

The Professionals' & Business Owners' Network

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March 7, 2020

Kind attention:

The Hon. Premier Doug Ford

Province of Ontario

Queen's Park, Legislative Building

Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Email: doug.fordco@pc.ola.org

Dear Premier,

Subject: GTA West Corridor

On behalf of the non-profit '**Professionals' & Business Owners' Network' (PBON)**, and its 7,000+ members across GTA, Ontario, please accept our respectful greetings and best wishes.

Today, we feel compelled to bring our concerns regarding the GTA West Corridor (dubbed Hwy 413), to your kind attention. It was with disappointment that we watched the proposal for the project be scuttled for reasons that appear to be knee-jerk, contrary to precedents, and with no consideration being given to the long-term planning impacts of such a move. Permit us to briefly mention some of the criticisms for the corridor, and the disconnect between them and reality.

Why different rules for 407 & 413?

Even with the full environmental process in place and strong grassroots opposition, the Ministry of Transportation and the development industry got precisely the 407 East Extension they wanted — through the Greenbelt in Durham Region's countryside. During the process of unveiling their "technically preferred" route at various public information meetings (PICs), MTO's representatives insisted that the proposed highway was nothing more than a transportation corridor intended to enhance traffic flow, thus reducing air pollution and commute times. Now that it has been built, Durham Region's chairman, local mayors, many businesspeople as well as spokespersons for local Chambers of Commerce, realtor groups and B.D.I. 's tout it as a development corridor.



Contrary to above, the proposed GTA West corridor avoids the greenbelt, unless there are no options. It helps to reduce emissions by enabling the traffic to move quickly by avoiding congestion on roads. The Region of Peel forecasts an increase of 800,000 people and 300,000 jobs by 2051. With our current traffic challenges holding us back in 2021, we shudder to think what would happen by 2051. We will stifle out neighborhoods and local roads with traffic if the proposed highway is not built, and the opportunity for rail transit across the Northern portion of the GTA will be lost as well.

Is the Ontario Greenbelt Law really against new construction envisaged for Hwy 413?

Not so. Ontario's Greenbelt law allows infrastructure like roads and sewage systems to be built on the protected, environmentally sensitive lands. Unfortunately, and despite this, the proposed highway was cancelled for no known reason in 2018 by the former premier of Ontario. A step, that the current provincial government has very wisely sought to overturn. And the rationale is clear for all to see. The GTA west Corridor is the kind of infrastructure project that could not only ease vehicular congestion today but create opportunities for moving people and goods in the future as a viable conduit for the increased numbers of immigrants that will anticipatedly arrive in Ontario once the pandemic ends. What is more, Hwy 413 is expected to create jobs and boost economic growth for all the cities in the GTA serviced by this corridor for years to come. Moving goods and people should be our priority.

The new corridor will create a ring road, outside of the GTA, which creates more jobs in the north and the area west of GTA. It will help bring more employment to the north, which will help reduce traffic on highway 401, 400, 410 and 427. It also promises to be a viable solution for GTA by attracting large businesses to the area and building complete communities so that people can work where they live.

Several environmentalist groups are misleading the public through social media campaigns about paving the farmland and ruining the natural environment. This flies in the face of facts. The majority of the GTA West corridor is slated to be built on white-belt land, where development will come through new housing, warehouses, and commercial development. It is critical for municipalities to have the proper infrastructure built to move people and goods. Proper planning should not be pressured by interest groups, but focused on community planning to create more jobs, build complete communities, thus helping build a sustainable economy.

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This project is critical to the GTHA, and the future success of our communities and economy now hinges on your good offices, Hon. Premier. It is our fervent prayer that you and your team do everything possible to ensure that this promising project not be cancelled, and the environmental assessments are marked by transparency and with an eye on the future.

Joined in our respectful regards to you and your department, we remain

Yours in hope,

Director, Communications

Professionals' & Business Owners' Network

Mississauga ON Canada.

Copy to -

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