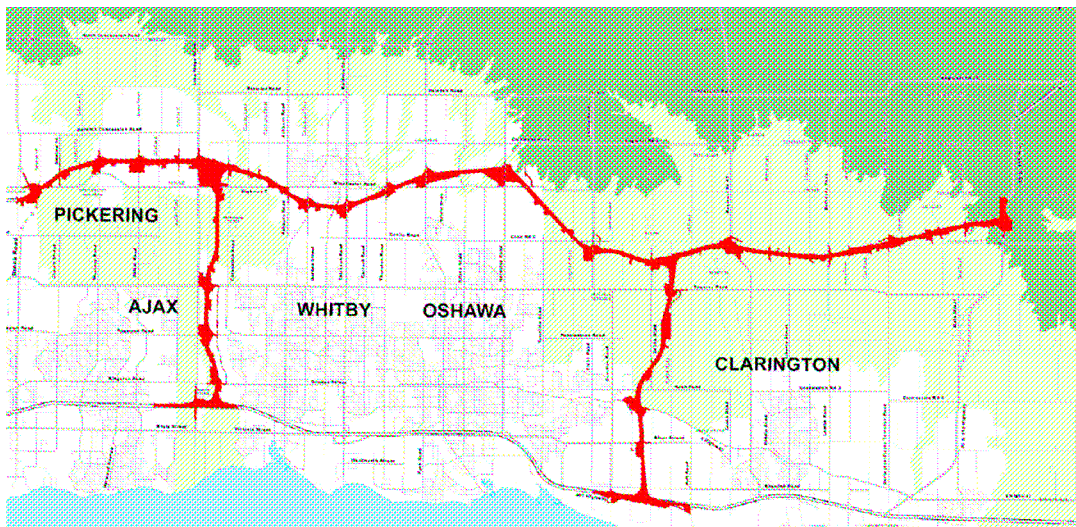


Reaching a Fork in the Road

The Peterborough Social Planning Council Announces Social Impact Study on the Benefits and Challenges of the Highway 407 Extension and the Importance of Smart vs. Status Quo Growth

The Peterborough Social Planning Council (PSPC) is undertaking a major research project on the social impact of the Highway 407 East Extension on the Peterborough Community. The 407 East Extension is expected to run across North Durham Region, from where Highway 407 currently ends at Brock Road in Pickering to the 35/115, with two major interchanges: one between Ajax-Whitby and another between Oshawa-Clarington, as is seen in the map below.¹



There are a range of costs associated with this project. Environmentally, the 407 extension will cross many water systems: rivers, creeks and wetlands. The project is expected to cost in the range of two billion dollars.² But with these costs, also come opportunities for growth (economic development and infrastructure) in communities affected.

Peterborough has been set out by the provincial Places to Grow Initiative as an Urban Growth Centre, a role which entails being a centre for “institutional” and “region-wide” public services, a centre for transit infrastructure, a high density employment centre, and a centre which will accommodate “a significant share of population and employment growth”.³ In this role, Peterborough’s population is projected to increase by 13,000 residents to a total population of 88,000 by 2031.

¹ Map Courtesy of: TSH Engineers, Architects & Planners. “407 East Environmental Assessment. Available Online: www.407eastea.com

² Toll Road News. “Ontario province “to own” 407-East extension, but private proposals sought” <http://www.tollroadsnews.com/node/3969>

³ Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, (2008). “Places to Grow: Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe”. http://www.placestogrow.ca/images/pdfs/UGC_final.pdf

This extension is expected to have a tremendous effect on future development in Peterborough City and County, with both positive and negative effects. It is expected to bring economic development and investment to industries including tourism, manufacturing and agriculture, but there are concerns amongst Peterborough residents about long-term job creation, impacts on the environment, and the extent to which Peterborough City and County are prepared to deal with growth.

Our research begs several questions:

- **Where does the balance lie between the benefits and challenges of the 407 Extension for Peterborough City and County?**
- **What challenges does the 407 Extension bring to two current provincial initiatives: *Places to Grow* and *the Greenbelt Plan*?**
- **How can we ensure that Peterborough's future is one of smart growth and better choices rather than status-quo growth?**

The PSPC's Social Impact Study seeks to create discussions with Peterborough residents and Peterborough business leaders in order to get the necessary feedback for our research. Our research will include focus group based discussions, key informant interviews, discussions with selected municipalities, such as Barrie, and a literature review.

For further information on this project please contact:

Dawn Berry-Merriam
Research and Policy Analyst
dawnbm@pspc.on.ca

Cara Walsh
camariewalsh@gmail.com

For more information about our InfoNotes contact Dawn Berry Merriam at 705-743-5915 or email dawnbm@pspc.on.ca.



A United Way Member Agency