

Jerry J. Ouellette

MPP Oshawa

Moving the 407 Eastward



The decision by the current government to postpone the Highway 407 East extension and halt construction in Oshawa came as quite a shock to everyone. Throughout the Highway 407 East Environmental Assessment (EA) process there was no indication given at any time that the extension would terminate in Oshawa and be constructed in phases. There was no mention that the Highway 407 East completion would be a 2-phase process and there were no opportunities for consultation or comments from individual municipalities or the general public in that regard.

The eastern development of Highway 407 represents the largest single economic stimulus for Oshawa and the Region of Durham. I have always been a big supporter of the Highway 407 East extension through our region to Highway 35/115, and I recognize the huge economic stimulus and other positive aspects that it will bring to our community. Since 2005, throughout the EA and consultation process for the Highway 407 east expansion, I engaged local and provincial officials, facilitated meetings and discussions, and met with businesses, developers and local landowners to ensure the timely completion of this project. I have raised the issue of conflicting dates of completion in the Ontario Legislature since December 2007, challenging the government and pursuing other initiatives to ensure the province honours its commitment set out in the FLOW agreement with the federal government, and completing the extension of Highway 407 to Highway 35/115 by 2013.

The Toronto Board of Trade has reported that congestion on our 400-series highways is responsible for \$6 billion annual loss of productivity and that the GTA has the worst commute times in all of North America. There is simply no alternative to Hwy 401. With the increased gridlock and lengthy commute times experienced in the GTA, the decision and position of the current government is questionable.

Ending the 407 in Oshawa at Simcoe Street or Harmony Road would increase gridlock on municipal and regional roads which would continue to hurt businesses, kill jobs and strain municipal budgets to keep up with the wear and tear. Families in Oshawa and across Durham Region would be impacted by increased rates of taxation to offset the upgrades and maintenance of local and regional roads and infrastructure. It would be more financially responsible to extend the terminus of the 407 to an area where it will have a minimal financial impact as opposed to Oshawa, which would cost millions of dollars to shore up the end of the line gridlock.

As former Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Transportation, I am responsible for facilitating the current Highway 407 development into the Region of Durham. I worked with ministry officials, municipalities and regional representatives to bring this to fruition. As a matter of fact, I worked with Tim Hudak, Leader of the Official Opposition, as he committed his support for extending the highway all the way to Highway 115/35. I will continue to work with all officials in the same manner to ensure the rapid construction of Highway 407 through our community and expedite its completion to Highway 115/35.

I applaud our community of Oshawa for its activeness and commitment to this project and offer my absolute support and continued assistance to see that this important development is completed in the best interests of our community.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry J. Ouellette". The signature is stylized and cursive.

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