

Notice of Motion: GTA West Corridor (413 Highway)

Moved by Markham Regional Councillor Jim Jones

Seconded by Councillor Ward 7 Khalid Usman

GTA WEST CORRIDOR (413 HIGHWAY)

At the April 21st Development Services Committee meeting, Committee members will be requested not to support the GTA West Corridor (413 Highway) and Transmission Corridor by adopting the following Motion:

- I) **WHEREAS** Ontario farming and food processing together employ one million persons and generate over \$35 billion economic benefits annually; and
- II) **WHEREAS** the Greater Golden Horseshoe is the third largest agricultural producer in North America after California and Chicago; and
- III) **WHEREAS** the Province of Ontario is proposing to develop the GTA West Corridor by razing 2,000 acres of pristine farmlands, some of which are Class A and Class B farmlands and many of which will immediately cease to be farmed and other lands, over time, which will be developed for non-agricultural uses; and
- IV) **WHEREAS** the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has not completed an Agricultural Impact Assessment for the GTA West Corridor; and
- V) **WHEREAS** the proposed GTA Corridor will lead to greater demand for development with more than 33,000 acres of Whitebelt lands in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Caledon and Vaughan) leading to greater urban sprawl and development that is not supportive of transit investment; and
- VI) **WHEREAS** the proposed GTA West Corridor will cut across 85 waterways, and destroy protected Greenbelt lands including 7 entire woodlots, 220 important wetlands and valley land features, 10 different species-at-risk and hundreds of acres of vulnerable wildlife habitat,
- VII) **WHEREAS** the Greenbelt Plan's permission for new infrastructure which negatively impacts key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features or key hydrologic areas requires determination that there is "no reasonable alternative" and this has not been established through a planning process; and
- VIII) **WHEREAS** the 59-kilometre proposed 413 highway is an old idea, dropped by the previous government after a highly esteemed panel found it would save commuters less than a minute while increasing carbon emissions; and



Figure 1 - Proposed 413 Highway Route

50-59 kilometres long

Estimated Costs – Between \$6 Billion to 15 Billion Dollars

Rumored to be a Toll Highway

413 saves 30 seconds to 30 minutes versus using the 407 Tolled Hwy, but

Hwy 413 is 13.6 kms longer. I think they mean the 401 Hwy

Consultants didn't look at the 407 Hwy as a solution for the trucks

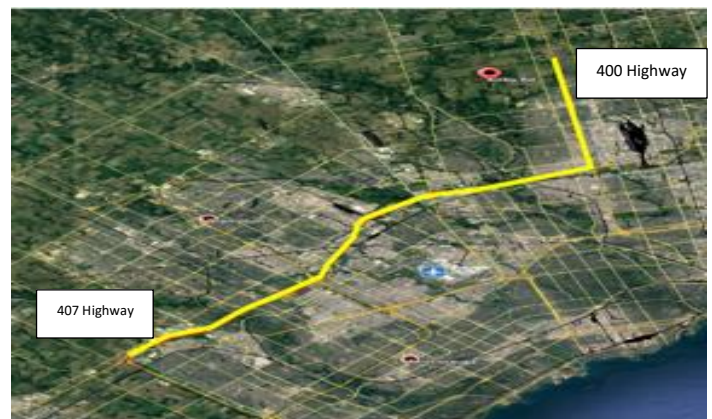


Figure 2 – Existing 400-407 Route

Currently Existing – 45.4 Kilometres Long where 413 starts and finish

407 Hwy is Underutilized – Trucks don't take it because of the tolls

Metrolinx GO-Rail Transit Network is an underutilized asset

413 Highway would Save 30 minutes if alternative was to use the 401 Hwy.

Using the 407 Highway would be 10-12 minutes faster than 413 Hwy.

- ix. **WHEREAS** the current Provincial government revived the \$6 billion to \$15 billion GTA West Corridor proposal in 2018, saying it could relieve congestion issues in the fast-growing Toronto suburbs and boost Ontario's economic recovery from COVID-19.
- x. **WHEREAS** several reasonable alternatives to the GTA West Corridor exist including congestion pricing on other highways, shifting truck traffic to the under-utilized 407 Highway including the reduction or elimination of tariffs, transportation system management on other highways (ramp metering, speed harmonization, compass etc (freight, rail improvements. underpasses) and developing the east-west 407 rail transitway including its potential for high-speed electric rail transitway; and
- xi. **WHEREAS** the final recommendation of the Stage 1 Provincial Environmental Assessment (2012) was to first put in place the transportation system management components, rapid transit, freight rail improvements and expansion of existing highways prior to constructing the new expressway; and
- xii. **WHEREAS** the City of Markham has taken reasonable measures to mitigate against climate change which reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs); and
- xiii. **WHEREAS** responding to the climate emergency requires immediate re-evaluation of all transportation plans as greenhouse gas emissions (GHG's) from transportation which is the highest single source of emissions; and
- xiv. **WHEREAS** the proposed GTA 413 Highway Corridor involves destruction of woodlots which are important carbon absorbers and help clean the air; and
- xv. **WHEREAS** the Province must take immediate measures to decrease GHG through alternatives such as increasing public transit, including the necessary local public transit networks, to enable broad access to the higher order transit including high-speed electric trains; and
- xvi. **WHEREAS** the City of Markham has consistently supported transit orientated community development including a high-speed rail transit corridor alongside the 407 Highway to address long term inter-regional transportation solutions and to enhance integration with the development of our communities and supported rail integrated communities along both the GO transit rail lines and the 407 rail transitway; and
- xvii. **WHEREAS** the preferred route for the GTA West 413 highway will increase traffic in the western portion of York Region without appropriate transit solutions; and
- xviii. **WHEREAS** the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA), which is the regulatory authority for developments in flood plains, wetlands and valley lands, has also raised concerns about the potential impact of the proposed GTA West Corridor as well as the streamlined Environmental Assessment process; and
- xix. **WHEREAS** the Environmental Assessment undertaken by the previous provincial government was shelved because of strong objection to the GTA Corridor by an expert panel in the fields of rural development, renewable cities, agriculture, environment and efficient transportation who sounded alarms over predicted irreversible ecological harm caused by the uncontrolled, low density urban sprawl enabled by the Corridor; and
- xx. **WHEREAS** Transit Oriented Communities (TOCs) positively contribute toward a more environmentally friendly and economically sustainable communities. TOCs reduce the reliance on car-dependent trips for all members of the community, therefore reducing Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) and also reducing the high costs of auto ownership thus contributing to achieving affordable housing outcomes; and

