

DEPUTATION REQUEST

REGIONAL COUNCIL

MARCH 18, 2021

Subject: Bradford Bypass Project and GTA West Transportation Corridor

Spokesperson: Tony Malfara

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

Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:

I have two requests for you if possible regarding the upcoming March 18th, 2021 Regional Council Special Meeting.

1. I would like to request to be a deputant and present at the above meeting.
2. Attached please find my letter submitted for the upcoming Regional Council Special meeting on Thursday March 18, 2021 regard Agenda item F.4 Items Deferred from February 25, 2021 Regional Council Meeting. My letter covers both Items F.4.2 and F.4.1.

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

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Dear Regional Council Members, my name is Tony Malfara and I am a resident of Kleinburg.

I am writing to you once again as a concerned citizen of Vaughan and York Region requesting that as my Regional Councillors you respect the wishes of Vaughan's and:

- **Bring forward a motion reversing the endorsement for the proposed GTA West Corridor/Highway 413" like the motion passed at the Vaughan Council Meeting on March 10, 2021,**
- **Bring forward and vote yes to a motion that supports the request for a Federal Environmental Assessment as is being done in other municipalities and Regions across the path of the Corridor.**
- **Request that the deadline for the official plan review be extended, given that the Region has not been able to engage the public in meaningful and effective consultation due to the pandemic, and**
- **Lastly, I request that York Region withdraw support for the endorsement of the Bradford Bypass and that the Region support the Federal Impact Assessment**

To all Council Members of York Region how can you continue to support the GTA West Corridor when so many others have stopped supporting it? **To the Council members from Vaughan, you are not elected by the Region and should be representatives for Vaughan council and its community,** which voted last week to withdraw support for the GTA West Corridor and requested a Federal Environmental Assessment. **It is your responsibility to bring forward these two motions and vote in a manner consistent with the wishes of your local Vaughan councillors. Any deviation would be wrong!**

The proposed GTA West Corridor and highway 413 will have **an obvious direct negative impact to the City of Vaughan, it's councillors and residents, but it will also have a less obvious, but equally negative impact on other municipalities and their Councillors participating in this meeting. Traffic on North/South and East/West roads in other municipalities across in York Region will be significantly impacted and get much busier as vehicles (commuter and commercial) drive to get to a highway that is just south of King Township and one that ends abruptly at Highway 400.** North/South Roads like Hwy 27, Jane, Pine Valley, Keele, Dufferin, Bathurst will overflow as the Highway attracts this net new traffic. East/West roads across all of York Regions will not escape damage. King/Vaughan, King Road, Kirby, Teston and on the east side of the Region, Gamble Rd, Jefferson Side Road, and others will see a dramatic increase in traffic. **Have you considered the impact to those communities?**

As you are seeing, communities across the path are becoming more and more aware of the negative consequences of the proposed GTA West corridor and the 413 Highway and opposition is growing quickly. We will continue to make them aware, but it is your responsibility as their representatives to act in their best interests. **Do you believe they are fully aware and properly represented?**

Councillors who are progressive and not fixated on the GTA West Corridor and Highway 413 as the only option have in recent months informed themselves. They are withdrawing support and are now asking the Provincial Government to thoroughly review and evaluate economically viable alternatives provided by various experts to the proposed highway to meet the transportation needs of today and for our planned growth. With the dilution of authority within the TRCA and the provinces own environmental assessment process, Councillors are also requiring the Provincial Government to ask the Federal Government to insert themselves and conduct an environmental assessment of the proposed project.

The GTA West Corridor and Highway 413 would run through our greenbelt and would see the pavement of a significant amount of land that goes right through or near the sensitive natural environment. The proposed Highway will do little to alleviate existing congestion as has been the

message from the Province and the Region. Ironically, it will induce greater vehicular traffic as users drive to get to the Highway and the Corridor.

This is not what our communities in Vaughan signed up for. Like Vaughan and other municipalities, I suspect that residents and councillors in other municipalities will say the same as they become awareness and understand the true impact on their communities.

