



OSGN

Ontario Smart Growth Network

September 5, 2007

Bryan Tuckey
Commissioner of Planning and Development Services
York Region Administrative Centre
Box 147, 17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

Re: ROPA 58 (Bradford Bypass)

Dear Commissioner Tuckey:

Formed in 2003, the Ontario Smart Growth Network (OSGN) brings together organizations that are working to stop urban sprawl and promote sustainable, compact and healthy communities across Ontario. At present, OSGN has 61 members, including national and provincial organizations as well as local community organizations.

We believe that there are three basic requirements with respect to achieving the principles of smart growth in Ontario: stopping urban sprawl, fostering healthy communities, and supporting community involvement in planning.

Submission

We object to the proposed ROPA 58 for the following reasons:

1. Neither the extension of Highway 404 beyond Ravenshoe Road nor the Bradford Bypass are included in Places to Grow, which states public transit will be the first priority for moving people in infrastructure planning and investments. In fact, the Province put a halt to these projects because they are in obvious conflict with recent land use planning decisions. In addition, both the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal have publicly stated that neither of these highways are immediate priorities.
2. Pencilling in these highway extensions through ROPA 58 precludes investigation of alternatives. ROPA 58 also contradicts the 4R approach to sustainable transportation outlined in York Region's Master Transportation Plan. These 4 R's are:
 - Reduce the need to travel
 - Alternative modes of transportation
 - Public transit

- Optimize existing Roads
- 3. Residents who participated in York Region's public consultations on "*Planning for Tomorrow*" expressed concern about patterns of growth in the region, subsidization of sprawl by taxpayers, poor air quality and gridlock. At these meetings, residents supported infill development, intensification in existing urban areas, work/live communities, improving GO Transit and protecting agricultural land and green spaces.
- 4. Extending Highway 404 and building the Bradford Bypass will only increase gridlock in the future. One of the myths of highway extensions is that traffic congestion will ease. Yet study after study shows that gridlock is only reduced temporarily by the construction of new roads. Congestion tends to return within five years. A University of California study showed that increasing highway mileage by 10% led to a 9% increase in traffic.

As you know, gridlock's twin is increased air pollution. According to Statistics Canada, the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions is transportation. And the main reason for this is our nation's dependence on roads to move people and goods.

Putting money into new roads also diverts it away from investments in public transit.

- 5. Extending Highway 404 beyond Ravenshoe Road will fuel urbanization of prime agricultural lands in the northern part of York Region.

Recommendation

- 1. Withdraw ROPA 58.

Yours sincerely,

Janet May
Network Director

Cc: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Cc: Ministry of Natural Resources
Cc: Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal