



# STOP THE 413 NOW

Briefing to MPs  
Summer, 2024



# WHO WE ARE



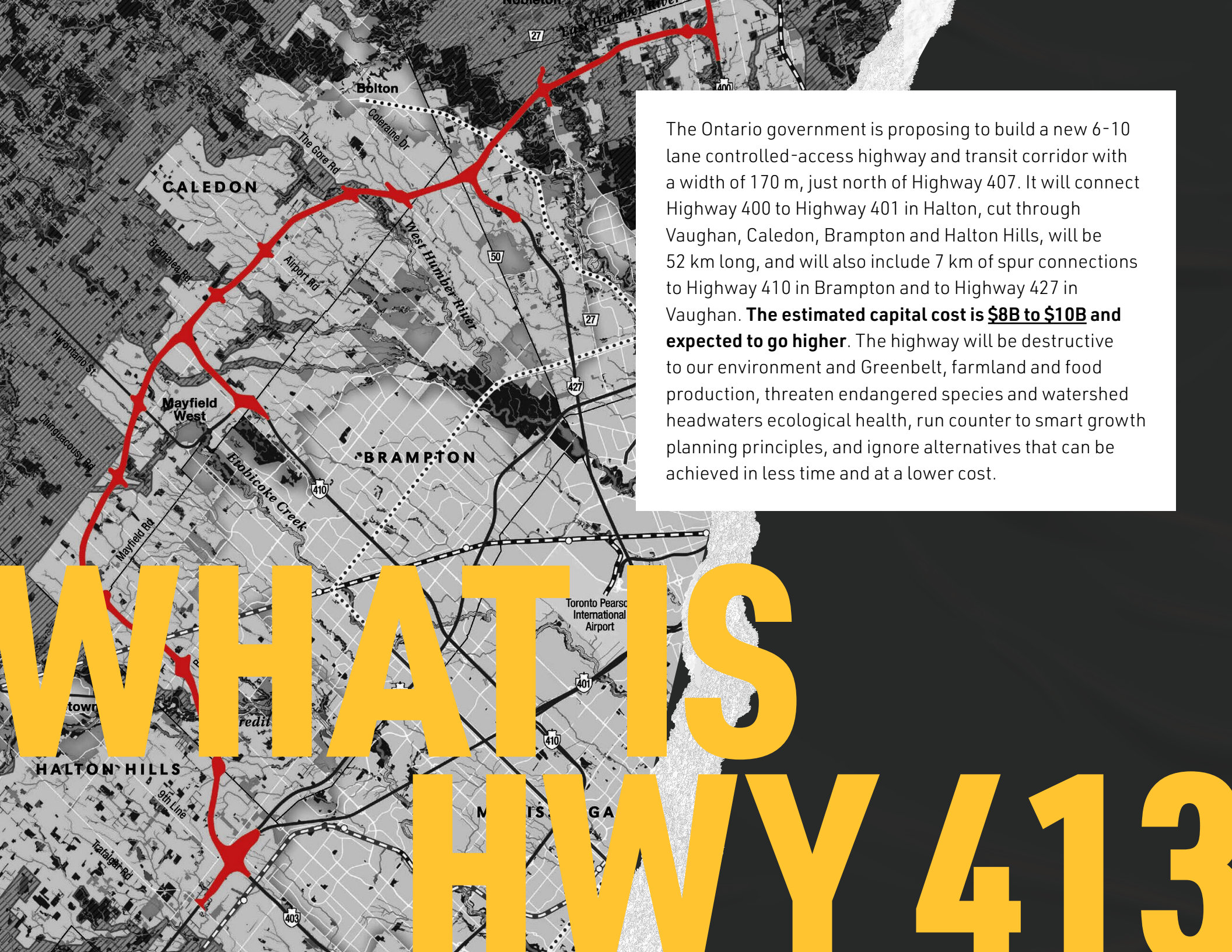
We are a grassroots community organization with members across the GTA working together to put a **stop** to the destructive and costly HWY 413, which cuts through valuable farmland, the “Greenbelt”, and the headwaters of four watersheds. Our focus is to **promote** more timely alternatives and better use of tax dollars.

[stopthe413now.ca](http://stopthe413now.ca)

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The Ontario government is proposing to build a new 6-10 lane controlled-access highway and transit corridor with a width of 170 m, just north of Highway 407. It will connect Highway 400 to Highway 401 in Halton, cut through Vaughan, Caledon, Brampton and Halton Hills, will be 52 km long, and will also include 7 km of spur connections to Highway 410 in Brampton and to Highway 427 in Vaughan. **The estimated capital cost is \$8B to \$10B and expected to go higher.** The highway will be destructive to our environment and Greenbelt, farmland and food production, threaten endangered species and watershed headwaters ecological health, run counter to smart growth planning principles, and ignore alternatives that can be achieved in less time and at a lower cost.

