

MEMBER'S RESOLUTION

Committee of the Whole (1)

DATE: Tuesday, December 03, 2024

TITLE: ENDORSEMENT OF FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR HIGHWAY 407

FROM:

Councillor Marilyn Iafrate
Councillor Rosanna DeFrancesca

Whereas, in 1998, Premier Mike Harris passed Bill 70, allowing the sale of Highway 407 to a private consortium on a 99-year lease, enabling the consortium to set its own toll rates and,

Whereas, privatization has led to significant toll increases over the years, limiting the use of Highway 407 by Vaughan residents and causing high traffic volumes on local roads and,

Whereas, high tolls disproportionately affect low- and mid-income Vaughan residents who rely on the Highway for commuting to work and,

Whereas, trucking companies avoid Highway 407 due to its tolls, leading to high volumes of trucks on Vaughan roads, particularly on Highway 7 as well as Highway 401 and,

Whereas, York Region statistics show approximately 100,000 vehicles travel between Jane Street and Weston Road, in which almost 10% consists of trucks and,

Whereas, a Transport Action Ontario study suggests a toll subsidy for trucks could increase truck usage of Highway 407, reducing volume on Highway 401 by 12,000-21,000 trucks per day and,

Whereas, prevailing logic would see a reduction of truck traffic on Highway 7, which runs parallel to Highway 407, which is just a few kilometers away and,

Whereas, subsidizing truck lanes on Highway 407 would facilitate faster delivery of goods, reduce transport costs for Vaughan businesses, and support local economic development and,

Whereas, a pilot project to subsidize truck lanes on Highway 407 would provide valuable insights into the economic impact of diverting truck traffic from Highway 7 and Highway 401 and,

Whereas, this pilot program would allow the government to conduct a cost-benefit analysis measuring potential savings in lost productivity, reduced vehicle operating costs, and increased efficiency for Vaughan businesses using Highway 407 and,

Whereas, toll revenues from Highway 407 currently benefit private entities, while Vaughan residents continue to face high costs and unnecessary traffic volumes and,

Whereas, potentially purchasing Highway 407 back would eliminate profit-driven motives, allowing for toll rates to reflect public interest rather than corporate profit and,

Whereas, lower tolls from public ownership would increase highway usage, alleviate traffic on other highways, and generate revenue through increased usage and,

Whereas, at the start of this term, the Mayor and Council have made it their priority to work towards reducing gridlock and “Getting Vaughan moving again”.

It is therefore recommended:

1. That this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Transportation endorsing a feasibility study assessing the financial and logistical implications of buying back the lease for Highway 407 and,
2. That the provincial government be asked to implement a one-year pilot program that will subsidize or eliminate tolls dedicated truck lanes on Highway 407, evaluating their impact on traffic congestion and overall transportation efficiency and,
3. That this resolution be circulated to all municipalities that host a portion of Highway 407 and,
4. That local MPPs for Vaughan be provided a copy of this resolution.

Financial and Staff Resource Impact

There is no financial impact

Attachments

1. Highway 7 Traffic Data, York Region, November 4, 2024.
2. Transport Action Ontario Study, November 7, 2023.
3. Toronto Star Article October 2, 2024.
4. Inside Halton Article, October 28, 2024.