

Forget more taxes, just spend our dollars wisely

“How was your drive?” It has to be one of the most talked about topics — again, since the Leafs are out of the running for the

Cup.

Traffic.

We are commuters and, in this case, too (what was that, Leafs!), we have a right to gripe. Our commute times are among the worst on the continent, with the average Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) resident spending 82 minutes a day stuck in traffic.

That's worse than 18 other international cities, even infamously congested Los Angeles.

It's only going to be more horrific as the government-mandated population explosion continues.

Understandably, tackling congestion is the No. 1 local issue with GTHA residents.

So kudos to CivicAction for trying to get somebody to finally do something with its Your32 campaign, which wants us to pledge support for *new *sustainable funding sources — to the tune of \$50 billion over 25 years — for Metrolinx's Big Move regional transportation plan. (*significant words)

It aims to show “people are ready to be part of the solution to pay for a better transportation network”. It's not wrong to be left with the impression you are pledging to pay more for better transportation.

Which might explain why many of us are still pondering the pledge. Just more than 1,000 people, out of more than 6.6 million, and



Debora Kelly

44 elected officials among municipalities have made the pledge since the campaign launch seven months ago.

In York Region, mayors who have pledged are Richmond Hill's Dave Barrow, Vaughan's Maurizio Bevilacqua, Markham's Frank Scarpitti, Georgina's Rob Grossi and King's Steve Pellegrini, along with a dozen councillors.

Metrolinx is offering us a list of 11 “revenue tools”, ranging from highway tolls and parking levies to additional taxes on fuel and general goods, to bring in \$2 billion annually.

While differing on which tools to implement, mayors Barrow, Scarpitti and Bevilacqua agree *new, *sustainable sources of funding are required if the Big Move is to get any traction.

I agreed to be a “local champion” for the campaign because I know indisputably congestion is negatively affecting our quality of life, as well as our region's social and environmental prosperity. It has to get better.

While it may not be very “local championy” of me, I have yet to sign the pledge.

When I hear *new *sustainable funding, I get

a little nauseous.

It's discouraging — if not enraging on a grumpy day — that the lazy solution of raising taxes is even on the table. I'm taxed out.

Unfailingly every year, taxes go up, as does the cost of living (electricity rates!), outpacing any increase in my family's income.

The province has spent billions on transit and transportation in the last decade, with another \$35 billion over three years in the new budget.

How about better spending of the taxes we already pay — including gas taxes — as a revenue tool?

It's insulting to even suggest new taxes after a decade of Liberal government mismanagement, out-of-control spending, vote pander-

ing, tax-gouging and billions wasted on Ornge Air, eHealth and gas plant cancellations.

While more taxes are a no go for me, I'm reconsidering tolls after a trip to Buffalo last weekend. When choosing to drive the state thruway, paying 50 to 90 cents per trip from hotel to soccer fields, I thought it's fair to have users — not just taxpayers — pay if we have to swallow this pill.

Metrolinx is to deliver its investment strategy to the province June 1, so now's the time for you, too, to take part in the conversation about how we pay to ease congestion before your 82 becomes 114.

Debora Kelly is editor in chief of the York Region Media Group.

Correction Notice

Incorrect bid numbers were printed on the Town Page of the Thursday May 16th edition of the Stouffville Sun-Tribune. The Bid Numbers in the Bid Document section are as follows:

BID DOCUMENTS

Bid packages may be obtained by registering on Biddingo at www.biddingo.com (a subscriber and/or document fee may apply) or from our Central Customer Service Centre. For more information, visit our website (for Business tab).

Bid Number	Description	Bid Closing
WS-T-13-17	CONCRETE SIDEWALK REPAIRS	Wednesday, May 29 before 3 p.m. EST
WS-T-13-18	CATCHBASIN & CONCRETE CURB REPAIRS	Wednesday, May 29 before 3 p.m. EST
WS-T-13-22	NEW WIDE DECK MOWER	Wednesday, May 22 before 3 p.m. EST
WS-T-13-23	ROAD REHABILITATION & ASPHALT PAVING	Wednesday, May 29 before 3 p.m. EST
WS-T-13-24	WSOC SEPTIC SYSTEM ALTERATION	Wednesday, May 29 before 3 p.m. EST

The Corporation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville reserves the right to accept or reject all or part of any Bid and also reserves the right to accept other than the lowest Bid and cancel any Call for Bids at any time.

..... May is Hearing Awareness Month



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When you wear a hearing aid, you may find it difficult to hear. This is because low priced hearing aids often have a limited frequency range and may not be able to hear the higher frequencies that are necessary for understanding speech. This is why it's important to choose a hearing aid that is designed to provide the best possible hearing.



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