

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

I am writing to request that as my Councilors you once again:

- **Bring forward and unanimously vote yes to the motion reversing the endorsement for the proposed GTA West Corridor/Highway 413" similar to the motion passed at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on March 2, 2021, and**
- **That council bring forward and vote yes to a motion that supports the request for a Federal Environmental Assessment.**

As have we, more and more residents in Vaughan are becoming aware of the negative implications of building the 413 Highway. In building Highway 413 our greenbelt would see a giant asphalt corridor run near or right through the sensitive natural environment. In addition, **the proposed Highway will not alleviate existing congestion, but will in fact induce greater traffic.**

As the community becomes better informed, our opposition to the Provincial Government's decision to fast track a project that will have devastating 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.** 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 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 environmentally friendly growth.

As our elected City Councilors, you have an obligation to be fully and correctly informed in order to properly represent your constituents, which includes us, our youth, and the future residents of Vaughan. To do so, you must ensure the Provincial Government conducts independent environmental and business assessments and proceeds with the right solutions. **Until then, the only appropriate action is to not endorse the Provinces desire to build Highway 413.**

The Provincial Government has stopped listening and chosen uncontrolled growth over the environment and as a result is biased towards a pre-defined outcome which is Highway 413.

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, without bias, 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.

Mississauga, Halton Region, Orangeville, Halton Hills and Halton Region have all chosen to oppose Highway 413 based on local opposition and to ask for a Federal Environmental Assessment. **In addition to upholding your decision to remove your support for the Highway, Vaughan should also request a Federal EA as other municipalities have done, just in case the Region or the Province chooses to proceed with the highway .**

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

There are other solutions.

Be Bold. Instead of using this land for Highway 413, create an environmental buffer between Vaughan and King Township. Leave it in its natural state and create a “**Green-Space Destination**” in Vaughan for all in York Region to enjoy.

Instead of building a highway, insist that this government stops making unilateral decisions and starts to once again follow due process, seeks input from the community, and considers the recommendations and solutions provided by expert stakeholders who were independent and unbiased.

Recommendations that DID NOT INCLUDE A HIGHWAY.

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 was not an effective means for moving people in the GTA West Region. **The report has been largely ignored.**

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

The amount publicly stated to build this Highway is not an insignificant amount and many believe will be double the published amount. Some of these public funds could be better directed to alternative and more progressive public transit projects and enhancements to our Regional Road system where significant investment is long overdue and badly needed. **This is particularly important in today’s world where finding public funding will become increasingly challenging and assuming the Highway is not a toll road, which nobody will once again want to use.** Projects to consider include, but not limited to the following.

There are many better and more progressive ways to spend the funds allocated to Highway 413. For commuters in vehicles, provide new public transit options, including:

- The acceleration of Go-Transit projects already approved for Vaughan but awaiting funding.

- Other Public transit and infrastructure projects that were not included due to funding constraints, but could be re-proposed and brought forward in an accelerated manner, and
- Revisit and fund a pilot project to establish Go Service from Bolton to Nashville/Kleinburg, to Woodbridge using existing CP Rail lines.

For Commercial vehicles, ask the Provincial Government to negotiate subsidized access to Highway 407, which is in close proximity to 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 to the industry to take vehicles off our Regional Roads and put them on the existing 407 for a timely solution.

At the Committee of the whole meeting last week, the majority of Councilors listened and the motion to withdraw support for Highway 413 was approved. Four councilors, including those who represent Vaughan at York Region did not. We are once again looking for unanimous support at the March 10th meeting of Council, to be strongly represented at the next York Region meeting.

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

- **Bring forward to Council and unanimously vote yes to the motion to reverse endorsement for the proposed GTA West Corridor/Highway 413" as was done at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on March 2, 2021, and**
- **That council bring forward and vote yes to a motion that supports the request for a Federal Environmental Assessment.**

Thank you.

Tony Malfara
Kleinburg Ontario