

Subject: FW: Urgent: Please stand together to formally oppose Hwy 413 "GTA West"

From: Rahul Mehta [REDACTED]

Sent: February 23, 2021 5:37 PM

To: Crombie, Bonnie <mayor@mississauga.ca>; Mahoney, Matt <matt.mahoney@mississauga.ca>; Carlson, George <george.carlson@mississauga.ca>; Kovac, John <john.kovac@mississauga.ca>; Saito, Pat <pat.saito@mississauga.ca>; McFadden, Sue <sue.mcfadden@mississauga.ca>; Parrish, Carolyn <carolyn.parrish@mississauga.ca>; Ras, Karen <karen.ras@mississauga.ca>; Fonseca, Chris <chris.fonseca@mississauga.ca>; Starr, Ron <ron.starr@mississauga.ca>; Stephen Dasko <stephen.dasko@mississauga.ca>; Dipika Damerla <dipika.damerla@mississauga.ca>

Cc: ZZG-COUNCIL <zzg-council@peelregion.ca>; Iannicca, Nando <nando.iannicca@peelregion.ca>; Iqra.Khalid@parl.gc.ca

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Hello Mayor Crombie and Members of Council,

The Ford Provincial Government has brought back from the dead a highly controversial highway project, officially known as "GTA West" and described by community groups and residents as "Highway 413". This project has been shelved two times already yet has been revived at a surprising time when budgets are tighter than ever, traffic volumes lower than ever, population growth uncertain and the urgency to build smart, dense and sustainable communities at a critical crossroads. This toll highway and its generous ROW would pave over thousands of acres of prime farmland, forests, wetlands and a portion of the Greenbelt costing taxpayers an estimated \$6 to \$10 billion dollars (link:

https://d36rd3gki5z3d3.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/IsBuildingHighway413TheBestOption_Report_Final.pdf). This is an enormous amount of money that is sorely needed to build transit and active transportation infrastructure, catch-up on existing/future capital and repair expenses, and protect and restore natural areas and farmland, on a path to a more complete community. If the Province spends these billions then that money will be reduced from other priorities, too. The 2021 City budget underscores how important every dollar is, and how serious the risk of losing sight of essential community-building goals and projects in the years ahead. We cannot risk a white elephant project like this.

Highway 413 would become the third parallel Highway between Toronto and Halton Region - this level of redundancy is outrageous, especially considering present circumstances. Infact, Highway 407 is so underused right now that the owners are expected to pay fines to the Province for not meeting usage targets

(link: <https://www.thestar.com/business/2020/12/19/doug-ford-plans-to-start-building-a-new-superhighway-near-the-401-next-year-why-arent-we-moving-traffic-to-the-vastly-underused-407-instead.html>)! Yet, the Province pushes forward, 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 our immediate health crisis. While stressful due to the sudden changes demanded during a pandemic, this moment also presents an opportunity to invest in infrastructure that gives more choice to move locally, more efficiently, with lower emissions and lower long-term costs. Many just don't have a choice but to drive - the bus or train isn't frequent enough, the protected bike paths are missing and the BRT or LRT projects remain years if not decades away. Yet our Highways become wider and longer parking lots with each passing year...

Which scenario does our Council wish to take? There is no way to abstain - silence equals support for greater emissions, noise/light/air pollution, salt and vehicle chemical runoff, farm and natural areas fragmentation and doubling-down on a

deeply unhealthy dependence on cars for all forms of travel.

Ultimately, building a new (redundant) highway gets more polluting cars on the road, and does nothing to relieve congestion in the long-term. The concept of "induced demand", seen in highway projects all over the world, confirms this (link: <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 (link:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20190618163558/http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/publications/gta-west-report/executive-summary.shtml#conc>).

Collectively, there is a strong case against Highway 413, and it's time Mississauga Council came "off the fence" and stood 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 that they are united in opposition to this project as well. 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 hope Council will seriously consider not just my feedback and those of supporters in local grassroots groups, but also the chorus of concerns raised by residents across the affected towns, cities and regions. It is essential to also consider the previous Expert Review and on-going and new criticisms by prominent community leaders, environmental organizations, planning experts and journalists. Let's ensure a sustainable Mississauga now and for future generations that we can truly be proud of. Let's get serious about the climate emergency - every decision, every policy, every action, and every voice matters to the future health of this one planet we call home. I am confident you will make the right decision.

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Sincerely,

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Rahul Mehta

Resident, Ward 8

Founder, Sustainable Mississauga