

C25
Communication
CW (1) – March 2, 2021
Items # - Presentation #2

From: Clerks@vaughan.ca
To: [Bellisario, Adelina](#)
Subject: FW: [External] Presentation Mar 2, 1pm Item 5(2)
Date: March-01-21 12:12:55 PM
Attachments: [Presentation-Supporting Letter Vaughan Council Mar 2 21 Item 5\(2\).pdf](#)

From: IRENE FORD <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 01, 2021 11:52 AM
To: Clerks@vaughan.ca
Subject: [External] Presentation Mar 2, 1pm Item 5(2)

Hello,

Please add this letter in support of my presentation for Council's meeting tomorrow.

Thank you,
Irene

Vaughan City Council
City of Vaughan
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, ON
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Mayor Bevilacqua, and Councillors

Re: Letter Supporting March 2, 2021 Committee of the Whole Agenda Item 5(2)

There is growing public awareness and media interest surrounding the GTA West Corridor/Highway 413. The need for accelerating such a large infrastructure project during a global pandemic and climate crisis is increasingly questionable^{1,2}. On behalf of the Stop The 413 community group I am requesting Council:

- 1. support the request for a Federal Impact Assessment; and,**
- 2. express strong concern about the GTA West corridor being the preferred solution from Phase 1 of the EA.**

The Region of Halton, Town of Halton Hills³ and Mississauga⁴ have opposed the proposed GTA West corridor and supported the federal impact assessment. Caledon and Brampton voted to support the federal impact assessment request. York and Peel Region Councils asked for staff reports on the Federal Impact Assessment request. All provincial opposition parties have publicly stated they will not support Highway 413, if elected.

Until last week our MPPs have been absent. The established GTA West project email has not sent a single communication update since the release of the preliminary design last August and does not respond to emails. To put your hands up in the air and tell us it is the Province's project, that you have no choice and there is nothing you can do is untrue. You can bring motions forward and you can vote yes or no. It is the Province's project but as we have seen with MZO's they need your endorsement and support as locally elected representatives.

I want to ensure that Council understands we are not being asked 'if' highway 413 should proceed that was decided during Phase 1 of the EA. No further solutions are being evaluated or considered. We are being asked about 'how' the highway will proceed; the design.

It is not a corridor and it is misleading of Council and the Province to call it such. It is a mega-400-series-highway equivalent if not larger in width than the existing 400, 401 or 407 with multiple

¹ Media Article collection see: <https://environmentaldefence.ca/stop-the-413/media-articles-highway-413/>

² For a timeline of events of the GTA West Transportation Corridor Refer to: <https://www.haltonhills.ca/en/residents/gta-west-transportation-corridor.aspx#Timeline-of-events>

³ Town of Halton Hills Motion, Nov 11, 2020: <https://www.haltonhills.ca/en/residents/resources/Documents/Resolution-2019-0195.pdf>

⁴ City of Mississauga Motion, Feb 24, 2021: <https://pub-mississauga.escibemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=9697>

interchanges. The highway will destroy and fragment the best farmland in Canada, cut through natural heritage and environmentally sensitive lands - bisect 85 streams, destroy entire wood lots, fragment valley lands, disrupt 1000 ha of land significant to wildlife movement and pave over 8.8 million square metres of surface. **The largest loss of forests from the proposed highway will occur in Vaughan; a 1.5 km stretch around the twin valleys of the Humber and East Humber Rivers⁵.**

Council must support the request for the Federal Impact Assessment for the following reasons.

- The streamlined EA allows for pre-construction which renders the Provincial EA meaningless and if such infrastructure is found to be detrimental to the environment, it will remain.
- The TRCA has stated: *"As MTO is exempt from the regulatory requirements of the CA Act, TRCA has significant concerns there is no mechanism in place for the protection of life and property or the management of natural resources...which fails to fulfill the objects of the EA Act."*⁶.
- The Provincial governments weakening of environmental legislation with unclear and/or unwritten regulations is no longer equivalent to Federal legislation.
- Proceeding under the current regime will cause irreversible destruction to farmland, wetlands, forests, natural hydrological features and put endangered species at further risk.
- No public health or agricultural impact assessment has been completed.

The provincial government has not acknowledged the concerns in the Advisory Panel Report⁷, which concluded the EA was fundamentally flawed for the following reasons.

- The EA did not demonstrate 'need' rather 'opportunity'
- The two Phased EA approach has allowed the highway to proceed without properly evaluating impacts to Greenbelt lands to avoid key natural heritage and hydrological features making it unclear if it conforms to the Greenbelt Plan.
- Modeling scenarios did not adequately account for future uncertainty (travel demand assumptions, self driving cars, growth forecasts – pandemics?).
- Other transportation infrastructure solutions recommended in Phase 1 have not been fully developed or utilized; such as better utilization of the 407.

Reliance from the province for leadership on environmental protection and climate change is meaningless and it is foolish to think or advocate otherwise. Vaughan and York Region's primary concern about the highway route has been the preservation of future developable employment and residential lands and to push the highway further north; a more environmentally destructive path.

⁵ <https://yorkpublishing.escrimemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=19601>

⁶ TRCA Letter Re: Proposed regulation for a streamlined environmental assessment process for the Ministry of Transportation's Greater Toronto Area West Transportation Corridor project (ERO #019-1882), refer to pg. 3: <https://pub-trca.escrimemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=6249>

⁷ "The Panel was also asked to assess the need for protecting the corridor for other transportation needs. In keeping with the PPS (2005; 2014), and under the Growth Plan (2006) policy, the identification and protection of corridors is related to need. As outlined above, the Panel found that the GTAW EA did not demonstrate that the proposed highway corridor met the test of need and the lack of reasonable alternatives for crossing valuable and protected lands, as required by the Greenbelt Plan (2005) and PPS (2005). The Panel is thus not recommending that there be continued protection of the corridor identified as preferred in the GTAW EA."

