

Premier Ford reiterates commitment to highways at stop in Caledon

By Rob Paul

Premier Doug Ford was in Caledon Village on Wednesday to make an announcement regarding investments towards moving Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass forward.

Ford was joined by Minister of Transportation Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Finance Peter Bethlenfalvy, and Mayor Allan Thompson.

The Fall Economic Statement underscored the government wanting to push forward with building and expanding highways, specifically Highway 413, to help save commuters time as the population in Ontario booms.

“There’s no other place anyone would rather start a business, work, or raise a family and that’s why our government is continuing to build Ontario and will be delivering the much needed 413 highway,” said Ford. “Right now, our 400-series highways are clogged with gridlock, ask anyone who drives on them, and you’ll hear the same thing. They’re not suitable for the current needs of Ontarians, let alone to handle the influx of new residents who are expected to arrive in Ontario over the next five years.

“Over 1 million more people are projected to come to the Golden Horseshoe over the next five years and 2 million over the next 10. While we welcome those who will contribute to Ontario’s success, I want you to imagine what that would mean if the current infrastructure was left in place. It would be an absolute nightmare for commuters, for residents, and for families. Real action needs to be taken to fix what’s broken, and the fact of the matter is that this should have been addressed many years ago.”

Ford stated that with over \$145 billion in investments in infrastructure projects from the provincial government, that not only will the highways save time, but they’ll create more jobs and help in economic recovery.

“Over 3,000 thousand commuters in York, Peel, and Halton regions experience gridlock every single day. Building Highway 413—a transit corridor across the regions—will save commuters up to 30 minutes one-way and 60 minutes two ways. Building Highway 413 makes sense for people’s lives, but getting drivers around more quickly makes economic sense as well, because we know that not only will Highway 413 help get people where they’re going much faster, it will also help get goods to market faster. The transportation system is the backbone of our export driven economy, it’s 40 per cent of the jobs in the entire sector.

“The current infrastructure that you’re dealing with is totally inadequate in our mission to build a better Ontario for everyone. The construction of Highway 413 would also create 3,500 jobs and pump \$350 million into the economy. This is a win for commuters, a win for workers, and a win for Ontario. That’s why we also announced plans for the Bradford Bypass a new four-lane freeway connecting Highway 400 and Highway 404. We’re going to get communities moving again, we’re going to get goods moving again, and we’re going to get this province moving again.”

Like the rest of Peel, Caledon is projected to grow more than two times its current population in the coming decades and Thompson endorsed the highway at the announcement as a way to help mitigate infrastructure issues.

“As the Mayor of the Town of Caledon, I want to highlight the importance of planning and building infrastructure that will support us in the future growth of the Greater Golden Horseshoe area,” said Thompson. “In Caledon alone, we will grow over 300,000 people and 125,000 job by 2051. The GTA West Corridor (Highway 413) will enhance transit connections like the future Caledon GO line and will help move people and goods across the Golden Horseshoe area. That will take pressure off our local roads and infrastructure.”

Though Thompson supported the highway, he wants to see it developed in a way that will keep the environment in mind as the Caledon, Ontario, and Canada aim for net-zero emissions by 2050.

'I'd like to thank the opportunity from the province to look at green innovation in design and construction of the corridor,' said Thompson. 'For example, utilizing embodied carbon materials, ensuring the corridor has a transit feature, and no other carbon emitting vehicle infrastructure. We know the corridor is needed to service the growth and I think we can look at ways it can also be innovative.'

When asked about many residents of the communities that will be impacted by the highway coming out and opposing the highways Ford stated that many who are against the highways aren't the ones being affected by the gridlock on a daily commute and only a minority of the people in the areas the highways will go are against them.

'The vast majority of the people in these regions who are sitting on these highways for an additional hour want to get home a lot quicker,' he said. 'Unfortunately, people up in this area don't have the bicycles the people downtown have to hop on a bike and get from point A to point B quicker. It's a very small percentage and we live in a democracy and the majority of the people want this highway and we are building the highway.'