



**JENNIFER
MCKELVIE**

City Councillor
Scarborough-Rouge
Park
Ward 25

September 9, 2024

SUBJECT: Establishing a working group to study the widening of Steeles Avenue East between Ninth Line and Beare Road to support regional growth

Dear Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

The employment and residential areas surrounding Steeles Avenue East continue to experience growth, in both the City of Toronto and surrounding municipalities. In recent years, vacant lands along the south side of Steeles Avenue East have been developed for employment purposes bringing thousands of new employees which has increased traffic volumes on Steeles Avenue East. There are also regional development pressures east of Toronto's boundaries that will have further traffic impacts.

This growth is expected to continue and Steeles Avenue East has been identified as a Higher Order Transit Connection in provincial plans, including Metrolinx's 2041 Regional Transportation Plan, and the City of Toronto's Official Plan in response to this growth.

The need to widen Steeles Avenue East dates back to the late 1980s when the province's "Highway 407 Overview Study" identified the need to upgrade the Toronto-York-Durham road infrastructure. In 1990, recognizing the inter-regional function that Steeles Avenue East has for the Cities of Toronto, Pickering, and Markham, the province committed funding to widen this segment of road.

In 1993, the province approved the City of Toronto's Environmental Assessment (EA) that studied the widening of Steeles Avenue East from Tapscott Road to Pickering Town Line from two to four vehicular lanes. The easternmost portion, from Beare Road to Pickering Town Line, was widened before the province withdrew its funding in 1996. Since 2015, the City of Toronto has been advancing design for the portion between Tapscott Road and Ninth Line, with construction targeted to start as early as 2026.

This motion requests the formation of a working group to identify opportunities to advance the widening of the remaining segment, between Ninth Line and Beare Road.

Steeles Avenue East is a vital arterial road in Scarborough and a critical link between East Scarborough and York and Durham Regions. A widened Steeles Avenue East would facilitate rapid surface transit in the future and ease congestion by providing better mobility for residents and employers throughout the region.

The recognition of Steeles Avenue East as an important regional corridor, and the openness to cooperation and partnership is highlighted in the letters of support from the City of Pickering and the City of Markham appended to this recommendation.

Recommendations:

- (1) City Council request the City Manager establish a working group with representatives from the City of Toronto, City of Pickering, City of Markham, Parks Canada, and Metrolinx to:
 - a. review the 1993 provincially approved EA that studied the widening of Steeles Avenue East and determine whether an amended, or a new EA, is required in order to proceed with the widening of the Steeles Ave East between Ninth Line and Beare Road;
 - b. explore the potential to advance rapid surface transit on Steeles Avenue East in association with the widening;
 - c. develop an inter-regional approach to widening Steeles Avenue East and identify potential funding sources; and,
 - d. report back with recommendations to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee in April 2025.

Sincerely,



Jennifer McKelvie
Deputy Mayor, City of Toronto
City Councillor, Scarborough-Rouge Park