

Subject: FW: Important: please stop the building of Highway 413

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From: Mahsa Karim [REDACTED]

Sent: February 23, 2021 2:27 AM

To: ZZG-COUNCIL <zzg-council@peelregion.ca>; Iannicca, Nando <nando.iannicca@peelregion.ca>; Crombie, Bonnie <mayor@mississauga.ca>; Starr, Ron <ron.starr@mississauga.ca>; Omar.Alghabra@parl.gc.ca; natalia.kusendova@pc.ola.org

Subject: Important: please stop the building of Highway 413

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Dear Mayor Crombie and Councillor Ron Starr, Natalia Kusendova, Omar Alghabra and Nando Iannicca,

My name is Mahsa Seema Karim and I am a resident of Ward #6.

Ontario is planning Highway 413, a redundant and unnecessary toll highway that would pave over farm, forests, wetlands and a portion of the Greenbelt costing taxpayers an estimated \$6 and \$10 billion dollars. This is an enormous amount of money that is sorely needed to build transit, address infrastructure deficits and protect and restore natural areas and farmland throughout the regions which would be negatively impacted by this Highway. Our priorities are out of order!

Right now Highway 407 (another toll highway) is significantly underused. Yet the province is proposing to build another east-west toll highway just 15 km away. This is despite a sustained drop in traffic volume during the pandemic, in part due to loss of work and work-from-home. These work and traffic trends are expected to continue well beyond this immediate health crisis. In addition, there are a number of local, regional, provincial and federal policies which discourage if not outright dismiss the idea of building more highways as a solution to current challenges. This includes policies on urban densification, protection of our Greenbelt and prime farmland, building a "Smart City", building modern transit and cycling infrastructure, increasing the modal split for transit and active travel while reducing car dependency and, most crucially, acting on climate change and setting strict emission reductions targets. The urgency of climate change has been further emphasized by governments across Canada declaring a "Climate Emergency" - including our own.

Building a new highway gets more polluting cars on the road, and usually does nothing to relieve congestion over time. The concept of "induced demand", seen in highway projects all over the world, confirms this (resource: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2z7o3sRxA5g>). In fact, an expert panel study found the highway would only save drivers 30-60 seconds per trip (resource: <https://web.archive.org/web/20190618163558/http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/publications/gta-west-report/executive-summary.shtml#conc>). Such infrastructure neither benefits the environment or the economy, while shifting away from urgent priorities such as transit, cycling facilities and infrastructure maintenance and repair.

Highway 413 would degrade the parts of the Credit River and Humber River watersheds that flow into Lake Ontario – a source of drinking water for millions of GTA residents, including every resident living in Mississauga. Highway 413 would be 50 km long and would pave over 2,000 acres of Class 1 and Class 2 farmland – among Ontario's most productive farmland. If we truly care about access to and stewardship of our Great Lakes ecosystem and world-class prime farmland local and still in production, then we must show it in opposition to this Highway.

Collectively, there is a strong case against Highway 413, and it's time Mississauga Council come "off the fence" and stand in opposition with residents and experts (resource: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-ontarios-proposed-highway-413-is-a-6-billion-sprawl-accelerator/>) concerned for our environment, our economy and the legacy we are leaving for generations to come. It's time for our actions to match our words - our policies and our declaration of a climate emergency. I am fully opposed to the construction of the GTA West Highway, and urge Council to pass a resolution stating the same. I am also in full support of Councillor Parrish's Motion to reject the GTA West Highway as well as pursue a full Provincial and Federal EA, should the project still proceed.

I want nothing more than to have Ontario be a leader in climate resilience and be the early adopters of the circular economy and truly be a steward and champion of the environment. Protecting, conserving and preserving the environment makes social and economic sense as it will benefit these sectors in the long-term as well as the short-

term. want to save and preserve the ecosystems that allows us to survive and thrive. We depend on them heavily and without it our lives will become more expensive and our health will also decline in the long run. I urge you, I beg you to please consider stopping this Highway 413 project all-together and look for environmental and sustainable solutions for the congestion problems we have on our roads. One way to do that is by investing more in efficient, clean, eco-friendly and sustainable public transportation systems, which will reduce the number of cars on the road in the first place, which will take care of one aspect of the traffic issues. Another solution is making more jobs remote or making businesses have the option for employees to work from home permanently. This will also reduce the congestion especially during the rush hour period of the morning and evenings.

I look forward to Council considering my feedback as well as the resources included in this email. Let's prioritize a sustainable Mississauga while showing leadership and solidarity with our neighbouring cities, towns and regions.

Sincerely,

Mahsa Seema Karim