# WHAT IS HIGHWAY 413

# STATUS OF THE PROJECT

Planning for the 413 corridor started in 2007, however was suspended in 2015 and shelved in 2018 by the Ontario Liberal government. The project was resurrected by the Ford government and the route is currently undergoing a Provincial Environmental Assessment (EA) and preliminary design by the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO).

In 2021, the project was also designated by the Federal Government under the Impact Assessment Act (IAA). However, in March 2024, following a Supreme Court of Canada ruling that portions of the IAA were unconstitutional, Ontario and Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to cancel the federal assessment. A joint working group has been established to identify appropriate measures to minimize environmental impacts in areas of federal jurisdiction, such as Species at Risk (SAR), Fisheries and Migratory Birds. The project will require important federal permits in areas such as SAR and Fisheries.

With EA work, permits and detailed design work still pending, the Ford government claim of "shovels in the ground in 2025" is unrealistic.

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS



The highway will pave over farms, forests, wetlands, 400 acres of the Greenbelt, negatively impact the headwaters of four watersheds, including the Federally designated Heritage Humber River, destroy the Nashville Conservation Reserve, negatively impact at least **2 endangered and 29 species at-risk**, impact several highly vulnerable aquifers and significant groundwater recharge & wellhead protection areas, extract millions of tonnes of new aggregate from surrounding communities, and create a decade or more of disruption, noise, dust and additional truck traffic during construction.



### **SPECIES AT RISK CRITICAL HABITAT LOSS:**

Highway 413 would be a disaster for Southern Ontario's endangered species. The project would destroy around 1000 hectares (nearly 2,500 acres) of significant natural areas, including Greenbelt land and the Nashville Conservation Reserve. It would cross streams and rivers an estimated 85 times, contaminating those rivers with every crossing.

According to Environmental Defence's analysis, HWY 413 would negatively impact approximately 29 at-risk and endangered species, including 2 endangered species (Redside Dace and the Rapids Clubtail), and over 100 protected species of birds.

[Read More Here](#)

### **VITAL FARMLAND LOSS:**

According to the 2021 Census Data, Ontario is losing 319 acres/day of our food growing farmland because of sprawl, which is a sharp increase from previous census data in 2016. Can we afford to pave over thousands of acres of Class 1 and Class 2 (most productive) farmland for the highway, and spur on even more sprawl, if growing food locally is important to Ontario?

[Read More Here](#)



### **SOURCE WATER THREATENED:**

The proposed alignments transects Highly Vulnerable Aquifers, Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas in the Regional Municipality of Peel and York, and a Wellhead Protection Area for quality and quantity in York Region. The highway will contribute more salt to our aquifers, streams and drinking water.

[Read More Here](#)



### **NASHVILLE CONSERVATION RESERVE AND GREENSPACE LOSS:**

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of our public greenspaces, not just for species at risk, but also for people's mental health. Is it acceptable to lose one of the few remaining public Conservation Areas in the GTA (Nashville Conservation Reserve (NCR)) for the highway? This reserve is a 900 + hectare property that supports a variety of wildlife, provides significant deer wintering yards, is an important migratory corridor, and it's current and future ecological value make NCR an integral part of our region's natural heritage system.

### **INCREASED NOISE, DUST AND LOSS OF QUALITY OF LIFE:**

Research & analysis has shown that building Highway 413 will require over 2 million tonnes of new aggregate, and will increase truck traffic within affected communities by over 100,000 truckloads during construction. Several communities within the 905 region are more at risk of becoming the future source of the highway's aggregate because of their proximity to the proposed route, the amount of potential aggregate available, and the concentration of existing permits within particular areas.

[Read More Here](#)



Not only did the Ford government ignore a former expert panel that determined that HWY 413 was not in the best interest of the public, nor would it save more than a few minutes of commute time on average; but against current expert recommendations, and that of its own consultants, it instead chose a route through Vaughan that would be the most devastating to the natural environment and “undermine the credibility” of the entire project.

[Read MTO Confidential Presentation, May 2020 Here \(page 17\)](#)

**EXPERTS ARE  
IGNORED**



# MISINFORMATION ABOUTS

The Ford government has been promoting the highway as the solution for GTA traffic congestion. However, **congestion is rarely relieved over time by building new non-toll highways.**

The phenomenon of induced demand, where drivers change their behaviour and drive more often or longer distances, means that the extra highway capacity is quickly used up, leaving congestion levels as bad as before. This is well documented in dozens of studies.

