

Local MPP candidates asked to pledge support for 400-404 Link

Bradford West Gwillimbury, ON (*June 4, 2018*) – Is the creation of the Highway 400-404 Connecting Link a provincial election issue for you?

Mayor Rob Keffer sent a letter to each candidate for MPP of the York-Simcoe riding in the upcoming provincial election seeking their support for moving forward with construction of the Link.

Responses were received from the Liberal, PC and NDP candidates (as well as the Trillium Party candidate, who has since withdrawn from the race) and all candidates confirmed their support in writing. The letters from the three current candidates are appended to this release.

This information was gathered and is being shared to assist residents who consider the Link a priority when making their decision at the polls. In a survey conducted by the Town in 2016, 85% of residents said they favour or strongly favour construction, while 10% were undecided and just under 5% opposed construction.

“Regardless of which party wins, I will work with my colleagues across the riding to hold our MPP accountable to their promise to urge the provincial government to start construction on the Link as soon as possible,” says Mayor Keffer.

The Highway 400–404 Connecting Link is a proposed 16.2 km, four-lane controlled access highway that will provide an east-west connection between Highway 400 in Bradford West Gwillimbury and Highway 404 in the Town of East Gwillimbury. The Link is intended to alleviate congestion on east-west corridors across the Holland Marsh and to provide an alternative path from eastern Toronto and eastern Greater Toronto Area to Barrie and the rest of the Simcoe area.

The Town of BWG’s Mayor and Council have continued to raise awareness of the urgent need for the Link both with residents and with the provincial government. The Province added the Highway 400-404 Connecting Link to their Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe released last year, but did not specify timelines for construction.



9 May 2018

Dear Mayor Keffer,

I am writing to you in reply to your letter of May 7, 2018 regarding support for the Highway 400-404 Link.

I stated in my speech accepting the Ontario Liberal Party nomination to be our York—Simcoe candidate that, “We need to link Highway 400 and Highway 404 and we need 15-minute GO train service, not to mention the parking to go with it.” I have reinforced this message throughout my campaign.

In fact, I am the only candidate to address this issue to date, and I am pleased to say I am a strong supporter of the Highway 400-404 Link. Indeed, *The Bradford Topic* reported recently, “Liberal candidate Lorelea Carruthers is the only candidate to publicly address the issue” (23/3/18).

As you know, I have worked with you and Bradford West Gwillimbury and East Gwillimbury town councils to advocate for the Link over the past few years, including working behind the scenes to help facilitate conversations with local MPPs and then-Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca.

As a local resident who lives between Green Lane and Queensville Sideroad, I know firsthand that we need this Link to ensure commuters travelling home on Highway 404 can get through East Gwillimbury and Bradford without congesting local roads and adding delays to their drive home. Unlike my Conservative opponent, my family and I sit in local traffic every day and know the importance of this piece of infrastructure.

I was pleased that the Ontario Liberal government put the Link on its updated growth plan, recognizing that we need this link to facilitate the smart planning we need as our region grows. I congratulate you on your successful leadership and lobbying efforts in this regard.

More broadly, our Ontario Liberal government is making an historic investment in our transportation infrastructure to fix traffic congestion, including extending Highway 404 to Ravenshoe Road in Keswick, widening and improving Highway 400 between Innisfil and King Township, constructing the Highway 400-5th Line interchange, providing funding for the Bradford bus service, and of course our ongoing work towards all-day GO train service, which has seen significant improvements including the new weekend service, along with the coming increase of around 70% in parking spaces in Bradford and a 75% increase in parking spaces in East Gwillimbury.

Experienced, local leader.



Doug Ford and the Conservatives, on the other hand, risk the progress we are making. Doug Ford has a history of creating chaos when it comes to transit projects during his time on Toronto City Council, including cancelling bus routes. Mr Ford has already stated that he is not necessarily committed to GO train service enhancements in other parts of the GTHA, and when the Conservatives were last in power, they cut GO train service to Barrie. Mr Ford's agenda of deep cuts to public services includes a pledge from him that he will force municipalities to make cuts to municipal budgets in order to access provincial funding as well, which would further risk support for building infrastructure in our region.

