (Existing Traffic Conditions)

With respect to existing traffic conditions, Steeles Avenue operates with delay at the major intersections including Martin Street, Ontario Street, Esquesing Line, James Snow Parkway, and Trafalgar Road.

The delay at the intersection with Trafalgar Road is caused by high morning and afternoon volumes on the eastbound, westbound, and southbound approaches, as drivers travel to/from the Highway 401 interchange or other commercial attractions.

The segments along Steeles Avenue eastbound between James Snow Parkway and Sixth Line in the morning peak hour, and westbound from Trafalgar Road to Sixth Line in the afternoon peak hour are approaching capacity due to high directional commuter trips.

The corridor experiences about 19,000 to 28,600 daily vehicles between Regional Road 25 and James Snow Parkway and 15,000 to 15,800 from James Snow Parkway to Trafalgar Road. Approximately 7 to 13 per cent of daily traffic are trucks.

Slide 8 (Future Transit Conditions)

A study called the Defining Major Transit Requirements in Halton Region or DMTR was completed in 2019 and recommended 2031 and 2041 transit priority corridor networks. The DMTR identified Steeles Avenue as Mixed Traffic (2031) & Priority Bus Corridor (2041), with the opportunity to implement transit supportive infrastructure such as: High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV), Transit Signal Priority (TSP), queue

jump lanes, bus shelters, and other transit stop improvements. TSP involves optimizing signal timing to minimize delay at signalized intersections.

Slide 9 (Existing Safety Conditions)

A Road Safety Review was conducted as part of this study to review the condition of all features on Steeles Avenue within the study limits. Key findings include

- Steeles Avenue is experiencing a consistent number of collisions each year, with a reduction in severe collisions; and
- Most collisions occurred at the intersections of Regional Road 25, James Snow Parkway and Trafalgar Road.

Recommendations to enhance safety will be considered in the next stages of the study.

Slide 10 (Problem & Opportunity Statement)

Based on the planning and transportation context, we have developed the following to summarize the problem and opportunity statement for Steeles Avenue.

- Steeles Avenue is a key east-west link providing connections in the Towns of Milton and Halton Hills.
- Without improvements to the corridor, traffic operations are expected to experience increasing delays and demand.
- To support growing travel demand, as well as a future transit priority corridor, improvements to Steeles Avenue are required to create a transportation system which is safe, continuous, connected, and coordinated for all users and abilities.
- The future right-of-way will accommodate active transportation, transit supportive infrastructure, an improved pedestrian environment and allow for improvements to traffic operations at intersections and along the corridor.

Alternative solutions to address this problem and opportunity statement are addressed on the next slide.

Slide 11 (Alternative Solutions Evaluation)

The MCEA process requires that alternative solutions be considered to address the problem and opportunity statement identified for the study area. Alternative solutions represent functionally different solutions to address the problem and opportunity statement. This slide presents a summary of the assessment of the alternative solutions.

Alternatives for Steeles Avenue include:

1. Do nothing which is maintenance of existing conditions on Steeles Avenue.

2. Active Transportation Improvements which includes improving active transportation facilities throughout the corridor and at intersections to support healthy and safe communities, active lifestyles and provide inclusive multi-modal transportation options for all users of all abilities.
3. Intersection/Operational Improvements which include enhancing traffic operations at intersections through physical and operational modifications.
4. Improvements to Steeles Avenue which includes widening Steeles Avenue to accommodate additional travel capacity and opportunities for transit priority corridor infrastructure.
5. Improvements to Other Roadways which includes undertaking capital improvements to widen other east-west roadways in proximity to the study area beyond planned improvements.
6. Transportation Demand Management which includes implementing measures to manage travel demand by encouraging carpooling, shifting travel demand through off-peak hours through flexible work hours and telecommute.

Slide 12 (Recommended Solution)

In order to support future travel demand and a transportation system that is safe, continuous, connected, and coordinated for all users and all abilities, the recommended solution for Steeles Avenue is proposed to consist of a combination of the following three alternative solutions:

- Improve facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, mobility device users and other non-vehicular travel to create a safe and accessible network;
- Improve traffic operations at intersections through physical and operational modifications; and
- Widen Steeles Avenue to six lanes to provide additional travel lanes and opportunities for HOV and transit priority corridor infrastructure.

Slide 13 (Traffic Analysis – Future Conditions)

Halton Region is undertaking an Integrated Master Plan for Water, Wastewater and Transportation that will identify infrastructure to enable Local Municipal future growth targets to 2051.

However, there remain several projects identified through the 2011 Transportation Master Plan – The Road to Change (TMP) to be implemented to improve network connectivity and address forecasted travel demand to 2031.

The TMP considered overall network travel demand and identified that six-lanes are required for Steeles Avenue to accommodate future growth and transit priority by 2031.

In this study, we will take a closer look at intersection and corridor operations to better understand future needs, considering three options:

- Maintain Existing Conditions (“Do Nothing” Alternative);
- Widen to 6-General Purpose Lanes; and
- Widen to 4-General Purpose Lanes + 2 High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

Slide 14 (We Want to Hear From you)

We want to hear from you. Please provide your comments and feedback on the Steeles Avenue study background, existing conditions, and recommended solution by completing the online survey. We will review comments and take your feedback into consideration as we move into the next phase and develop alternative design concepts.

As mentioned earlier in this video, please view Video #2 to learn more about the James Snow Parkway corridor and Video #4 to learn more about the Regional Road 25 corridor. For next steps, including evaluation frameworks and PIC #2, please view Video #5 – Next Steps.