As the community becomes better informed, our opposition to the Provincial Government's decision to fast track projects like the GTA West Corridor and MZO's that will have significant consequences on our quality of life, climate change, GTA watersheds, local ecosystems and the environment in general will grow larger in number and louder in voice and the voter will be heard. If you need evidence, you don't have to look too much further than the recent Pickering/Amazon decision. Arbitrary decision making in a democratic system does not end well.

Sustaining the GTA's watershed, which prevents flooding while ensuring clean water and healthy ecosystems is critical to the health of Ontario's most populous region. Building a highway across these valuable lands goes against everything the Region and the Province has done over the last two decades to protect the environment and against the City's position with respect to declaring an environmental emergency and the need for responsible and environmentally friendly growth.

As Regional Councillors, you have an obligation to be fully and correctly informed and today you are not! In order to properly represent your individual municipalities and York Region to your constituents which includes us, our youth, and the future residents in the Region you need better information than what you have today.

To make informed decisions, regardless of the outcome, **you should insist** on having current, complete, and accurate information. You should also be comfortable that the information you are provided is coming from an unbiased position and contains input from independent subject matter professionals. These are table stakes and represent good governance on any major initiative that has pervasive and long-term implications (good or bad).

To do so, together we must ensure the Provincial Government has plans that are based on current, complete, and accurate information and conducts independent environmental and business assessments so we can proceed with discussions based on the right solutions. **Until then, the only appropriate action is to not endorse the Provinces desire to proceed with the GTA West Corridor and Highway 413, as well as the Bradford Bypass.**

This Provincial Government has stopped listening and by continuing to support them, so are you! It is choosing uncontrolled growth over economic the environment and managed growth and as a result is biased towards a pre-defined outcome which is the GTA West Corridor and Highway 413.

The streamlined Provincial EA will render the Provincial led EA significantly weakened allowing for pre-construction and expansion of bridges and other infrastructure before proper consultation has taken place. If that happens and such infrastructure is found to be detrimental to the environment, then what?

Recent changes made by the Provincial Government to the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, who had objected to the potential impact of the highway, has created a further void and eliminated the

ability of this formerly independent organization to be the unbiased oversight body. **The public announcement by TRCA on the recent Amazon/Pickering matter is evidence of the lack of authority and influence that TRCA has with the Province.**

Without a Federal Environmental Assessment, who will independently assess, without bias, the effects on the environment of the GTA West Corridor, which cuts through agricultural, natural heritage and environmentally sensitive lands - bisecting 85 streams (10 of which are ecologically high priority) destroying seven entire wood lots, including 5.95 km length of forest significantly fragmenting valley lands, disrupting 1000 ha of land significant to wildlife movement, and paving over 8.8 million square metres of surface.

More than ever, it is now imperative that the Federal Government provide an independent review of the highway proposals and their effects on the social, health, environment, indigenous lands, and historical aspects.

Mississauga, Halton Region, Orangeville, Halton Hills, City of Toronto, City of Vaughan, Halton Region, and Peel Region have all chosen to oppose Highway 413 based on local opposition and to ask for a Federal Environmental Assessment. **York Region should take the responsible step and request a Federal EA as other municipalities have done, just in case the Region or the Province chooses to ignore the wishes of so many and proceed with the highway.**

Growth is healthy and indeed needed, but it cannot be uncontrolled and be growth at all cost. It must be Smart Growth. **You have a responsibility to act on behalf of the majority** in our communities and the region to ensure they are not negatively impacted by the highway **and not the few who have the resources to bring you information that is biased and shapes the direction of growth in York Region in a manner that benefits them significantly.**

As you review your growth plans as required by the Provincial Government, don't make the same mistake made as plans were developed for the GTA West Corridor, seek public input and seek it in a proactive and in a manner that allows for meaningful contribution. **DON'T** ask for community input once your plan is mostly complete.

The growth plans require further public input and must be revisited as plans change and other options become more feasible. **Don't allow the Province to impose an artificial deadline that is driven by political agendas! Do what's right and request that the deadline for the official plan review be extended, given that the Region has not been able to engage the public in meaningful and effective consultation due to the pandemic.**

There are other solutions. Be Bold. Instead of using this land for the GTA West Corridor and Highway 413, create an environmental buffer between Vaughan and King Township and across its path in other municipalities. We don't need growth on every acre of land. Leave it in its natural state and create a **"Green-Space Destination"** in Vaughan and other municipalities for all in York Region and other regions to enjoy.

