

**Directed to:** Mayor Joe Preston and Members of City Council

**Meeting Date:**  
April 7, 2025

**Department:** Environmental Services

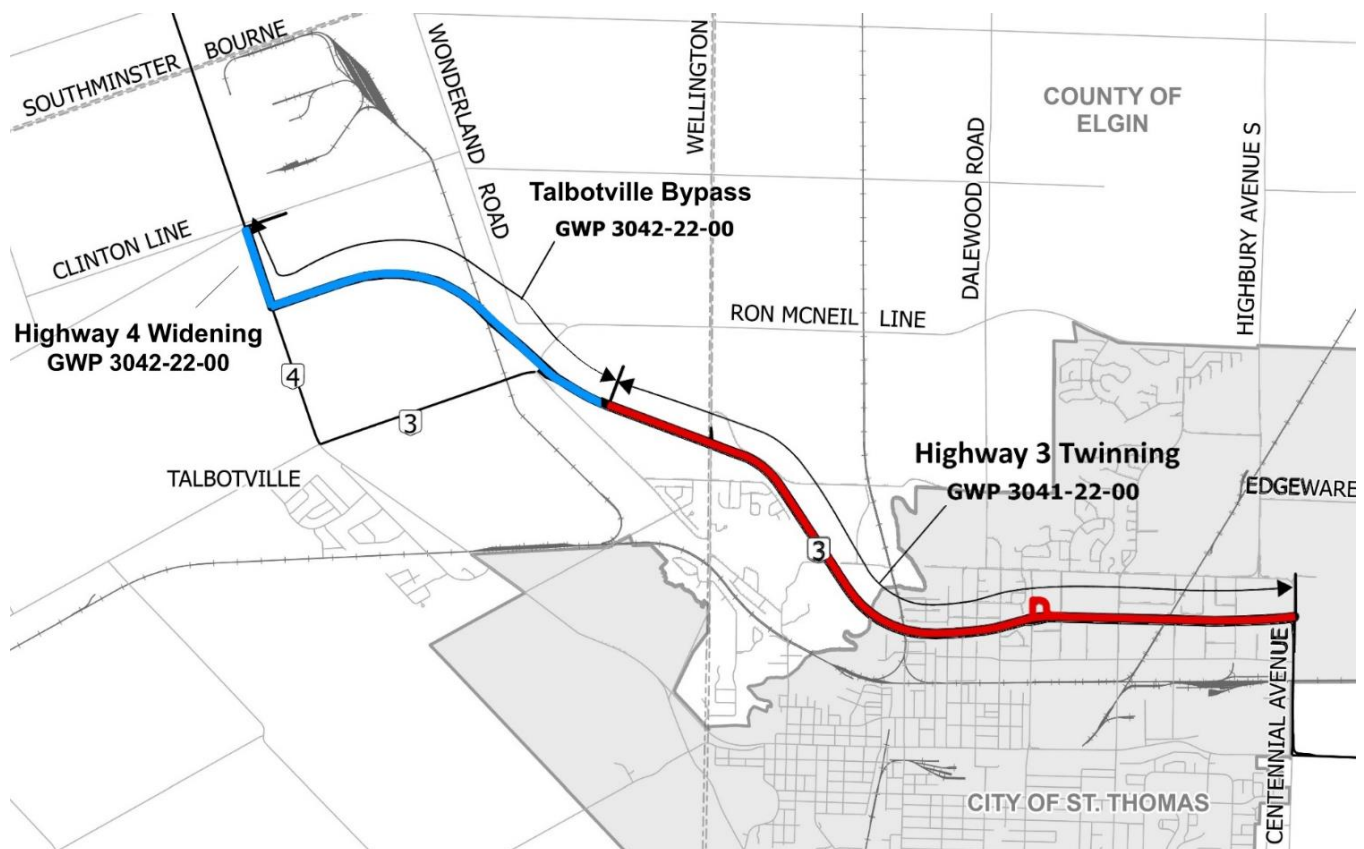
**Attachment**
**Prepared By:** Daniel Koppert, LET, PMP, Manager of Capital Works

**Subject: MTO Highway 3 Project Update**
**Recommendation:**

THAT: Report ES-13-25 MTO Highway 3 Project Update be received for information.