The Ministry of Transportation has been promoting commuter time savings of 30 minutes which is a misrepresentation of the facts. It has used skewed inputs for an analysis that results in unrealistic outcomes for the majority of commuters in the GTA **(only 8% of drivers will use the entire route, with most only travelling 19 km with savings of 6 min over HWY 401)**. Highway completion is many years off (likely 10+ years) and will result in many years of construction noise, dust, and disturbance

to those living in the affected areas with little real time savings for the majority of commuters.

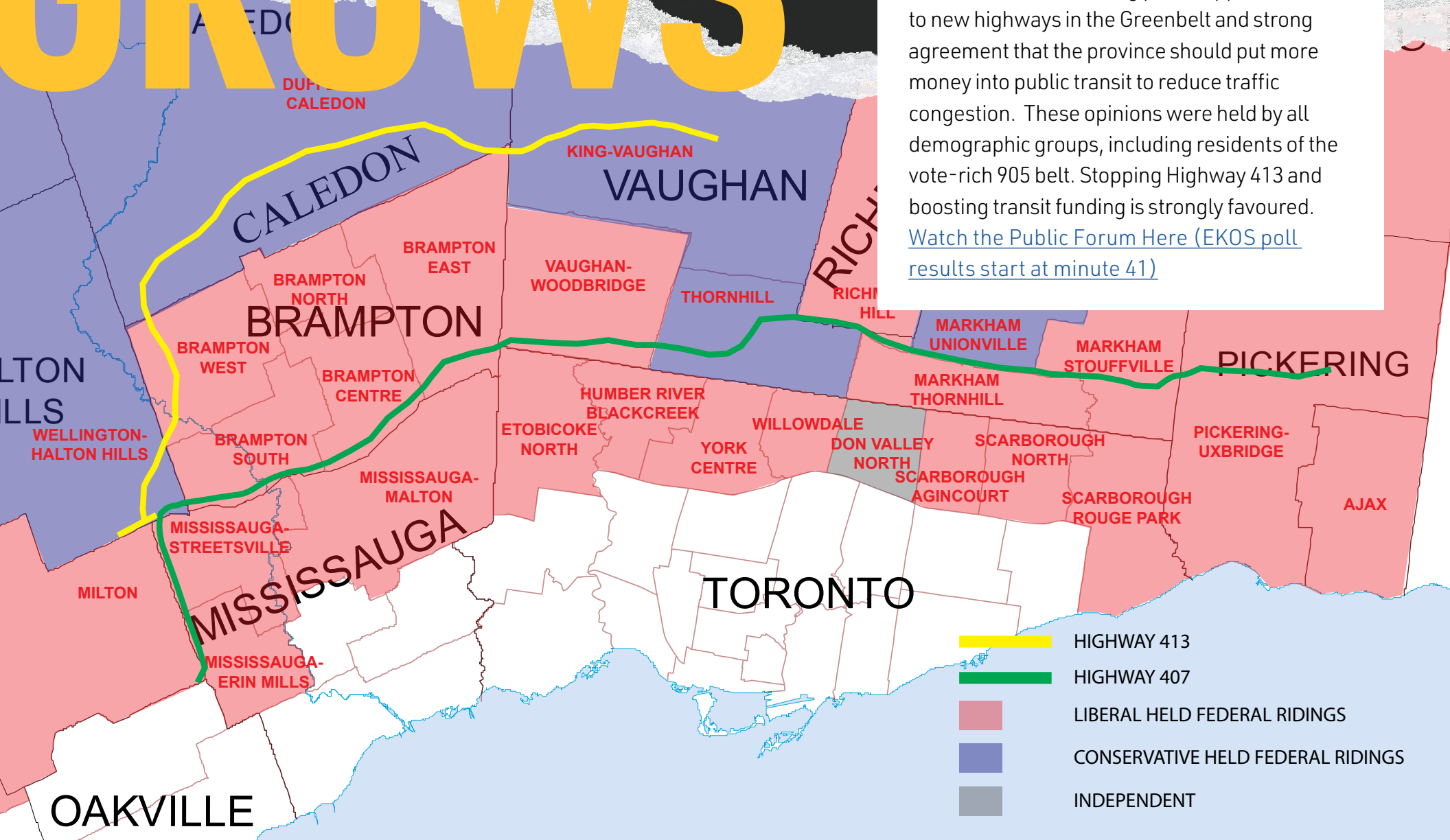
It is expected that Highway 413 will result in earlier expansion of regional roads to deal with traffic entering and exiting the highway. **This will negatively impact property taxes in each local municipality.**

**Better rapid public transit connecting nodes of walkable, diverse communities is the model for smart growth.** It is well recognized that highways are for cars, they create a toxic noise and air quality environment, divide and create more car dependent communities. There is a need for highways, but they are not the best way to support growing our communities.