<https://web.archive.org/web/20190618163558/http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/publications/gta-west-report/executive-summary.shtml#conc>

Vaughan Council declared a Climate Emergency⁸ and four months later supported a mega-400 series highway which will drive Climate Change. You cannot say you are committed to strong and urgent action on Climate Change, preservation of the Greenbelt and prime agriculture land and support the highway without question. **It is a contradiction and if Council continues to support the highway then the statement you're making to your constituents, is that you don't care about Climate Change, the Greenbelt or prime agricultural land.**

The highway is not consistent with many of Vaughan's policies, plans and strategic goals. Staff have not, nor been asked, to incorporate and understand how the highway may negatively impact important initiatives like Green Directions or what costs will be borne by local municipalities due to the loss of free Natural Asset Management services⁹. How does this highway support climate change goals to reduce GHG emissions, increase climate resiliency and carbon sequestration, natural source and storm water protection, air quality, active, healthy and sustainable communities?

Residents are not asking for mega-highways, they are not even asking for new roads they are asking for better transit, to utilize infrastructure we already have (road, rail), to make transportation healthier, more climate friendly and for walkable communities that promote active transportation¹⁰. The highway is planned to have dedicated transit but is in an area not planned for growth and does not connect to any major transit centers; it makes no sense. Vaughan desperately needs transit investment in areas that have sufficient population density.

My concerns surrounding this highway are expanding exponentially. The continual rhetoric for goods movement appears to curtail to powerful corporate interests (Amazon, Walmart, Fed-Ex, Sobey's Costco)¹¹. Distribution facilities have been approved by this Council that will bring more trailers, than jobs, to Vaughan. The locations will benefit greatly from the proposed Highway 413 and 427 extension. Real estate investment firms are already advocating that land surrounding the proposed highway 427

⁸ https://www.vaughan.ca/cityhall/environmental_sustainability/Pages/Climate-Change.aspx

⁹ <https://www.watercanada.net/feature/a-few-more-steps-understanding-the-economics-of-low-impact-development/Opinion:It's-time-to-reveal-the-hidden-value-of-Canada's-natural-assets>

¹⁰ York Region Municipal Comprehensive Review [What We Heard](#)

- Transit is the top Regional service that residents indicate they will rely on most in the future and York Region should continue to invest in public transit
- Residents want compact, walkable communities that offer employment opportunities, community facilities, local services, stores and places for social connection
- Affordable housing is one of the most important components of building complete communities, however, many of us are facing housing market challenges
- Residents want our communities to reduce emissions and are aware of the impacts of climate change in York Region
- Residents want to protect our forests, parks, trails, agricultural lands and green spaces
- Residents want a variety of Employment Opportunities within their community

Province of Ontario, Ministry of Transportation Public Survey Results: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/greater-golden-horseshoe-ggh-transportation-plan#section-2>

City of Vaughan, Master Transportation Plan Review: [Summary of Public Input from Winter 2020 Pop-up Kiosks](#)

¹¹ "Delivery stations power the last mile of Amazon's order fulfillment process. Packages are transported from fulfillment and sortation centres to delivery stations to be loaded onto delivery vehicles to reach the end customer. These investments are part of the evolution of e-commerce that has given rise to new distribution centres such as Voila (Sobeys), article.com, FedEx, Home Depot, Costco and the Walmart distribution centre which broke ground this past August."

<https://vaughanbusiness.ca/news/amazon-opening-two-new-delivery-stations-in-vaughan/>

interchange is or will be future developable¹². Land identified as prime agricultural in [York Region](#) and [Vaughan's](#) current municipal comprehensive zoning reviews. **I no longer believe this highway is about improving transportation for residents, it is about improving commercial transportation and making profits for shareholders** at the expense of our farmland, greenbelt, source and storm water protection; some of the last pristine forests and wetlands in Vaughan. These distribution facilities come with community impacts and external costs that are not accounted for or acknowledged; the economic benefits are not implicit.

Are we subsidizing and spending billions of dollars to pave over farmland and the Greenbelt so Amazon can deliver packages within 2 days and avoid tolls on the 407?

This is not about NIMBYism, environmentalism or rejecting cars and roads. It is about having transportation choices and not committing residents to car dependency and “dooming a new generation to congestion”¹³. This is about the future vision of our City and Ontario, our youth who are scared what a future impacted by Climate Change holds for them and governments responding and acting urgently to address climate change. A message we continually hear from subject matter experts, acknowledged by governments but lost in process and bureaucracy. It is about upholding public goods and interests in the face of immense and unrelenting political influence and interference from powerful corporations, developers and investment firms; blind to community and environmental impacts, motivated only by shareholder profit.

Council members must be cognizant of what and whom you are representing should you continue your unwavering support for this nonsensical highway. The landowners and developers advocating for residential development and large distributions facilities for large multinational corporations will become common knowledge¹⁴.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to speak today.

Irene Ford

¹² “Within a 2-km radius surrounding the interchange (hwy 427), there is immediate potential for the development of approximately 380 acres (official plan designated). There is also future potential to develop a further 1,785 acres (not yet designated).”
<https://www.avisonyoung.ca/documents/56635302/56647756/GTA+West+Multimodal+Transportation+Corridor+Fact+Sheet/475acaa9-7667-41f3-bca9-e0b9ebada2bc>

¹³ <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2021/02/26/a-new-highway-dooms-a-new-generation-to-become-the-congestion.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2021/02/16/investigations/ford-government-mzo-fast-tracked-developments-by-donors>