

**From:** Karen Alison

**Sent:** Sunday, March 14, 2021 6:20 PM

**To:** Regional Clerk <ClerkGeneralLine@york.ca>; Mrakas, Tom <tmrakas@aurora.ca>; vhackson <vhackson@eastwillimbury.ca>; mquirk <mquirk@georgina.ca>; Rob Grossi <rgrossi@georgina.ca>; Steve Pellegrini <spellegrini@king.ca>; fscarpitti <fscarpitti@markham.ca>; dhamilton <dhamilton@markham.ca>; Deputy Mayor Jack Heath Markham <jheath@markham.ca>; jli@markham.ca; jjones <jjones@markham.ca>; jtaylor <jtaylor@newmarket.ca>; tvegh <tvegh@newmarket.ca>; officemayor@richmondhill.ca; joe.dipaola <joe.dipaola@richmondhill.ca>; carmine.perrelli <carmine.perrelli@richmondhill.ca>; Bevilacqua, Maurizio <maurizio.bevilacqua@vaughan.ca>; Ferri, Mario <mario.ferri@vaughan.ca>; Rosati, Gino <gino.rosati@vaughan.ca>; Jackson, Linda <linda.jackson@vaughan.ca>; ilovatt@whitchurch-stouffville.ca

**Subject:** Please oppose the 413/GTA West

Dear York Region Mayors and Councillors,

Please oppose the 413/GTA West and any early construction of bridges, overpasses, etc.

Your long-term support of the highway project, since 2007, clearly needs to be re-thought in light of how Covid has changed the way people work and commute, not to mention the insignificant advantages of the highway to potential users. (A savings of 30-60 seconds per trip does not justify a \$10 billion expense.)

The consequences of Covid make it uncertain that the growth and population projections in the PPS will have any accuracy in a post-pandemic world. Planning for the future based on the ideas of the past is dysfunctional at best, disastrous at worst.

With an aging population and young people who cannot afford houses in the GTA, the sprawl concept of single family homes is an outdated one that does not support the actual life needs of our population in the 21st century. Likewise, a 400-series highway does nothing to answer the current and future transportation needs of our population, nor does it support the ideal ratio humans prefer of living 15 minutes from work, schools, and shops. I refer you to the example of Kitchener-Waterloo as a model of sustainable community.

The GTA already has the underused and perfectly good 407 for goods movement. The majority owner of the 407 is the Canada Pension Plan, so it's not inconceivable that an agreement could be reached, among Canadians, to ease costs for truckers on this highway.

While I am aware that the highway opens up an exciting opportunity to developers who would avidly build over as much land as possible on either side of the proposed route, with little concern for anything but profit, I think you need to remember that none of us voted for developers. They are a special interest group who pretend to enhance the economy while destroying human health (construction is one of the most polluting industries in the world), biodiversity, existing communities, crucial farmlands, wetlands, and forests, while increasing the climate crisis, flood and disaster risks, and insurance costs, and force buyers to move farther and farther from urban centres to find an affordable place to live.

All of these very serious problems are subsequently paid for by the public (through OHIP, disaster remediation, loss of natural spaces and extant communities, salification of fresh water, toxic air quality, personal suffering, etc), not by the developers who caused the problems. This sprawl will cost us far more than it will benefit the public good.

Highway traffic produces significant amounts of PM 2.5, a neuro-toxin and known factor in the epidemic of dementia, Alzheimer's and neurological health disasters. Is this something you would choose to increase for residents of York?

The hypocrisy of declaring a climate emergency, then supporting a 400-series highway which will directly increase the climate crisis and make it impossible for you to meet your upcoming carbon targets sends a clear message that you are only paying lip service to this life-threatening reality.

Your website says: "York Region is dedicated to environmental sustainability now and for the future." It is impossible to understand how supporting this highway will provide any environmental sustainability whatsoever.

Certainly the province has demonstrated an incomprehensible contempt for Ontario's environment which is no role model for any Region. Following the province's example will doom future generations to increasingly severe climate and life consequences. Their coercion of the TRCA and Conservation Authorities to conform to MZO's and other draconian measures does not represent any form of democracy.

Highways are the most expensive method of enabling land transportation. Rail is significantly cheaper, requires less maintenance, has a much smaller environmental footprint, uses less construction material, and pays municipal taxes, which highways do not.

It is unclear how the \$10+ billion GTAW would benefit the Region and local municipalities when the already overburdened taxpayer is reeling from the financial effects of Covid.

Unlike mega cities in the US such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, where there are extensive farmland options, the GTA does not have multiple Class One and Two farmland options in Ontario or Canada. To cover this land with sprawl is shooting ourselves in the foot in the worst way, and will permanently destroy food security options for future generations.

By supporting the development and construction industries, you are helping to undercut the multi-billion dollar agriculture and food industry in Ontario, the fourth-largest in North America. Why this favouritism? In addition, the highway, which is required purportedly for "goods movement" appears to be a conduit to freight villages where low-paying jobs will predominate, and profits will flow to largely foreign-owned corporations. Is this how you plan to support your local residents, businesses and workers?

The list of numbered companies who have written you a form letter in support of the highway are from Brampton and Mississauga, so do not even represent business owners in York.

As your neighbour in Caledon, I am aware that the issues mentioned above affect all of us. No one is exempt from the potentially disastrous consequences of this unnecessary and expensive highway.

Please consider the next generations and whether or not you believe they deserve the same or better opportunities as we have to enjoy air and water quality, available farmland and natural spaces, the possibility of choice about how they live, and a reduction in the climate crisis that threatens to steal their future.

Please include this letter in the agenda for the upcoming York Region meeting on Mar 18, 2021.

Thank you,  
Karen Alison