**Background:**

In response to projected growth in the area and with the electric vehicle (EV) battery manufacturing facility announcement in the Spring of 2023, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) initiated a Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) for the twinning of existing Highway 3 through St. Thomas (GWP 3041-22-00) and for a new alignment of Highway 3 bypassing Talbotville (GWP 3042-22-00) as shown in **Figure 1**. A notice of study completion was posted on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 with both projects advancing to detailed design. More information regarding the Class EA process, project scope, preferred options and recommendations can be found at [www.highway3elgin.ca](http://www.highway3elgin.ca)


**Figure 1 – MTO Projects**
**Analysis:**

The MTO projects consist generally of the following components:

**Talbotville Bypass (GWP 3042-22-00)**

- Widening of existing Highway 4 from two to four-lanes (from the new Talbotville Bypass to Clinton Line)
- A new Highway 3 alignment bypassing Talbotville (also known as the Talbotville Bypass),
- Connecting Highway 3 near Ron McNeil Line to Highway 4
- Roundabout at Highway 4 and Talbotville Bypass
- Interchange at Ron McNeil Line / Wonderland Road
- Associated drainage and infrastructure improvements to facilitate the construction of the bypass, including construction of new culverts, and bridges
- Replacement of utilities in conflict with the planned roadway

### Highway 3 Twinning (GWP 3041-22-00)

- Twinning of Highway 3 through St. Thomas (Centennial Avenue to Ron McNeil Line)
- Interchange at Wellington Road
- Improvements to First Avenue interchange (as shown in **Figure 2**)
- Connection to proposed Centennial Avenue roundabout (study being completed by others)
- Twinning of Kettle Creek Bridge (as shown in **Figure 3**)
- Associated drainage improvements (culverts and sewers)
- Replacement of utilities in conflict with the planned roadway
- Noise barriers and retaining walls, as required



**Figure 2 – Conceptual Rendering of the Improvements at the First Avenue Interchange**

As per the mandatory notice provided at the February 3, 2025 Council Meeting, the MTO is undertaking expropriation of 12 properties (partial and/or full) within the City of St. Thomas along the MTO corridor to accommodate the work. This property acquisition work is still in progress.

City staff have been meeting with the MTO's design team and other area municipal representatives on a monthly basis since the completion of the Class EA to advance detailed design as it relates to the municipal infrastructure, and to address any municipal related concerns.

The Talbotville Bypass and Highway 3 Twinning is a multi-year construction project that the MTO intends to complete in stages under multiple contracts. Detailed design is progressing rapidly and the MTO has advised that construction on the Talbotville Bypass (GWP 3042-22-00) project is expected to begin in the summer of 2025. This project will require large quantities of fill for the construction of the Highway 3 and Ron McNeil Line Interchange that will be excavated from the west side of the Highway 3 Expressway in St. Thomas between Centennial Avenue and First Avenue and transported to the Talbotville Bypass project area. Tree clearing in advance of this work has begun already, with excavation expected to begin as early as July.



