

February 11, 2021

Region of York  
17250 Yonge St,  
Newmarket, ON  
L3Y 6Z1

Re: Item E2- GTA West Update

Regional Chair Emmerson, Mayor and Regional Councillors,

I urge members of Regional Council today to ask the province to reconsider building the GTA West highway.

As the Region of York and local municipalities plan our communities for the next 30 years, through the MCR process, it is essential that you support infrastructure and land use decisions that are financially sustainable. Highways fuel an unsustainable sprawling pattern of growth that is contrary to compact transit supportive communities. Sprawl type development results in higher levels of debt for municipalities and higher taxes for residents too.

As you are well aware, our economy is suffering, as we rebuild our economy to support local business, reinvest in healthcare and affordable housing is more highway infrastructure a priority? Is spending billions building the GTA West highway the best use of our provincial tax dollars when we have so many other priorities today.

The GTA West panel report noted many problems with the Environmental Assessment for the highway. Specifically, the need for the highway was not established in the EA and the route does not avoid the Greenbelt. Indeed, the route for the transportation corridor crosses through the Greenbelt, affects over 200 wetlands that absorb floods and filter water, and crosses over 80 rivers, streams and sensitive headwater areas.

Further, many Councils across York Region have declared a climate emergency and vowed to take action. Moving forward with this highway is inconsistent with climate change action as highways create traffic and increase greenhouse gases, they don't alleviate it.

Please use your powerful collective voice to urge the province to build back better, not backwards.

Respectfully Submitted,

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