The six billion dollars publicly stated amount to build this Highway is not an insignificant number and is an amount that many believe will be at least double when all direct and secondary costs are considered. **This is particularly important in today's world where infrastructure projects are becoming**

increasingly more complex and expensive and finding public funding from cash strapped governments is also increasingly challenging.

Highway 413 cannot be a toll road like Highway 407. Commercial vehicles will not use it and if so, it will only be beneficial to commuters with the financial capability to pay tolls. Others will not use it.

This highway will not reduce traffic congestion for the residents of Vaughan, King Township, and across other municipalities in York Region. It will attract and increase traffic from communities outside of York Region going through our communities to get to the highway. **If so, why build it?**

The [expert advisory panel report](#) which led to the cancellation of this highway in 2018 outlined a number of reasons for not proceeding with the 413 highway and that it was not an effective means for moving people in the GTA West Region. The report provided observations and recommendations and provided alternative solutions. **Recommendations that DID NOT INCLUDE 413 HIGHWAY. To-date these alternatives have been largely ignored by York Region and our Provincial Government.**

Instead of proceeding with the GTA West Corridor, require the Provincial Government stop this habit of making unilateral decisions and to start following due process. Before supporting the Provincial Government, require them to consider recommendations and solutions from expert stakeholders who are **independent and unbiased**. Ensure they engage and **seek meaningful and effective input from the community**, which is now speaking out, before decisions are directionally taken as has happened with the GTA West Corridor and Highway 413.

Some of these public funds could be better directed to alternative and **more progressive public transit projects, enhancements to the existing Road system** where necessary, and financial subsidies to achieve **greater commercial use of Highway 407** at a fraction of the cost of building a new Highway.

There are many better and more progressive ways to direct the funds that will be allocated to Highway 413. For commuters using vehicles provide:

- Increased Regional Transit options and increased service providing greater options for use
- Acceleration of Go-Transit projects approved in the Region but on hold due to scarce funding
- Increased capacity of parking facilities and reduce parking fees to remove existing barriers to using public transit
- Other Public transit and infrastructure projects that are planned but currently unbudgeted due to funding constraints, but could be re-proposed if funding were available, and
- Identify additional Go Service opportunities across the region using existing rail lines.

For Commercial vehicles, ask the Provincial Government to negotiate subsidized access to Highway 407 which is near the planned route for Highway 413:

- The use of the underutilized 407, which at present is deemed by commercial users as too expensive. The 407, which I believe is 51% owned by CPPIB has publicly stated it would welcome the opportunity to have more commercial traffic. Require the Provincial Government to explore the establishment of a subsidy for the industry to take vehicles off our Regional Roads and put them on the existing Highway 407. **A solution that is a rounding error relative to the cost of building Highway 413 and a solution that could be implemented in months if there was a desire to negotiate.**

At the Vaughan Council meeting on March 10th our progressive thinking councillors listened and approved a motion to withdraw Vaughan's support for Highway 413. Additionally, Vaughan council passed a motion asking the Provincial Government requests a Federal Environmental Assessment. **Unfortunately, those who represent Vaughan at York Region did not and remain fixated on GTA West Corridor, with the only consideration being its location. If they represent Vaughan, it is their responsibility to bring forward the position and approved motions of their fellow councillors and the community of Vaughan.**

In closing, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my letter and look forward to York Regional Councillor support to:

- **Bring forward a motion reversing the endorsement for the proposed GTA West Corridor/Highway 413" like the motion passed at the Vaughan Council Meeting on March 10, 2021,**
- **Bring forward and vote yes to a motion that supports the request for a Federal Environmental Assessment as is being done in other municipalities and Regions across the path of the Corridor.**
- **Request that the deadline for the official plan review be extended, given that the Region has not been able to engage the public in meaningful and effective consultation due to the pandemic, and**
- **As a community member in York Region, with interest in ensuring that due process precedes decisions, I request that York Region withdraw support for the endorsement of the Bradford Bypass and that the Region support the Federal Impact Assessment for the proposed Bradford Bypass**

Thank you.

Tony Malfara
Kleinburg Ontario