



MEMBER MOTION

Section 5.4.4(b) of Procedure By-law

Meeting:	Committee of the Whole or Council
Meeting Date:	March 19, 2025
Subject/Title:	Feasibility Study for Highway 407
Submitted by:	Councillor Thompson

Whereas in 1987 the original intention for starting construction on Hwy 407 was to relieve traffic congestion in the rapidly growing Greater Toronto Area (GTA); and

Whereas Ontario taxpayers paid \$1.6 Billion to have Hwy 407 constructed; and

Whereas tolls were to be used to exclusively cover the highway's construction costs; and

Whereas those tolls would be lifted once those costs were covered (expected to occur within 30 years); and

Whereas, in 1998, Premier Mike Harris passed Bill 70, allowing the sale of Highway 407 to a private consortium on a 99-year lease, enabling the consortium to set its own toll rates with no safeguards against rate hikes; and

Whereas by 2014 privatization has led to a 300% increase in tolls, limiting the use of Highway 407 by Ontario residents and causing high traffic volumes on local roads; and

Whereas high tolls disproportionately affect low- and mid-income Ontario residents who rely on the Highway for commuting to work; and

Whereas trucking companies avoid Highway 407 due to its tolls, leading to high volumes of trucks on GTA roads, particularly on Highway 7 as well as Highway 401; and

Whereas a Transport Action Ontario study suggests a toll subsidy for trucks could increase truck usage of Highway 407, reducing volume on Highway 401 by 12,000 - 21,000 trucks per day; and

Whereas subsidizing truck lanes on Highway 407 would facilitate faster delivery of goods, reduce gas emissions, reduce transport costs for Ontario businesses, and support local economic development; and

Whereas a pilot project to subsidize truck lanes on Highway 407 would provide valuable insights into the economic impact of diverting truck traffic from Highway 7 and Highway 401; and

Whereas this pilot program would allow the government to conduct a cost-benefit analysis measuring potential savings in lost productivity, reduced vehicle operating costs, and increased efficiency for Ontario businesses using Highway 407; and

Whereas toll revenues from Highway 407 currently benefit private entities, while Ontario residents continue to face high costs and unnecessary traffic volumes; and

Whereas potentially purchasing Highway 407 back would eliminate profit-driven motives, allowing for toll rates to reflect public interest rather than corporate profit; and

Whereas lower tolls from public ownership would increase highway usage, alleviate traffic on other highways, and generate revenue through increased usage; and

Whereas current trends suggest that unregulated tolls will continue to see Hwy 407 remain underutilized for the foreseeable future; and

Whereas MTO projections show commuter speeds below 20-40 km/hr on all 400-series Highways by 2041, except Highway 407, whether or not Highway 413 is built.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that:

1. That the City of Richmond Hill requests the Government of Ontario to conduct a feasibility study assessing the **financial, environmental, and logistical implications** of buying back the lease for Highway 407.
2. That the Government of Ontario be asked to explore the possibility of the private entity implementing:
 - a. Dedicated truck lanes on Highway 407;
 - b. A one-year pilot program to subsidize or eliminate tolls for dedicated truck lanes on Highway 407;
 - c. An evaluation of the impact of dedicated truck lanes on traffic congestion, the environment and overall transportation efficiency.
3. That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Ontario Minister of Transportation and the local MPP's for Richmond Hill.
4. That this resolution be circulated to all municipalities that host a portion of Highway 407.

Moved by: Councillor Thompson

Seconded by: