

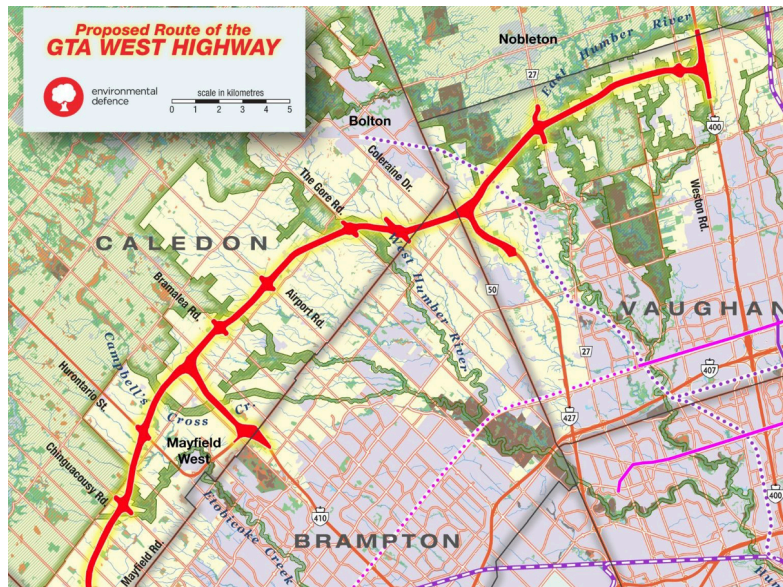
Ontario - Yours to Grow or Yours to Protect? Let's stop a sprawling disaster.

Louise Brownlee, *Environmental Actions Matter* Interest Group

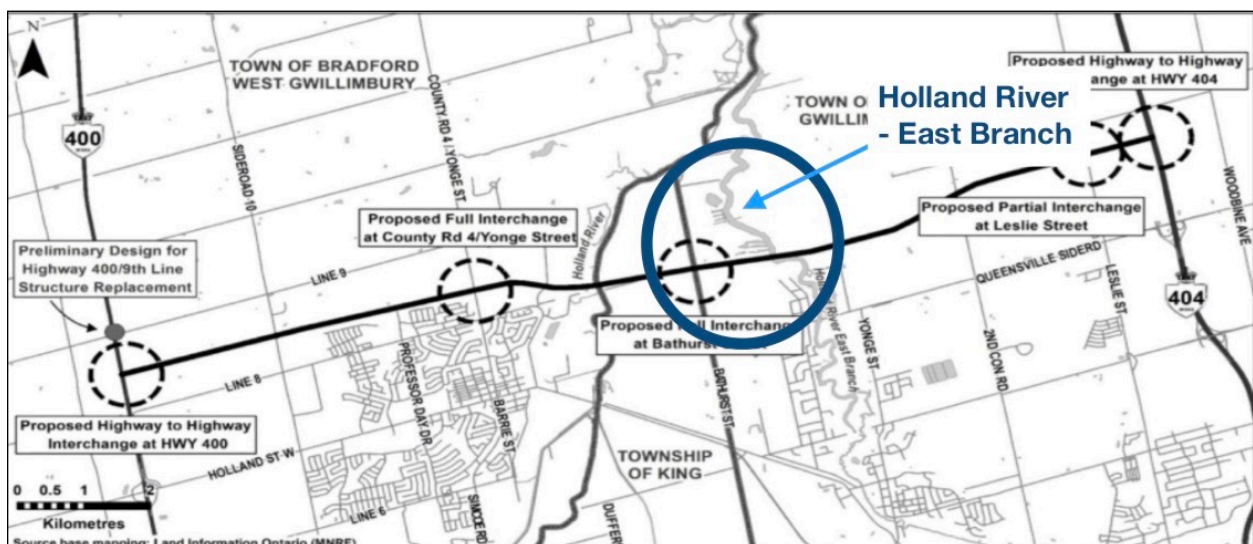
Shortly after taking power, Premier Ford announced the revival of the GTA West 400 series highway (413) with the launch of a **fast-tracked Environmental Assessment**. And last month the government announced a second highway project - the Bradford Bypass.

Environmentalists are up at arms. Highway 413 will cross rivers and streams approximately 53 times, including cutting through the headwaters of the Credit and Humber Rivers. It is only 15 km away from the underused highway 407 and will save **approximately 30-60 seconds per vehicle trip!** Why would Ford want to build two highways over sensitive wetlands? Here's what you should know.

#1 - **GTA West Corridor** - also called **Highway 413** by environmentalists and dubbed the “\$6 Billion Sprawl Accelerator” in a recent Globe & Mail Editorial (Feb 16, 2021).



This 50 KM stretch of highway starts in the NW corner of Mississauga, cuts across farmland in Caledon, and through farmer's fields at the northern edge of Vaughan before connecting with Hwy 400. (<https://www.gta-west.com/faq/>) #2 - The **Bradford Bypass** - also called the **Holland**



Marsh Highway by environmentalists - is a 16.2 KM four lane highway connecting the Hwy 404 crossing the sensitive Holland Marsh area south of Lake Simcoe to Hwy 400. It is still in the planning stage and does not have an official name.

Proposed benefits of the two highways?

It is expected that developers will build housing along these corridors. As the Globe & Mail wrote on Feb 16 - "A better name would be **The Sprawl Accelerator**. It's a plan to use taxpayer dollars to encourage real estate developers on the currently rural fringes of the Greater Toronto Area." Farmers living near the proposed Highway 413 have already sold land for millions to developers hoping to cash in on the bonanza.

Why are environmentalists fighting these projects?

We are in the middle of a Climate Emergency. We need to reduce greenhouse emissions (GHG's). Highways do not achieve that goal. Research has shown that building more highways does not reduce traffic. The outcome is more urban sprawl and increased GHG's. As the former mayor of Bogota, Enrique Peñalosa, said, "Trying to solve traffic problems by building more roads is like putting out a fire with gasoline." To slow down the rate of climate change, we need to preserve nature.

The Bradford Bypass highway will cross through what is now the Holland Marsh, one of the most productive specialty crop agricultural areas in the country, Greenbelt areas and one of the most important wetlands in Southern Ontario.

Ripping up farmland for Highway 413 will also increase GHG's and **future food insecurity**. Farmland benefits the people of Ontario in many ways:

- farmland takes CO2 out of the atmosphere for us and stores it underground.
- farmland mitigates climate change by absorbing water and preventing flooding during massive storms
- farmland support pollinators and provides habitat for wildlife and endangered species

The \$6 billion could be better spent on building complete, compact and healthier communities, better public transit and protecting farmland.

Early in February 2021, Ecojustice helped environmental groups urge the federal government to conduct environmental assessments for the two proposed highways located on environmentally sensitive lands. Ecojustice writes: "The two highways will significantly impact Ontario's endangered species, migratory birds and aquatic life. They must be properly assessed."

What can CFUW members do?

Take action now to write to Minister Wilkinson, and your MP, to tell them that you want a **real (not fast tracked) environmental assessment** for Highway 413 and the Holland Marsh Highway. Don't let Premier Ford fast-track two massive highways through Ontario's Greenbelt, rivers and forests! Sign the petition [here](#). You can also obtain a **Stop 413** sign from [Environmental Defence](#). Contact Louise Brownlee for more information.