- xxi. **WHEREAS** TOC is based on development above or around an existing, planned or yet-to-be planned piece of transport infrastructure, the path chosen will affect the level of complexity involved. TOD around stations can act as a catalyst for market-led densification ultimately resulting in creative, transit supportive communities while providing significant land value uplift; and
- xxii. **WHEREAS** Strategic land-use planning requires public policy that communicates TOC as integral to a community's long-term vision with supportive official plan and zoning provisions that facilitate density and mixed land use. TOC can be applied based on a range of high densities. Some outlying city areas may focus on developments that offer access to transit connecting to employment venues and high-density downtowns, which boast a mixture of residential, employment, retail and entertainment options. Making TOC an integral consideration in city planning allows urban designers and land use/transportation planners to establish essential ingredients for future development and economic growth; and
- xxiii. **WHEREAS** the Regional Municipality of York passed a resolution on March 18, 2021 requesting a Federal Environmental Impact study for the proposed 413 Highway (GTA West Corridor), and
- xxiv. **WHEREAS** the 407 Highway was created in order to relieve congestion on 401 Highway, but the 407 was tolled, thereby limiting the amount of relief provided by the 407 Highway; and
- xxv. **WHEREAS** the need for rapid transit in the GTA is long overdue and in greater need than the 413 Highway to accommodate growth requirements of the Provincial Government's Growth Plan; and
- xxvi. **WHEREAS** concerned citizens of Markham and a significant number of reputable organizations have demanded cancellation of the GTA West Corridor project, including: Environmental Defense, the David Suzuki Foundation, the Federation of Urban Neighborhoods, Gravel Watch, Halton Environmental Network, National Farmers' Union-Ontario, Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, Sustainable Vaughan, Concerned Citizens of King Township (CCKT), Transport Action Ontario, Greenbelt Council, the Wilderness Committee and Sustainable Mississauga; as well as formal opposition of Councils from the municipalities of Halton Hills, Orangeville, Vaughan, Brampton, Mississauga, King and the City of Toronto; and
- xxvii. **WHEREAS** the Ontario NDP Party, Ontario Liberal Party and Ontario Green Party have all announced their opposition to the GTA West Corridor.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. **THAT** the Council of the City of Markham strongly objects to the proposed GTA West Corridor and Transmission Corridor as it is currently defined; and
2. **THAT** the Council of the City of Markham continues to support an integrated rail transit network which includes high speed rapid rail transit running along beside the 407 highway; and
3. **THAT** the Council of the City of Markham fully supports the Environmental Defense request for a Federal Environmental Impact Study pursuant to s.9(1) of the Impact Assessment Act (I.A.A.), prior to any advancement of this project; and
4. **THAT** the Council of the City of Markham supports the Province undertaking an economic evaluation and time travel analysis of Highway 407 versus the proposed 413 Highway including the potential for congestion and non-peak hour pricing; and
5. **THAT** if the GTA West Corridor does not proceed, that capital costs of funding the proposed GTA West Corridor should be redirected to provide for rapid transit for the Regions of York and Peel such as investment in the 407 rail transitway, improved GO service on the Kitchener and Milton lines, a new GO transit line to Bolton and LRT/BRT on Major Mackenzie; and

6. **THAT** the Council of the City of Markham recommends that the Province undertake a comprehensive economic benefits analysis of the potential for transit orientated communities along the 407 Highway and GO rail transit network and new LRT/BRT lines versus the cost of urban sprawl triggered by the proposed 413 Highway; and
7. **THAT** the Province undertake a review of the Provincial Government Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the GTA Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy to provide holistic comprehensive policies for achieving affordable housing near transit stations including policies to achieve the Province's goal of 50 percent of all new housing over the next twenty-five years being within a half mile of fixed guideway rail transit or high frequency (15 minutes or less, peak hour) bus transit. The Province must also update its affordable housing program to recognize the relationship between housing affordability and transit including the positive role of housing near rail transit TOC stations to improve the operational efficiency of the province's investment in mass transit; and
8. **That** the Province, in undertaking consultation on the proposed GTA West Corridor, ensure that holistic, comprehensive integrated land use planning for the whole of the northern GTA is considered including planning the northern communities for land use and transit prior to considering new roads including the GTA West Corridor; and
9. **AND FURTHER THAT** this Resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford, the Minister of Transportation, Hon. Caroline Mulroney, MPP York-Simcoe, Hon Jeff Yurek, MPP, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Hon. Stephen Lecce, MPP King-Vaughan, Hon. Kinga Surma, Associate Minister of Transportation GTA, Hon. Steve Clarke, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Phil Verster, President and CEO, Metrolinx and all Municipalities of the Region of York and as well as the Region of Peel.

cc. Hon Caroline Mulroney, Minister, Ministry of Transportation, minister.mto@ontario.ca
and MPP, York-Simcoe, caroline.mulroneyca@pc.ola.org
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