**Figure 3 – Conceptual Rendering of the Proposed Kettle Creek Bridge**

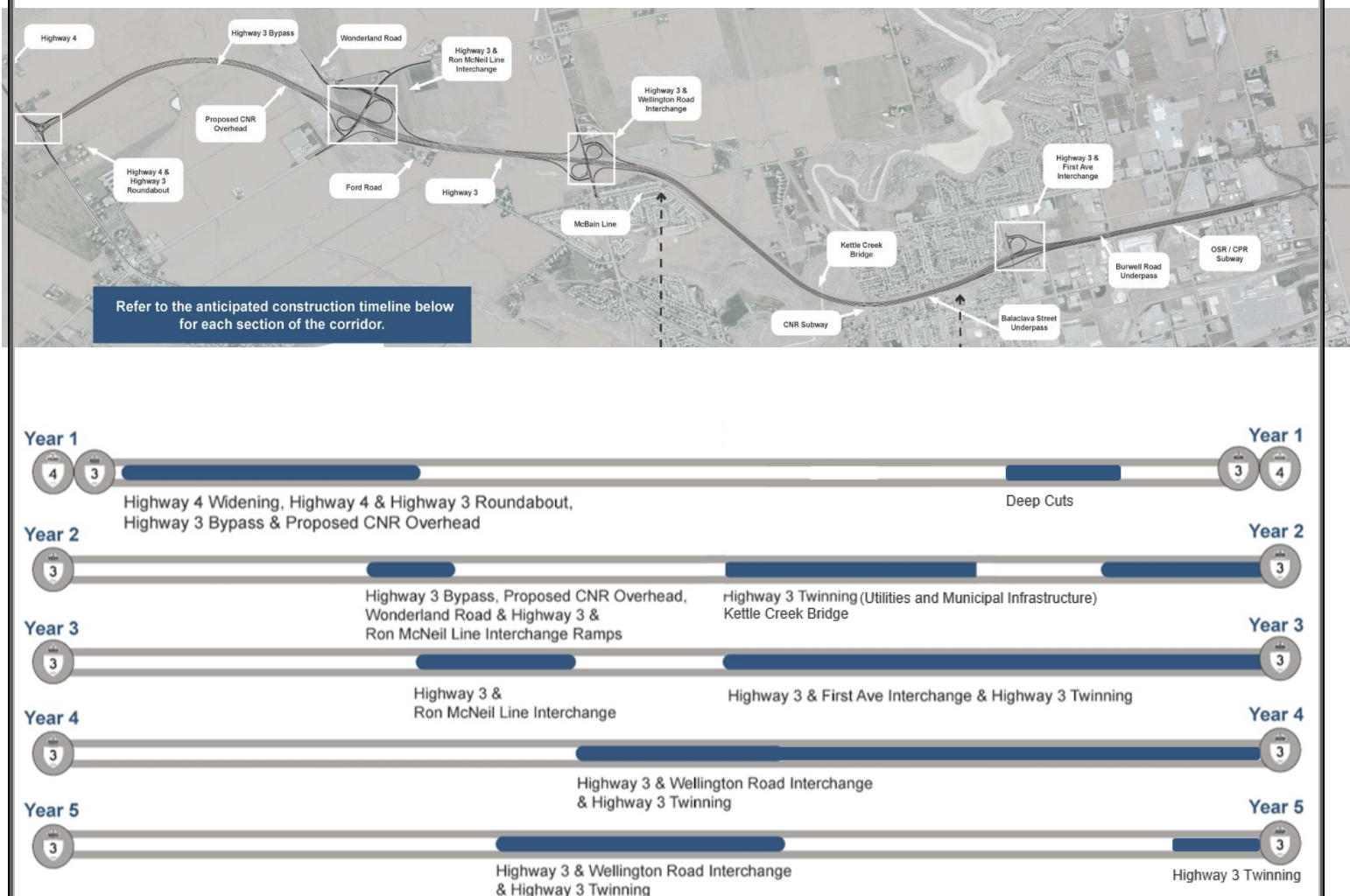
The St. Thomas Area Water Supply System (STAWSS) existing 750mm transmission main conflicts with the proposed Highway 3 and Ron McNeil Interchange configuration. As part of the Talbotville Bypass project (GWP 3042-22-00) the MTO intends to replace the existing 750mm transmission main along a new alignment from the new Ford Road cul-de-sac to Wonderland Road, including all related appurtenances, and at Water Tower Line/ McBain Road west of Wellington Road. The STAWSS transmission main realignment work is one of the important components to be completed as part of the Talbotville Bypass project in 2025. To carry out this work there will be some overnight interruptions to the STASWSS system, affecting residents in Southwold and Central Elgin. The coordination and communication of any overnight STASWSS shutdowns will be completed in accordance with DWQMS Communication Protocol.

As part of the Highway 3 Twinning project (GWP 3042-21-00) the MTO will be required to replace municipal infrastructure crossings that may conflict with the proposed works. Potentially impacted City infrastructure includes 6 municipal trunk watermain crossings, 11 storm sewers outlets, a parallel trunk sanitary sewer from Burwell Road to Woodworth Avenue, and 3 sanitary sewer crossings. City staff are working collaboratively with the MTO and their design team to identify and mitigate impacts to City infrastructure. In general, it is expected that impacted City infrastructure would be renewed within the MTO right-of-way on a like-for-like basis as part of the Twinning project.

Staff have undertaken a review of each infrastructure crossing to determine if upgrades are required to meet future growth demand. Four watermain crossings have been identified for sizing upgrades to provide system redundancy and meet future development needs. In addition, new sanitary sewer forcemain crossings and trunk sewer crossing upgrades are required at Woodworth Avenue to provide the sewer capacity for PowerCo and the greater Yarmouth Yards industrial subdivision and to direct the sewage flows to the planned Water Reclamation Facility (WRF 2) on Dalewood Road.

The MTO has indicated that new crossing agreements will be required for any municipal infrastructure within the MTO right-of-way. Draft agreements are being prepared and will be communicated to Council for approval when they become available.

A preliminary project schedule for the MTO’s projects is provided in **Figure 4**.



**Figure 4 – Preliminary Construction Staging Sequencing and Timeline**

**Strategic Priority:**

Strategic Pillar: Excellence in All We Do - Priority #3: Thriving Economic Development

**Financial Impact:**

There are no direct financial impacts to the City as a result of this report. Costs to upgrade the sizing or to provide new infrastructure crossings within the MTO right-of-way will be included as part of the Capital Budget for the respective year of construction.

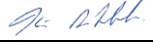
Respectfully,



Daniel Koppert, LET, PMP  
Manager of Capital Works

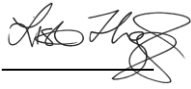
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Reviewed By:



City Engineer

Approved By:



City Manager