To conclude, I want to reaffirm my support for this project and respectfully point out that I am the only candidate who has worked with you to advance this issue. Unlike my Conservative opponent, I live in this community and am committed to working together with you to solve the issues we experience firsthand as residents.

The Highway 400-404 Link and the associated design, planning and construction work associated with delivering the project is a key priority for me. Should I be fortunate to be elected MPP, I will be a strong, vocal and local advocate for this necessary piece of infrastructure.

Thank you again for your letter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'L. Carruthers'.

Loralea Carruthers
Ontario Liberal Party Candidate
York—Simcoe

cc Mayor Virginia Hackson, Town of East Gwillimbury

From: Dave Szollosy

Sent: May-31-18 12:47 PM

Subject: RE: Support for the Highway 400-404 Connecting Link

Dear Mayor Keffer,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Highway 400-404 Connecting Link. The proposed Link will play an important role to the growth of our communities in York-Simcoe, stimulating the development of the employment lands in the York Region and Simcoe County designated areas. It should as well, address traffic concerns and relieve congestion in the Bradford access roads. After decades of back and forths by various governments on this project, I understand the importance to invest in much-needed infrastructure across Ontario.

The Wynne Liberals promised to spend \$31 billion on transportation infrastructure, but municipalities have not been given a specific allocation they can make plans for. And so far, barely a trickle of this money is flowing yet in rural Ontario.

Doug Ford's vow to slash \$6 billion across the board and "leave no stone unturned" puts the services that York-Simcoe residents rely on at risk and will not help the much-needed investments in our community.

The Conservatives also devastated municipalities two decades ago when they downloaded provincial responsibilities onto cities and towns with no way to pay for them and the Liberals had 15 years to undo the damage, but chose not to.

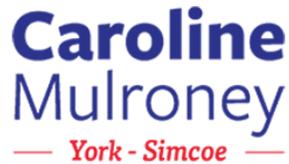
That's why the NDP will undo the damage caused by decades of disrespect and downloading by Liberal and Conservative governments. We understand and respect local government, which is the closest to the people and provides services and infrastructure that people depend on every day.

An NDP government will invest over \$180 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years—without wasteful P3s. We will also make it a priority to invest in rural infrastructure.

As a lifetime resident and frequent user of the route, I understand the importance of the Link and the residents of York-Simcoe can count on me to fight for their interests.

Dave Szollosy

NDP Candidate for York Simcoe



May 16, 2018

Dear Mayor Keffer,

The Highway 400-404 Connecting Link is a top priority for York-Simcoe, **and if elected you have my guarantee that I will advocate for the construction of this essential piece of infrastructure.**

For years this Liberal government has ignored the needs of York-Simcoe, and this Connecting Link is a prime example. As you know, an Environmental Assessment for the Connecting Link was conducted and approved by the PC government in 2002. The PCs included the Connecting Link in the Ministry of Transportation Capital Plan, and the Liberals removed it. The Connecting Link was included in the York Region Official Plan, with construction that should have begun in 2010. The Liberal government cancelled this development, and only just put it back in the Growth Plan for the Golden Horseshoe last year. However, including the Connecting Link in the Growth Plan does not include putting it in the Capital Plan. That is to say, this project still lacks the funding it needs to get our community moving. Sadly this is another example of the Liberals playing politics, on the eve of an election.

The Liberal government has taken no action on this project. It is not listed on Infrastructure Ontario's list of projects to be completed in the next decade, and no funding has been allocated towards seeing it completed. The Highway 400-404 Connecting Link needs to be built to help connect people to jobs and opportunity, to help parents get home from work sooner to see their kids, and to help relieve traffic congestion in our community. York-Simcoe can't wait another decade.

It was a PC majority government that began this process, and you can count on me to champion this project at Queen's Park.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Caroline Mulroney". The signature is written in a cursive style and is set against a light blue rectangular background.

Caroline Mulroney
PC Candidate, York-Simcoe