# OPPOSITION GROWS

Toronto, Vaughan, Mississauga, Halton Hills, Halton and Peel Region **have all voted to oppose the highway.**

A November, 2023 EKOS poll of 830 adult Ontarians, commissioned by the David Suzuki Foundation, found strong public opposition to new highways in the Greenbelt and strong agreement that the province should put more money into public transit to reduce traffic congestion. These opinions were held by all demographic groups, including residents of the vote-rich 905 belt. Stopping Highway 413 and boosting transit funding is strongly favoured. [Watch the Public Forum Here \(EKOS poll results start at minute 41\)](#)



OAKVILLE

# BETTER TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

**With 2 million people moving to York, Peel and Halton Regions over the next 30 years**, there is a need to add more transportation capacity both for people and for freight.

**Highway 407 is the most expensive, underutilized highway in North America** (currently running well below capacity).

It is a public injustice that Highway 407 is now mainly the domain of wealthy individuals, putting undue stress on the 401 and surrounding regional roads. This highway was created with taxpayer money, having already caused many negative impacts to the environment and surrounding communities, to provide a true east-west corridor for commuters and trucks. Operations were then outsourced in a 99-year concession agreement. Its original purpose has been subverted due to the outrageous toll rates and usage costs.


For freight movement, instead of wasting approximately **\$8-\$10 billion dollars** of taxpayer money on a destructive and unnecessary highway that is years away from providing any relief from current challenges, Ontario should commit to examine the feasibility of a truck lane on Highway 407

with low (or no) tolls, providing immediate relief on existing highways. With **trucks using the 407 as a true east-west bypass** of Toronto (unlike Highway 413 that is only a north-west route) space would be freed up, providing immediate relief and improving economic supply chains. Preliminary economic analyses show that a truck subsidy on Highway 407 is substantially more cost-effective than building and operating a new expressway. ([Read More Here](#))

**Public transit can move more people more cost-effectively than any expressway.** There are numerous unfunded rapid transit projects in this region that could be constructed with **\$8-\$10B dollars**. We could expand GO Rail on the Kitchener and Milton corridors, create a new GO corridor to Bolton through west Vaughan and increase bus rapid transit and light rail transit in Vaughan and Brampton. Analysis has shown that these projects would have a capital cost about equal to Highway 413, but be able to move 3 - 4 times as many people per hour as Highway 413.

[Read New Report from Transport Action Ontario](#)

**OTHER \$10B  
FOR**

- 
- **TRUCK SUBSIDY ON HIGHWAY 407**
  - **RAPID TRANSIT**
  - **HEALTH CARE**
  - **SENIOR CARE**
  - **EDUCATION**
  - **CHILDCARE**

# IN SUMMARY

Highway 413 has been in study for almost two decades at significant cost to the public, has been shelved by a previous government, and has now been resurrected by the Ford government. The Ford government has proposed the most environmentally devastating route through Vaughan which has been stated by consultants to “undermine the credibility” of the entire project. Analysis has shown Highway 413 is not the best solution to address the needs of the GTA and our growing region.

The project will:

- ignore the immediate transportation relief and economic advantage possible by using Highway 407 for trucks
- expend money that can better be used in other areas such as transit, health care or affordable housing
- impact many species at risk habitats, including two endangered species
- eliminate thousands of acres of irreplaceable prime farmland
- impact four watershed headwaters areas, with an estimated 85 river & stream crossings
- transect highly vulnerable aquifers, groundwater recharge areas and wellhead protection areas
- contribute to sprawl development, contrary to smart growth principles and climate targets
- require over 100,000 truckloads of aggregate from surrounding areas
- create over a decade of truck traffic, dust and noise through the construction of this highway

# FEDERAL INTERVENTION IS URGED

The current provincial government cannot be relied upon to protect areas of federal jurisdiction, including Indigenous rights and federally listed species at risk, like the Redside Dace and the Western Chorus Frog. The federal government has a number of tools available to ensure federal jurisdiction is protected and we urge you to make use of them. These tools include:

- A new impact assessment under the recently revised impact assessment act
- Permits for construction and site alteration under the Species-At-Risk Act, the Fisheries Act and the Migratory Birds Act

We are requesting you to help “Stop the Highway 413” project and support better use of Highway 407 as an investment in supply chain competitiveness & immediate congestion relief. This would also better support smart growth principles and provide more opportunities for much needed affordable housing. These efficiencies also open up opportunities to invest in other pressing needs in our communities, like healthcare and more rapid transit solutions.

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