

DEPUTATION REQUEST

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

FEBRUARY 11, 2021

Subject: Greater Toronto West Transportation

Spokesperson: Alexandra Ney

Name of Group or person(s) being represented (if applicable): Alexandra resident & member of Stop the 413

Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:

Please provide my letter for Members of Council to read prior to my presentation. Would like to speak as a resident in the area who will be effected by GTA West and all the upgraded road networks

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

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Hello Regional Councillors and Mayors,

In June 2019, The City of Vaughan declared a Climate Emergency. Ironically, 5 months later the City of Vaughan Mayor and Councillors fully endorsed the GTA West Hwy. I am writing to ask you to reconsider this endorsement.

This Hwy will have massive environmental ramifications to my home life. It is proposed 500m from my front door. It will rip through actively farmed prime agricultural land, all along the proposed route and surrounding my home. My family had farmed lands here; always respecting the natural heritage by preserving wetlands and woodlots. I'm saddened and outraged, when I look at the surrounding majestic old growth woodlots, and mature Elm trees, home to Pileated Woodpeckers, Great Horned Owls amongst other now rarer seen species. I see many song birds when walking along the road sides of the farm fields by my home: Bobolinks, Savannah Sparrows, Eastern Meadow Larks, and Warblers. In a Woodlot along Weston Road, I hear and see Thrush, Peewee's and Phoebes in the spring and summer. The migratory birds use this area as a flight path. These fields provide natural eco-system services for free natural storm and source water protection. The highways, heavy traffic and noise will be detrimental to land surrounding my home. The GTA West Hwy will likely mean the loss of everything I just described, and everything I love about my home.

Do you understand this area is not devoid of Natural Heritage? The Hwy will go right through a tributary to the Humber River, which includes a deep ravine, home to fox, deer, other numerous wildlife, hemlock and massive old maples. In the spring, you enjoy the riotous chorus of wood frogs, spring peepers and birds.

I am terrified of the future here, feel left without a voice, struggling to save my area from this looming devastation. Our family has lived here for 99 years; we cannot imagine having to move or be forced out by the overwhelming noise, air pollution and unhealthy environment. What will be left? Who will be our voice? Who will speak for our Natural Heritage? Our Conservation Authorities have no jurisdiction or authority to place conditions on the highway. I implore all Regional Councillors especially those representing Vaughan, Mario Ferri, Gino Rosati, Linda Jackson, and Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua – once you've realized the massive destruction. Please rescind your decision to endorse The GTA Hwy and at the same time represent your constituents. Did you consult with any of your residents before providing your support and endorsement?

Interchanges everywhere – There's a planned partial interchange from the Hwy onto the present 2 Lane Weston Rd. King Road currently has a full interchange; just a short distance below, I see a request for a full interchange at King Vaughan Road/Hwy 400. Then the full interchange approximately 400m S of King Vaughan for the GTA West merge into the Hwy 400. This planning makes no sense?! This will have even more of a destructive impact on the surrounding area and my home. How do you plan to protect me and the community from the noise, traffic volume and detrimental health effects? This will pave and fragment more Greenbelt and prime agricultural land.

It will make Climate Change worse! All the added cars and trucks on the roads. Transportation emissions are already the largest greenhouse gas emissions sector in Ontario. Smog, toxic air pollution, and salt from the roads will kill natural flora and fauna, more salt will leach into our surface and ground water. The adverse health impacts from living near highways and exposure to air pollution are well documented: cancer, lung disease, cardiovascular issues and premature death. I'm Asthmatic, the respiratory health impacts living so close to a highway are significant. How can you endorse something when the Province has not even completed a Health Impact Assessment? How can you endorse this without asking about the public and community health impacts to your current and future residents? How can you endorse something that drives Climate Change, reduces climate resiliency and acknowledged the urgency to act to mitigate the worst impacts from increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events?

Bicyclist love to cycle King Vaughan and Weston Roads on route to other side roads. The snarl of traffic, smog, heavy plumes of pollution hanging in the air will ruin this area and closely neighbouring areas, such as King. Paved surfaces will also contribute to increased heat and related illnesses.

How can York Region Council support this highway and support strong climate action, preservation of the Greenbelt and Prime Agricultural Land? The two are not compatible. Have you looked at building light rail transit or any of the other proposed solutions that were never fully explored as identified by the Expert Advisory Panel in 2018. It was identified the justifications for this highway were fundamentally flawed and advised against proceeding.

This Hwy was stopped for good reasons in the past. Now due to the Pandemic, business practices and traffic volume have evolved considerably. The needs may be forever changed, Hwys are no longer the answer, nor should they be.

Remember the Climate Emergency declaration before the GTA West Hwy revival? Please review what you thought was great for the area. Rescind your endorsement. Join Halton Hills and Orangeville who have passed resolutions opposing the highway. The City of Brampton has unanimously endorsed a local boulevard as an alternative.

The province is not listening; they are not responding to constituents. You must be our voice, say No. York Region, like Brampton, can find alternatives which are less destructive and forward thinking. Develop mindfully, we can move people and goods without carbon emissions – stop ignoring better options.

Thanking you for your consideration,
Alexandra – Resident of King Vaughan Road