

DEPUTATION REQUEST

REGIONAL COUNCIL

MARCH 18, 2021

Subject: GTA West Corridor

Spokesperson: Sherry Draisey

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

Concerned Citizens of King Township

Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:

access roads to GTA West Corridor; influence on residents; development of technology

From: Sherry Draisey

March 17, 2021

Re: Agenda Item F4.2: Greater Toronto Area West Transportation Corridor: Regional Response to IAA of Canada

To: Chair Emmerson and Members of York Region Council,

Growth to 2051. That needs progressive thought.

Let us not forget - Ontario remains the landlord for the 407. By 2051, our tenant may be interested in a bit of negotiation, to be allowed to extend that lease. It remains a good solution for York Region east/west traffic – unlike the GTA West corridor.

The 407 design at highway 400 is not the serious impediment to traffic flow that the GTAW will be. It does not dead end in an already over travelled section of highway The 407 proceeds to Highway 400 through collector lanes.

The GTA West Transportation Corridor Project Regional Response to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada was issued February 25, 2021 – and to achieve that, there may have been some rushed thinking about integration of GTA West into York Region 2016 Transportation plan.

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York Regions response to IAA request mentions 'negative impact of delays caused by Federal EA process' – that implies a need to rush, but most residents do not yet understand the hurry.

The system of Highway 400, near the GTAW interchange effectively already includes Weston Road and Jane Street as service roads, but the addition of the GTAW will push them into being collector lanes. That will mean a that a 2 km wide pavement track, interspersed with a rows of vegetation; 4+4+8 lanes wide, with Highway 400 as its centerline. If that's what the GTAW will lead eventually lead to, then we do need the Federal IAA!

The need to rush these decisions is probably what has lead to there being 4 interchanges on the 400 by 2051, within 4.7 km, plus a weigh station – making it 5 'slow downs' within 5.5 km. A veritable stop sign. Hard to see why York councillors with towns North of GTAW are supporting either the GTA West or those arterial road access plans.

The need to rush might also explain why my seemingly simple questions concerning Access Road changes have been left unanswered for over a month.

In King, two residential areas – Nobleton and Laskay will be significantly adversely affected by the GTAW – in spite of the fact that it does not cross over them. Laskay could be all but wiped out. Nobleton south and Nobleton east will be overrun with non-local traffic accessing the 413. Walking and breathing in Nobleton will become extremely dangerous.

Laskay is centered on Weston Road, just north of GTAW/400. It is a hamlet of ~ 50 homes. The lack of response to my questions about Weston Road suggest either a sad answer, or that York Transportation has been extremely busy – in a hurry.

Why does Weston Road need to be rebuilt or widened? It is odd – there is almost no population north of Laskay, and then it becomes part of Oak Ridges Moraine – unlikely to be target of population growth. It eventually ends at Highway 9 – abutting Holland Marsh.

Weston Road does act as an overflow road during Highway 400 traffic crisis. And it is also rather adversely affected by truck traffic trying to avoid Highway 400 weigh scales. Those weigh scales tend to push knowingly overloaded trucks onto regional roads. Probably it can be assumed that weigh scales will be eliminated by 2051 and replaced with truck transponders submitting weight information wirelessly. And by 2051, regional roads will probably also have the capability to monitor vehicle weights.

It is likely that York Transportation is aware of the weight monitoring opportunities. Quebec has the ability to do it on their new Champlain Bridge – though it has not yet implemented operationally.

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Big problems are seldom solved by a single big solution – the magic pill. We all dream of it, and it seems York is rushing to it. A big problem is a lot like trying to get your weight down - an ongoing problem with a lot of effort and incremental approaches needed. Trying to reduce traffic congestion and cut CO2 emissions is a lot like going on a diet.

While a new road might seem like the easy solution to congestion, it is exacerbating many issues more by doing so. East/West traffic for the north part to GTA is a problem. The proposed GTAW can only solve half of east/west traffic problems, and it is going to exacerbate traffic flow east of the 400. The traffic chaos at the GTAW/400 interchange will certainly increase CO2 production.

York is in a hurry to build this highway. Good design is rarely accomplished in a rush. By declining the Federal offer of an impact assessment, because we're in a hurry are we just declining the offer of assistance from our best hope of Covid Economic Recovery?

I assume the Ontario expert panel traffic report of 2018, Ontario not moving forward with highway for GTA West Corridor has been read by York transportation engineers. But it is worth a re-read.