

Highway would run through Halton

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north with Highway 407/ Highway 401 in the west. Studies have been ongoing since 2007.

"The GTA West has been studied by the ministry for nearly a decade. The ministry has spent over \$14 million studying the corridor, with zero results," Jones said following Friday's announcement.

"The GTA West Corridor is a project that deserves a complete environmental study. Congestion will cost the GTA \$7 billion a year by 2031, according to Metrolinx."

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) had initially decided on a route that would have connected Highway 400 in Vaughan to Highway 407 in Halton Region near Milton, pending an environmental assessment (EA).

That required EA was put on hold in December 2015 after the ministry opted to commission an advisory panel to review the project. The panel recently came back with its recommendations to the province.

"A proposed highway in the GTA West corridor is not the best way to address changing transportation needs," the MTO stated in its

news release. "A narrower corridor that is approximately one-third of the size of the analysis area of the environmental assessment will be protected from development while the province assesses what infrastructure, such as new transit or utilities, will be needed to support the growing region."

Documents obtained through a freedom of information request by Jones, the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party's infrastructure critic, indicate the government had spent \$14 million on the EA before it was halted to reassess the project.

Jones said landowners and municipalities have been unable to plan for years. "Frankly, further delay is irresponsible and unacceptable," she said prior to Friday's announcement.

"People are spending more time in their cars stuck in traffic and less time with their families," said Ontario PC transportation critic Michael Harris. "There is a massive infrastructure deficit in Ontario, and this amounts to yet another disappointing broken promise from the Wynne Liberals."

- With files from the *Brampton Guardian*



Twitter photo

Burlington MP Karina Gould and Minister of Democratic Institutions.

Gould to be Canada's first federal cabinet minister to give birth while in office

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BURLINGTON - Burlington MP Karina Gould will be making Canadian history as the first federal cabinet minister to become a mom while still in office.

The minister of democratic institutions, who was the youngest to be appointed to a ministerial portfolio in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's cabinet shuffle in 2017, released a statement on Friday, Feb. 9 indicating she would be stepping down from her post after she gives birth to her and husband Alberto Gerones' first child - expected sometime in March.

"I will be back in Ottawa for one final sitting week before going home to Burlington and will continue to carry out my duties as minister of democratic institutions until I give birth," Gould said.

"I will return to the House - and to my ministerial portfolio - when the time is right for me and my family."

Trudeau confirmed, through a statement also issued Feb. 9, Gould would be taking a leave of absence to go on parental leave and Kings - Hants, N.S. MP Scott Brison would be taking over as acting minister of democratic institutions, in addition to his role as president of the treasury board.

Halifax, N.S. MP Andy Fillmore will continue as parliamentary secretary on the democratic institutions portfolio.

"Our country is stronger when we empower decision-makers who reflect the diversity of Canada," Trudeau said in his statement.

"Part of encouraging the next generation of young women to run for office is demonstrating that our institutions are modern, family-friendly, and that the

experiences they bring to the table will contribute to their success," he continued.

"Sophie and I congratulate Minister Gould as she makes Canadian history as the first federal cabinet member to give birth while in office. We wish her well during this exciting time and look forward to welcoming her and her family back to Ottawa when the time is right for them."

Gould said she looked forward to joining other new parents in the House of Commons as proof it's possible to have a political career while starting a family.

"I will keep working with colleagues in all parties to make the House a more family-friendly environment and encouraging young women to run for office, because when decision-makers reflect the diversity of Canada, we achieve better outcomes for everyone."

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