



East Gwillimbury



August 12, 2016

The Honourable Bill Mauro, Minister of Municipal Affairs
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
17th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto ON
M5G 2E5

Dear Minister Mauro:

**RE: Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review
Highway 400-404 Connecting Link**

We are writing to express our support for the Highway 400-404 Connecting Link, otherwise known as the Bradford by-pass, and to ask that it be included in the updated Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. As you may be aware, the Highway 400-404 Connecting Link is a proposed 16.2 kilometre, four-lane controlled-access highway that will provide a much needed east-west connection between Highway 400 in Bradford West Gwillimbury and Highway 404 in East Gwillimbury.

The area between Highways 400 and 404 in the York-Simcoe boundary area has very distinct environmental features, as it contains the Holland River and the Holland Marsh. As a result of these distinct environmental and agricultural features, there is a discontinuity in the major road network, particularly with respect to crossing the West Holland River.

In 1993, the Province pursued an Environmental Assessment on the Highway 400-404 Connecting Link that was approved in 2002, and in 2004 it was designated as a "Controlled Access Highway" under the Highway Traffic Act, which protects the route from development until the highway is constructed. However, in 2006 the corridor was not included in the Province's Growth Plan, even though the plan identified surging growth and the need for highway infrastructure in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

As the political representatives for York Region and Simcoe County, we are intimately familiar with the difficulties our communities face on a daily basis due to a strained transportation network. The lack of connectivity in the boundary area road network creates significant traffic congestion most notably through Bradford, but also results in increased traffic on many other major roads within Innisfil, Bradford West Gwillimbury, King Township, East Gwillimbury and Newmarket. As the population of both York Region and Simcoe County has grown significantly in the past two decades, so too has the demand for York-Simcoe cross boundary travel. With a combined planned population of 2.6M people by 2041, our growth will not be sustainable unless this cross boundary issue is addressed.

Of greater interest, the connecting link is also a key component to supporting economic development in the area, specifically in the Towns of Georgina, East Gwillimbury, Newmarket,

Bradford West Gwillimbury and Innisfil. Unlocking employment lands located adjacent to highways in northern York Region and southern Simcoe County is critical to reducing travel demand and improving live/work ratios.

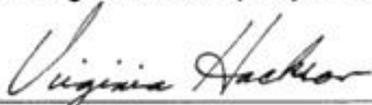
It is imperative that the Highway 400-404 Connecting Link be included in the updated Growth Plan as it is consistent with the government's mandate of investing in infrastructure and people to create jobs and grow the economy further. With strong provincial leadership, there have been a number of successful projects that are improving travel in the area. The recent completion of the Highway 404 extension from Green Lane to Ravenshoe Road (which now carries up to 50,000 vehicles daily), plans for Regional Express Rail and the Highway 427 extension are just a few examples of what can be achieved with strong leadership from multiple levels of government. We hope that the Highway 400-404 Connecting Link will soon be included in this list of projects.

For additional information on this matter, please contact Geoff McKnight – CAO, Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury at (905) 775-5366 ext. 1201.

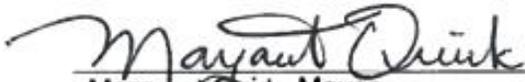
Regards,



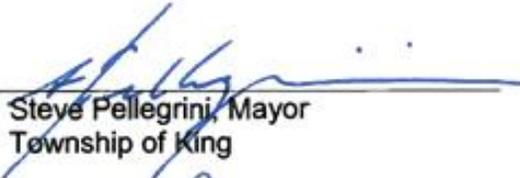
Wayne Emmerson, Chairman
The Regional Municipality of York



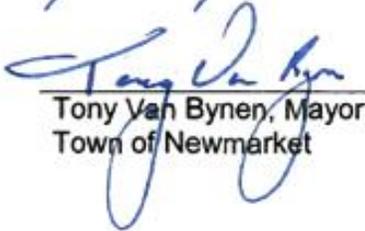
Virginia Hackson, Mayor
Town of East Gwillimbury



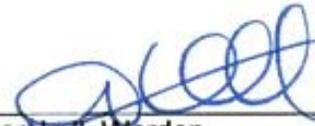
Margaret Quirk, Mayor
Town of Georgina



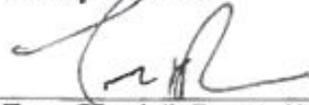
Steve Pellegrini, Mayor
Township of King



Tony Van Bynen, Mayor
Town of Newmarket



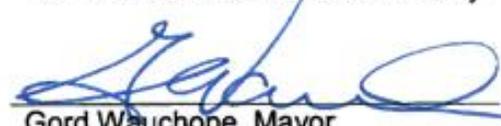
Gerry Marshall, Warden
County of Simcoe



Terry Dowdall, Deputy Warden
County of Simcoe



Rob Keffer, Mayor
Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury



Gord Wauchope, Mayor
Town of Innisfil