

RE: H.2.2 Potential for Employment Lands Along 400 Series Highways

October 7, 2020

Dear York Region Council,

I am concerned by your pursuit of measures to facilitate the construction of an unnecessary highway. I am also disappointed that you are taking advantage of public distraction during a pandemic to enable its construction. I have been opposed to this project since 2011 and would like to point out why.

- **It goes against Sections 1.8, 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 of the Provincial Policy Statement 2020.**
 - Section 1.8 b) promotes active transportation and transit. There are several areas in the region, where housing can be proposed that is compact, dense and less car-centric. Allowing the proposed Highway 413 to be built is going to continue a cycle of car-oriented development that runs counter to the high-density development occurring in areas like Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.
 - Section 1.8 d) focuses freight-intensive land uses to areas well-served by highways, airports, and rail facilities. The proposed Highway 413 would be farther away from the highways that exist in the City of Vaughan and York Region. Resources would be better spent negotiating a better use of Highways 7, 400, 404 and 407 for freight purposes.
- **It goes against Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 of the Provincial Policy Statement protecting Natural Heritage.** We are lucky to have the Greenbelt going through the region and city. Let's adhere to Section 2.1.2 "The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems..." (Provincial Policy Statement 2020) Once this highway is built, the damage is irreparable and irreversible for the Greenbelt's natural features.
- **Cutting through prime farmland.** Our food supply chains were tested during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are fortunate to have farmers in the city and region. Let's look at how we can better bring their goods to market and support the commercialization of their products. A highway's development along with subsequent residential construction will take away farmland that can be used during this pandemic and – potentially – future ones. The
- **I support the following proposals made by Susan Swail.**
 - Item 1. Council reiterate its request to the Province to develop a process allowing municipalities to access strategically located employment lands (outside of the Greenbelt Plan area), if deemed necessary through a Municipal Comprehensive Review.
 - Item 2. Council reiterate its request to the Province to permit the extension of Great Lake based servicing as an option to service settlement areas within the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan areas.

It is worth highlighting that an expert panel in 2018 has already recommended against this project. In fact, they have stated that the reduction in commute times will be minimal.¹ I firmly believe that the points I am raising are future-oriented and worthy of consideration.

Thank you.

Best, Jean-François Obregón

¹ Environmental Defence, Is building Highway 413 the best option for moving people & goods in the GTA-West region?