

STAR GRAPHICS

Will Highway 413 actually cut 30 minutes from your commute? A Ministry of Transportation analysis obtained by the Star suggests it won't

The MTO analysis found that by 2041 GTA transit time will be faster using existing highways, including the 407 ETR. Advocacy groups say that supports their view the new route is more about transporting goods than people.

By Paul Webster Special to the Star

Saturday, May 28, 2022 | 4 min to read



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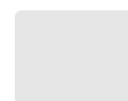
In Caledon and Vaughan, researchers Irene Ford, from left, Jenni Le Forestier and Kathleen Wilson, founders of a citizen action group called the Stop the 413, have been working to map development along the route. "All this is just a foretaste of the much larger environmental disaster that the 413 will unleash," Ford says.

Eduardo Lima for the Toronto Star

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The MTO data set, they said, showed that by 2041, crossing the GTA between Vaughan and Milton using the proposed Highway 413 would take an estimated 59 minutes in 2041, compared to 89 minutes using the existing 401 and 400 highways to travel the same distance — so the new highway is indeed 30 minutes faster.

But the analysis also assessed a third route: using the 407 ETR — the existing toll road that was privatized in 1999 by the Conservatives — along with Highways 400 and 401.

Using that route — which includes a toll highway commuters currently have to pay to use — the Ministry of Transportation calculated it would take 43 minutes to drive the same distance — or 16 minutes less than it would take on the 413 alone.

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When asked by the Star, Ministry of Transportation spokesperson Dakota Brasier said Alamillo was not available to answer questions about the findings, but provided a statement that said “every major highway in the region, including the 407, will be at or exceeding capacity within the next decade.”

A highway can serve more than one function of course, and if built, the 413 will undoubtedly shorten driving times for some commuters while easing the delivery of goods in the GTA, which benefits all of the area’s residents.

But up in Caledon and Vaughan, two of the places most affected by the new highway, researchers Irene Ford, Jenni Le Forestier and Kathleen Wilson, founders of a citizen action group called the Stop the 413, say the Ford government has focused almost exclusively on commute times in its messaging, while being relatively silent on the benefits to the trucking, warehousing, big-box retail and e-commerce industries.

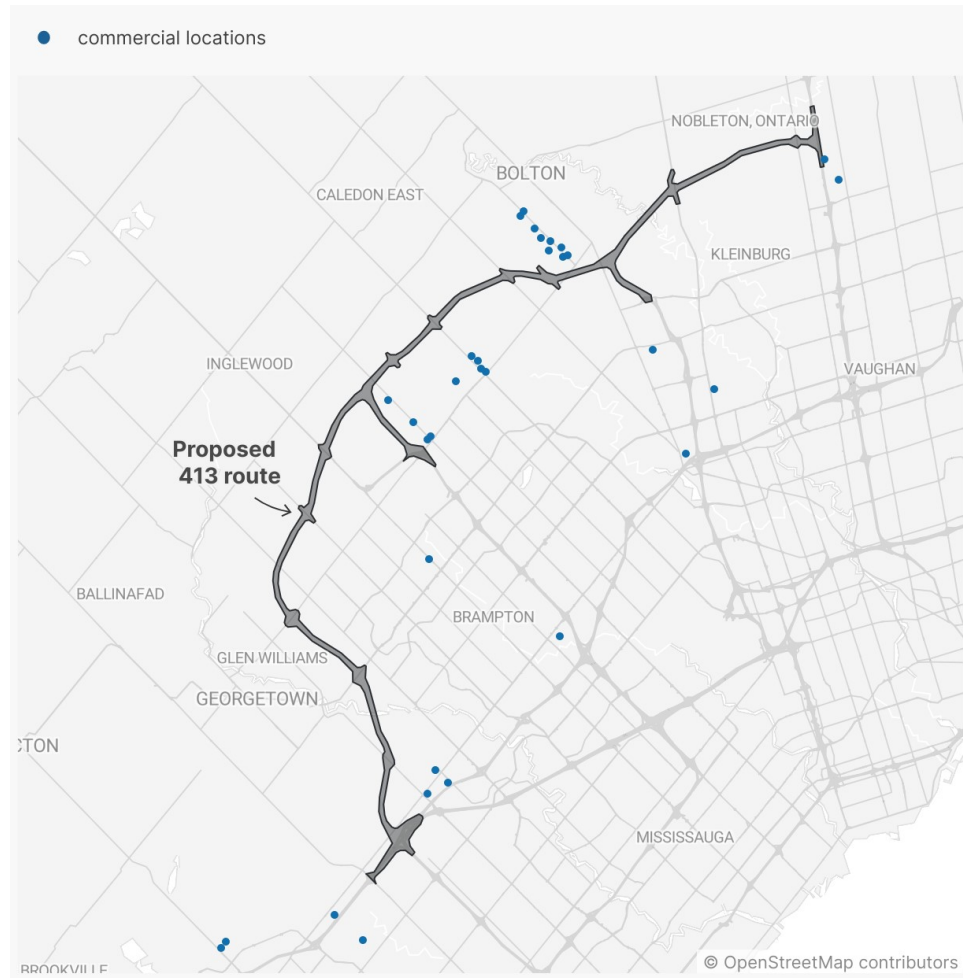
Using data from municipal land planners in Caledon and Vaughan, the group has mapped out the locations of a series of warehouses, many of which have already been built along the proposed path of the 413 by companies including Amazon, The Beer Store, Canadian Tire, DHL, UPS and Walmart.

Those corporations have all made huge financial bets on the 413, said Irene Ford, a self-described Vaughan hockey mom who has spent much of her spare time in recent years fighting the highway.

