

Highway 413 - GTA West Corridor

Moved by: Regional Councillor Jim Jones

Seconded by: Ward 7 Councillor Khalid Usman

CONTEXT AND HISTORY

1. **WHEREAS** the Province of Ontario initiated an Environment Assessment process in 2007 for the planning and construction of the proposed Highway 413; and
2. **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 construction of a new expressway; and
3. **WHEREAS** the Stage 2 Environmental Assessment (new expressway) undertaken by the previous provincial government was shelved because of strong objections 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
4. **WHEREAS** the current Provincial Government revived the \$6+ billion Highway 413 proposal in 2018, saying it could relieve congestion issues in the fast-growing Toronto suburbs and boost Ontario's economy; and
5. **WHEREAS** concerned citizens of Markham and a significant number of reputable organizations have demanded cancellation of the Highway 413 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, Caledon, Orangeville, Vaughan, Brampton, Mississauga, King and the City of Toronto; and
6. **WHEREAS** the Federal Government has decided to conduct an Impact Assessment study for the proposed Highway 413; and

AGRICULTURE

7. **WHEREAS** Ontario farming and food processing together employ one million persons and generate over \$35 billion economic benefits annually; and
8. **WHEREAS** the Greater Golden Horseshoe is the third largest agricultural producer in North America after California and Chicago; and
9. **WHEREAS** the Province of Ontario is proposing to develop the Highway 413 by razing 809 hectares 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 which over time will be developed for non-agricultural uses; and
10. **WHEREAS** the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has not completed an Agricultural Impact Assessment for the proposed Highway 413; and

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

11. **WHEREAS** the proposed Highway 413 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; and
12. **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 that this has not been established through a planning process; and
13. **WHEREAS** the Toronto and Region 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 Highway 413 as well as the streamlined Environmental Assessment process; and

GREENHOUSE GASES

14. **WHEREAS** the City of Markham has taken reasonable measures to mitigate against climate change to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs); and
15. **WHEREAS** responding to the climate emergency requires immediate re-evaluation of all transportation plans as GHGs from transportation is the highest single source of emissions; and
16. **WHEREAS** the Province must take immediate measures to decrease GHGs 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

INDUCED DEMAND AND ROAD ALTERNATIVES

17. **WHEREAS** the Highway 407 was created as a truck by-pass in order to relieve congestion on Highway 401, but the Highway 407 was tolled, thereby limiting the amount of relief provided by the Highway 407; and
18. **WHEREAS** it is well known that, as new road capacity (lane-km) is constructed, traffic demand grows to fill this capacity by the phenomenon known as “induced demand”, resulting in roads that are as congested as they were prior to the expansion of the road; and
19. **WHEREAS** several reasonable highway network management alternatives to the proposed Highway 413 exist and were recommended by the Expert Panel, including possible subsidies or congestion pricing that would shift truck traffic to the under-utilized Highway 407; and

TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES AND TRANSIT ORIENTED COMMUNITIES

20. **WHEREAS** the proposed Highway 413 will allocate limited Provincial funds to the movement of vehicular traffic instead of much needed transit investments for complete transit-oriented communities; and
21. **WHEREAS** transit investments and good land use planning decisions are vital to creating complete transit-oriented communities which are economically vibrant, where people and goods are moved seamlessly, and where multiple modes of transportation support the community including a focus on active transportation; and
22. **WHEREAS** the proposed Highway 413 will lead to greater demand for development with more than 13,350 hectares of Whitebelt lands in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Caledon and Vaughan) being impacted, leading to greater urban sprawl and development that is not supportive of transit investment; and
23. **WHEREAS** analysis has shown (<https://ontario.transportaction.ca>) that investment in various unfunded rapid transit projects, including GO Transit, 407 Transitway and LRT/BRT projects which can move 4-10 times the number of people as the proposed Highway 413, for the same invested dollars; and
24. **WHEREAS** the 407 Transitway has been planned for decades but has no approved funding for its construction; and
25. **WHEREAS** the City of Markham has consistently supported development of the transit-oriented communities, to support long term inter-regional transportation solutions and to enhance integration of our existing communities and supported rail integrated communities along both the GO Transit rail lines and the 407 rail transitway; and
26. **WHEREAS** Uncontrolled urban growth threatens these resources and is widely seen to embed unsustainable infrastructure maintenance costs, deepen traffic congestion problems, increase transportation-related emissions of greenhouse gases and smog precursors, and reinforce social divisions; and
27. **WHEREAS** planning and infrastructure decisions affect the shape of communities for decades, even centuries to come; and
28. **WHEREAS** Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) positively contribute toward a more environmentally friendly and economically sustainable communities, reduce the reliance on car-dependent trips for all members of the community, therefore reducing Vehicle Kilometers Travelled (VKT) and reducing the high costs of auto ownership thus contributing to achieving affordable housing outcomes; and

