

GROUP PUSHING FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT INVESTMENT

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the communities through which it will pass," said Keith Brooks, program director for Environmental Defense, "and it will deliver next to nothing in terms of benefits."

According to a report commissioned by the Ontario government in 2018, the GTA

West Corridor would save the average commuters between 30 and 60 seconds of travel time per trip. By 2031, according to a release from the Ontario government, more than 300,000 vehicles will travel on the new route daily. A report from Environmental Defense cites "induced demand" as a critical flaw in building the highway.

"Research has shown that construction of new highway capacity is met soon thereafter with an exactly proportionate increase in traffic," the report states.

The cost of the highway is estimated at about \$6 billion.

"For a comparable amount of money, you could move four times the amount of people by investing in public transit," Brooks said.

Environmental Defense outlines a number of options for mass transit in the report totalling an estimated \$6.9 billion, including GO expansion for the Milton Line and Kitchener Line. While neighbouring Milton is one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, with 30.5 per cent population growth since 2011, Environmental Defense said the new highway would not connect local commuters to



Graham Paine/Torstar

The GTA West highway between Vaughan and Milton could alleviate some of the traffic congestion in the GTA, but some critics feel there are better options.

employment centres in Peel Region or downtown Toronto.

While the GTA West Corridor project was halted by the Wynne government shortly before the 2018 election, the Ford government resumed the project's environmental assessment phase shortly after taking office.

The Ontario government recently announced streamlining measures to speed up the environmental assessment for the project, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2022. The comment period has closed for the GTA West Corridor, but Brooks said he urged concerned citizens to contact their MPPs and ministers to voice

their concerns.

"Tell them you don't want the project to go forward," Brooks said. "The highway is going to cause serious impacts and will do nothing to alleviate congestion."

STORY BEHIND THE STORY: Halted by the Wynne government and resumed months later by the Ford government, a new 400-series highway, anticipated to have more than 300,000 vehicles travelling on it each day by 2031, is being met with criticism. Critics say the \$6-billion price tag could serve a much larger amount of people through transit improvements.

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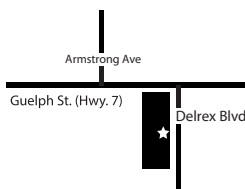


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