COMMUNICATION – C5
COUNCIL – March 10, 2021
Committee of the Whole
Report No. 8, Item 12

Dear Mayor Bevilacqua and Councillors,

My name is Tony Malfara. I'm a long-time resident in York Region. I moved to Nobleton with my wife in 1989, where we raised two children. In 2007 we moved to Kleinburg where we currently resided.

As a resident and taxpayer of Vaughan I am asking two things from the Mayor and the Vaughan Councillors at the March 2, 2021 Vaughan Council Meeting:

- I am asking you to support the request for a federal Environmental Assessment, and
- I am asking you to reverse Vaughan Council's support of the proposed GTA West Highway originally approved in 2015 and ask that you require the Provincial Government to fully assess the solutions identified in the 2018 Independent Advisory Report commissioned by the former Provincial Liberal Party and ask them to explain why the recommendation, have for the most part been ignored.

Regardless of its final location, this Highway will have a devastating impact on our environment and my quality of life, no matter if you live in Kleinburg or the other areas of Vaughan and King Township. **The proposed Highway will not alleviate existing congestion, but will in fact create induced demand.** Your decision to approve this highway will forever change this unique and sizeable greenspace in Vaughan that could be used as a centerpiece for everyone to enjoy and replace it uncontrolled growth that will create chaos for the residents in our communities and sadly do little to help alleviate traffic congestion.

You must be responsible to us, our youth, and the future residents of Vaughan. Growth is good and needed, but you cannot be tempted and only focused on uncontrolled growth at all cost. You have a responsibility to protect the majority who will be impacted negatively and not the few who have invested heavily to shape the direction of growth in Vaughan and York Region and will benefit significantly.

The Provincial Government has chosen uncontrolled growth over the environment. The streamlined Provincial EA will render the Provincial EA meaningless allowing for pre-construction and expansion of bridges and other infrastructure. If such infrastructure is found to be detrimental to the environment, it will not be reversed and will remain. 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.

Without a Federal Environmental Assessment, who will independently assess the effects on the environment of the proposed path 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

It is therefore imperative that the Federal Government provide an independent review of the highway proposal and its effects on the social, health, environment, indigenous lands, and historical aspects.

The impacts to Vaughan are clearly documented and supported by numerous **independent** and **unbiased** stakeholders that are saying the proposed highway route would:

- Pave over important farmland which feeds our city and fuels our economy.
- Pave approximately 400 acres of protected Greenbelt lands, mostly in Vaughan
- Bulldoze right through the Nashville Conservation Area
- Destroy important forests in Vaughan including a 1.5 km stretch around the twin valleys of the Humber and East Humber Rivers
- Undermine Vaughan's 2019 climate emergency declaration by increasing greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle traffic and reducing climate resilience
- Create more local air pollution from vehicle traffic

You need to listen to us and engage and have an obligation to act on our best interest. Many of us in Vaughan, York Region, and other municipalities across the path of this Highway have sent endless emails, which for the most part have been ignored or answered by form emails. We have made many calls to local elected officials expressing opposition to Highway 413. Municipally, a few of the councilors have reached out to hear from us. **Our mayor has not!**

Our Provincial MPP's have almost completely ignored us. There is minimal governance and ineffective engagement with stakeholders. The Province has concluded this highway is needed, despite the **many** stakeholders who say it's not the best solution for addressing existing current and future transportation needs.

The amount publicly stated is not an insignificant investment, which many believe will be higher, but will not admit. There are publicly documented viable alternatives to this highway which need to be considered by the Province. Alternatives that provide better and more progressive transportation return for the dollar invested with less environmental impact along the route of the planned corridor.

Stop and consider the alternatives. These progressive and creative alternatives, including prioritizing goods movement on the 407, and improving transit would be much better for Vaughan and were provided as recommendations in the expert advisory panel report which led to the cancellation of this highway in 2018. Among other solutions, it recommended greater use and enhancement of public transit such as the construction of the many new GO stations that were approved in 2018 and the better utilization of Highway 407 which is close to Hwy 413 and is currently under-utilized for commercial and general transportation. The report outlined a number of reasons the highway was not the right solution for addressing traffic across the GTA West Region (including Vaughan) and provided recommendations for follow up. This has been largely ignored.

Mississauga, Halton Region, Orangeville, Halton Hills and Halton Region have all chosen to oppose Highway 413 based on local opposition or are in various stages of opposing the highway with a desire to understand better via a Federal EA before committing to support it.

A federal Environmental Assessment is necessary because the Province has proposed changes that will weaken the Provincial EA process for this highway. The continuing dilution of Provincial regulations allow for expedited approvals so that construction could begin on parts of the highway before the Environmental Assessment has even been completed.

In closing, I ask all of you to support the request for a federal Environmental Assessment, and I am asking you to reverse Vaughan Council's support the Province's proposed GTA West Highway

originally approved in 2015 and reverse your approval for this highway and require the Provincial Government fully assess the solutions identified in the 2018 Independent Advisory Report commissioned for the former Provincial Liberal Party.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Tony Malfara
Kleinburg Ontario