



OAK RIDGES MORaine LAND TRUST

Regional Corporate Services Department
Administrative Centre
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Newmarket, Ontario
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Submission to York Regional Council on E.2.1. Greater Toronto Area West Transportation Corridor Update

Dear Members of Regional Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our thoughts about the road expansion and reconstruction related to the proposed GTA West Corridor. The Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust has been a participant in the Greenbelt Transportation Advisory Group for the GTA West Study.

It is our position that anything that creates new disruption to the natural heritage of the Region, in protected areas, such as the Greenbelt and the Oak Ridges Moraine, or on the rural lands adjacent to those protected areas, should be avoided. In the case of the proposed new highway corridor, there are several possible alternatives which should be thoroughly explored before any steps are taken to build a new highway.

First, the Province have failed to demonstrate that the construction of the new highway would produce any material benefits for automobile and truck traffic in the southeastern part of the Region and in Peel Region. More importantly, no one has demonstrated the difference in transit times, if any, if alternative strategies were pursued.

Below are a few considerations which should be applied to any proposal to augment existing transportation infrastructure in the part of the Region impacted by the proposed GTA West include:

- The extent to which expanding the existing roads, including Highways 9, 27 and 427, and Weston Road, would satisfy the expected traffic volumes for the foreseeable future
- The extent to which changing the pricing on Highway 407, at least in the segment between Highways 400 and 401, would influence traffic patterns and, most likely, obviate the need for any new highways for at least twenty to thirty years

- The extent to which the significant shift in working habits and the dramatic increase in people working from home in 2020 will have on long-term traffic projections (Highway 407 volume reductions being a perfect case study)
- Not considering the changes to adjacent roads in the proposed highway corridor until the Environmental Assessment is completed in 2022

It should be remembered that the people at the MTO who have developed the plans for the GTA West Corridor are the same people who recommended and then constructed Highways 412 and 418 in the eastern end of the GTA. Both of those highways have yet to achieve 10% (2% in the case of Hwy 48) design capacity and represent multi-billion dollars unnecessary expended at a time when the province, and all municipal governments, are facing extraordinary pressures on their budget. These highways cross numerous wetland and significant environmental features that are now negatively impacted.

The GTA West Corridor is both ill-considered and ill-timed. Clearly, the Region and the Province should take the steps which would have a far lesser impact on the environment before constructing a new highway. We would support the widening of Highways 27 and 427 as a far more logical, cost-effective and environmentally-friendly solution to any perceived increased highway traffic in the southwestern portion of the Region.

Thank you for your consideration.



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cc. Hon. Caroline Mulroney (York Simcoe)
Minister of Transportation