

# DEPUTATION REQUEST

REGIONAL COUNCIL

MARCH 18, 2021

**Subject:** GTA West Corridor

**Spokesperson:** Jennifer Anstey

**Name of Group or person(s) being represented (if applicable):**

Concerned Citizens of King Township

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**Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:**

I would like to make a verbal deputation at tomorrow's meeting regarding the GTA west – item F.4.2.



**Concerned Citizens of King Township** [www.cckt.ca](http://www.cckt.ca)

**March 17, 2021,**

**To:** York Region Council

**Re: Agenda Item F.4.2 – GTA West Transportation Corridor Project**

Concerned Citizens of King Township (CCKT) is an active citizen group in King with approximately 200 members. The group advocates for the long term protection of natural heritage systems and features including lakes, wetlands, river systems, valleylands and forests, along with prime agricultural land, established agricultural networks, and the planning of healthy, sustainable communities that do not encroach on the protected Greenbelt lands.

CCKT recognizes Ontario's world-renowned Greenbelt and the marvellous long term vision it embraces. Within the Greenbelt Plan it is clearly stated that *"the Greenbelt is a broad band of permanently protected land."*

With this vision in mind, CCKT requests that York Region Council:

1. Reverse York Region's endorsement of the GTA West Transportation Corridor.
2. Support the request for a Federal Impact Assessment as outlined in the Ecojustice submission to the federal minister.

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The vision for the Greenbelt is further described in the Greenbelt Plan

“The Greenbelt is a broad band of permanently protected land which:

- Protects against the loss and fragmentation of the agricultural land base and supports agriculture as the predominant land use;
- Gives permanent protection to the natural heritage and water resource systems that sustain ecological and human health and that form the environmental framework around which major urbanization in south-central Ontario will be organized;
- Provides for a diverse range of economic and social activities associated with rural communities, agriculture, tourism, recreation and resource uses; and;
- Builds resilience to and mitigates climate change.”

Permanently protecting lands in the Greenbelt is key to maintaining and improving the resiliency of local food systems and the physical, social and economic health of Ontarians. Healthy ecosystems are the foundation of human well-being and will become increasingly important for building a climate resilient Ontario.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made these facts clearer than ever before. Since the pandemic started, we all rely even more on Greenbelt-protected natural lands for our mental and physical health. We appreciate even more the Greenbelt-protected farmland and farmers that supply us with healthy local food and jobs. And we are profoundly grateful that Greenbelt-protected water resources provide rural areas and many communities with a clean and secure water supply.

Collectively, people rely on Greenbelt-protected lands for nearly 180,000 jobs and \$9.6 billion in annual economic activity. Meanwhile, the combined activities of plants, animals, insects and microorganisms in its wetlands, forests, farmlands and rivers generate over \$3.2 billion in annual ecosystem services such as:

- fresh water;
- flood and disease control;
- spiritual, recreational, and cultural benefits.

All of this needs to be sustained by wise infrastructure planning that does **not** further fragment valuable natural heritage and agricultural systems.

The Expert Panel that had previously studied the GTA West highway recommended several specific alternatives be considered including the following:

- Consider and prioritize planned and constructed extension and expansion of existing highways: 400, 401, 407ETR, 410 and 427.
- Consider providing truck priority on Highway 407ETR. Subsidizing truck traffic would be far less expensive than building the GTA West.

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- Consider slower population growth consistent with actual growth in York Region over the past ten years, and consider more compact land use patterns than the car-dependent urban sprawl of the past that create healthy, pedestrian-oriented communities.

CCKT believes that the Greenbelt, with its irreplaceable farmland and connected natural heritage systems sustaining a wide variety of wildlife must be protected, and that the estimated \$6 billion cost of the GTA West highway would be far better invested in other initiatives.

Thank you for actions you take today that will help secure a protected, healthy Greenbelt long into the future.

Sincerely,

J. Bruce Craig, Chair, Concerned Citizens of King Township  
Jennifer Anstey, Vice-Chair, Concerned Citizens of King Township

