

Resident presses Council to reverse support on proposed highway

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Local Journalism

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Caledon resident and environmentalist Jennifer LeForsetier spoke out to Council on Tuesday night about the implications the proposed Highway 413 will have on the community.

Leforestier has been involved with the proposed GTA West Corridor highway since 2014, along with several other community members.

The new 400-series highway is being planned to travel from Milton through Brampton and Caledon until it reaches Vaughan. Talks and plans of the new highway have been around since 2006 until all was halted in 2015 for further review, which later got cancelled by the Liberal government in 2018.

It has since been brought back to life by the current Progressive Conservative government where a preferred route was approved by Queen's Park this past August. This route will reach communities in not only Caledon, but Georgetown, King Township, Brampton, Milton and Vaughan.

The new highway shows to be an extension of the Highway 400 into the east of the 401 and 407 interchange area.

"We're now facing an ever-changing world within a global pandemic and a global climate crisis, which you yourselves declared on January 29, 2020," stated Leforestier to Council.

Caledon Council showed their support for the proposed highway back in 2018, stating that it has been a priority for the community in previous years.

"My requests are that Council reverse support and endorsement for Highway 413," said Leforestier, "officially request the Federal government conduct an environmental impact assessment of the proposed highway, as has been done by Echo Justice Canada on behalf of Environmental Defence and the Town of Halton Hills. I request and consider a cost benefit analysis from the Auditor General's office on the GTA West Corridor and the Bradford Bypass."

The Bradford Bypass is another proposed highway project extending from Highway 400 crossing through Bradford West Gwillimbury, King City and connecting to Highway 404. Both the GTA West Corridor and Bradford Bypass will travel through the Greenbelt.

"Council's support for the Greenbelt and climate change is compromised," said Leforestier.

Ward 3 and 4 Regional Councillor and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) Chair Jennifer Innis took the opportunity to bring forward a motion she had prepared for next month regarding this issue.

Innis brought forward a motion requesting that the TRCA's request for a voluntary project review (VPR) to be supported by the municipalities in Peel along with York Region.

"It allows Crown agencies to voluntarily engage in a process with the TRCA during detailed design stage where we can actually provide more of a comprehensive review based on our expertise and our watershed expertise," said Innis.

Council members unanimously agreed with the VPR, and the motion passed. The motion is to be brought forward at Regional Council, as well as York.

For further information, please visit Caledon.ca.