Betting big on the 413

For the past several years, companies large and small have been purchasing land near to the proposed route.

Showing a low-resolution version of the map. Make sure your browser supports WebGL to see the full version.



SOURCE: STOP THE 413

TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC

Meanwhile in Caledon, Le Forestier, a music teacher when she's not digging into Highway 413 data, said she is concerned about a 260-acre tract of agricultural land crossed by two West Humber River tributaries near the proposed 413 route that was recently bought by Tribal Partners, a Vaughan-based land owner and developer.

On its website, Tribal Partners says that in 2020 the company secured "parcels of lands for a total of 260 acres located in Caledon at the corner of Mayfield and Dixie."

Construction of a massive new development that will include 4.5 million square feet of industrial building space "is expected to commence in 2022," the website says.

Tribal Partners referred questions from the Star to Ottawa-based communications consultant Keelan Greene. After discussing the questions raised by Le Forestier, Greene said he would respond, but no response was

received by press time.

In a phone interview, Amazon Canada spokesperson Dave Bauer confirmed that Amazon bought about a third of the site from Tribal Partners in Caledon.

“Amazon has not been involved in the 413 highway process,” Amazon said in an emailed statement. “We look forward to working closely with the town, province and community to thoughtfully consider a future development that creates great jobs and better serves our customers in the area.”

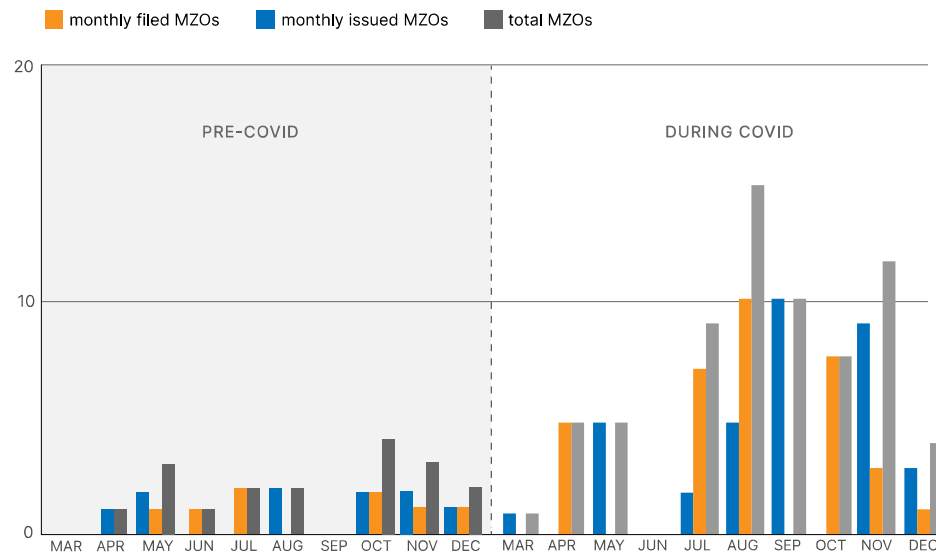
Caledon-based software designer Kathleen Wilson, who works with Ford and Le Forestier on the Stop the 413 project, said the Town of Caledon has advocated for the transformation of farmlands in Caledon into a trucking and warehousing hub to serve companies such as Amazon, which now operates two vast warehouses in Caledon near the planned route of the 413, in addition to the proposed Tribal Partners site.

“The Town asked for and got the provincial government to issue a Ministerial Zoning Order to push the Tribal Partners application through without public consultation,” Wilson said.

“The provincial government has issued numerous other MZO to allow warehousing and other real estate developments along the path of the 413 to bypass normal legally mandated public planning consultations,” Wilson added.

Uptick in pandemic MZO

Ministerial Zoning Orders allow the minister of municipal affairs to expedite zoning for development.



SOURCE: MIRNASL, NAYYER, SIMONE PHILPOT, AIDIN AKBARI, AND KEITH W. HIPEL. "ASSESSING POLICY ROBUSTNESS UNDER THE COVID-19 CRISIS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICYMAKING SYSTEM IN ONTARIO, CANADA." JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY & PLANNING (2022): 1-15.

MZO allow the minister of municipal affairs [to expedite zoning for development](#) after a request has been made by the local council, allowing rezoning of a piece of land to fast-track development and bypass public

participation. The province says MZO's are a way to fast-track affordable housing, infrastructure projects or long-term-care facilities. Critics, however, argue Ontario's Conservative government is approving development projects [without adequately assessing their environmental impact](#).

Documents obtained by the Star through freedom of information requests from MTO show that although the ministry has consulted extensively in private meetings with numerous business lobbyists — including the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan — that support the 413, it has not had a single face-to-face meeting with any of the environmental groups that oppose the highway, including Stop the 413.

In an email, Brasier said that among the major retailers and e-commerce corporations that built or are now building distribution centres along the proposed path of the 413, only Canadian Tire Real Estate Investment Trust has directly met with the MTO.

At an April 19 Caledon planning committee meeting, Caledon councillors Ian Sinclair and Annette Groves expressed concerns about the Tribal Partners project and called for open public consultations on it.

In an email to the Star after the meeting, Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson declined to discuss the controversy over the project, but said he supports more public consultations.

With files from Star staff

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MI

Miguel MAY 30, 2022

Ford says it would save 30 min. travel time. That is possible at today's traffic rate, but not when it is built and complete in 4 to 5 years from now. The Toronto residents are retired person moving out of the city buying cheaper home in the outskirts town to save money. Therefore will not commute anymore, as more and more people are working from home. Wasting Ontarians Hard earn money rather than paying Doctors, Nurses and build schools. where needed. Ford is not well informed and