
City Council

Notice of Motion

MM30.16	ACTION			Ward: All
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Supporting the Greenbelt and Opposing Highway 413 - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie, recommends that:

1. City Council express strong opposition to the Province's proposed Greater Toronto Area West Highway and Transportation Corridor.
2. City Council express support for Environmental Defence's request that the Greater Toronto Area West Highway and associated transmission infrastructure be designated for a federal Environmental Assessment pursuant to s.9(1) of the Impact Assessment Act.
3. City Council request that a copy of this Motion be provided to the Honourable Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation and the Honourable Jeff Yurek, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks.
4. City Council request that a copy of this Motion be provided to the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, federal Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Summary

The Province of Ontario has revived a proposal to build the Greater Toronto Area West Highway (413), a fully separated 400-series highway in the northwest Greater Toronto Area. Its construction threatens critical agricultural lands, sensitive waterways, protected Greenbelt lands and conservation areas, as well as

tens of thousands of jobs and billions in agriculture-related economic activity.

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is the third largest agricultural producer in North America, supplying millions of residents with local food. Agricultural lands in the Greater Golden Horseshoe contribute \$11 billion and 38,000 jobs to Ontario's economy, generating \$1.7 billion in tax revenue for the three levels of government.

The proposed Hwy 413 will slash a broad 59 kilometre swath through agricultural, natural heritage and environmentally sensitive lands, crossing 85 streams (10 of which are ecologically high priority), destroying seven entire wood lots including a 5.95 kilometre length of forest, significantly fragmenting valley lands, disrupting 1,000 hectares of land significant to wildlife movement, paving approximately 400 acres of Greenbelt land, and overall laying down 8.8 million square metres of paved surfaces.

The carbon footprint of this highway will drive up greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, which have been steadily increasing in recent years. The highway is also in direct opposition to the City of Toronto's climate emergency declaration and commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2018, the previous Ontario government scrapped the highway after their own expert panel concluded that the estimated \$6 billion highway was not an effective way to address changing transportation needs in the region. A significant number of organizations and residents in the Greater Toronto Area West corridor have demanded the cancellation of the project once again. This rapidly growing opposition has pushed many municipalities along the highway's path to oppose it, including Mississauga, Vaughan, Halton Hills, Halton Region and Orangeville, with Brampton, Caledon and Peel Region declaring support for a federal Environmental Assessment.

The Province has stripped away environmental oversight of these lands in recent years, and now wants to weaken their own Environmental Assessment process for this highway to allow construction over sensitive waterways before the Environmental Assessment is completed. To ensure accurate knowledge of its environmental impacts, Environmental Defence has filed a request for designation under Section 9 of the Federal Impact Assessment Act requesting the Greater Toronto Area West Project be considered for a federal Environmental Assessment.

The City of Toronto must join its municipal neighbours in calling on the Province to cancel this ill-conceived project and work to support the residents, workers and environment that will be permanently damaged if this project is to proceed.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM30.16