7. **THAT** the Province undertake an integrated review of the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan to develop a sustainable communities strategy to provide consistent and comprehensive policies for achieving affordable housing near TOC stations including policies to achieve the Province’s goal of 50 percent of all new housing over the next 30 years being within 800-1,000 metres of rapid rail transit station or high frequency (15 minutes or less, peak hour) bus transit; and
8. **THAT** 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 Provincial investment in mass rail transit; and
9. **THAT** Ontarians need serious, transparent, and accountable infrastructure planning processes, based on clear and consistent rules designed to advance the environmental, social, and economic sustainability of their communities; and
10. **THAT** a copy of this resolution be provided to the Regions of York, Peel and Halton, the Cities of Richmond Hill, Vaughan, Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto and the Towns of Milton, Caledon, and Halton Hills; and further
11. **THAT** this Resolution be forwarded to:

1. HON. DOUG FORD, PREMIER OF ONTARIO;
2. HON. PETER BETHLENFALVY, MINISTER OF FINANCE;
3. HON. CAROLINE MULRONEY, MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION;
4. HON. KINGA SURMAN, MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES;
5. HON. DAVID PICCINI, MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE;
6. HON. STAN CHO, ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION (GTA);
7. HON. STEVE CLARK, MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING;
8. HON. LISA THOMPSON, MINISTER OF THE AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS;
9. HON. VICTOR FEDELI, MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, JOB CREATION AND TRADE;
10. ANDREA HORWATH, LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION & ONTARIO NDP PARTY;
11. STEVEN DEL DUCA, LEADER OF THE ONTARIO LIBERAL PARTY;
12. ALL MEMBERS OF FEDERAL PARLIAMENT IN THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK AND PEEL;
13. ALL MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT IN THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK AND PEEL;
14. ALL MEMBERS OF REGIONAL COUNCIL IN THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK AND PEEL;
15. ALL CITY CLERKS IN THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITIES OF YORK AND PEEL;
16. RT HON. JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA;
17. HON. CHRYSTIA FREELAND, FEDERAL MINISTER OF FINANCE;
18. HON OMAR ALGHABRA, FEDERAL MINISTER OF TRANSPORT;
19. HON MARIE CLAUDE BIBEAU, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND AGR-FOOD;
20. HON. MELANIE JOLY, FEDERAL MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT;
21. HON. DOMINIC LEBLANC, FEDERAL MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES;
22. HON. JONATHAN WILKINSON, FEDERAL MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES;
23. HON. STEVEN GUILBEAULT, FEDERAL MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE;
24. WAYNE EMMERSON, CHAIRMAN AND CEO, YORK REGION;
25. JOHN MACKENZIE, CEO, TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY;
26. PHIL VERSTER, PRESIDENT AND CEO, METROLINX;
27. DAVID MCFADDEN, CHAIRMAN, 407ETR;
28. JAVIER TAMARGO, PRESIDENT AND CEO 407ETR.