

April 8, 2021

A message to our members and industry:

We have received many calls, emails and text messages about the Toronto Star's April 3 story on the proposed Highway 413. Some expressed anger and frustration, others concern and confusion, but all asked the question: how do we have a meaningful discussion on the big question of how we build sustainable and livable communities for the more than 14.8 million people who will call the Greater Golden Horseshoe home by 2051.

The Toronto Star story missed an opportunity to discuss this critical issue. Instead of fostering a responsible dialogue, The Star chose to publish a front-page "investigative" piece filled with innuendo. There is no subtlety here. We all see the bias in the way this narrative portrays Canadians of Italian descent. We know Ontario's diverse communities will recognize how offensive this storytelling approach is to their own stories of success in Canada. We encourage you to email the Editor of the Toronto Star at [lettertoed@thestar.ca](mailto:lettertoed@thestar.ca), to ensure that no community faces this treatment in future coverage.

As we've always done, BILD and OHBA will focus our energies on how provincial and municipal policies should be structured to provide housing, employment spaces and transportation for the more than four million additional residents of the GGH by 2051. For more than two decades, governments have managed growth and development, but have not succeeded in making the GTA more affordable or livable. Instead, we face housing shortages and affordability challenges, along with congested roads and insufficient services and infrastructure. Simply doing the same thing for the next 20 years will be delaying necessary action, a tactic paid for daily by every resident of Ontario.

A key part of the discussion is the need for transit routes and investment in public transit to enhance the movement of people and goods necessary to address real growth pressures of today and in the imminent and longer-term future. The lands around the proposed Highway 413 corridor are already being planned for growth, and it is true that the highway would support this future planned residential and commercial development.

We welcome the real and evidence-based discussion on the proposed highway that has been happening at the council meetings of impacted municipalities and regions. These local and regional governments supported the initial restart of the Environmental Assessment (EA) process. York Region council recently reaffirmed its support for the project, noting that it is desperately needed by its citizens, who currently contend with badly congested roads.

Governments at all levels have a responsibility to plan for future growth. These are difficult decisions and need to be taken with a view for the long-term. In 1986, Metro Toronto Council voted against a new subway line in downtown Toronto, to force population growth away from the downtown core. Here we are 40 years later, with millions more people calling Toronto

home and overwhelming support for the desperately needed downtown relief line being proposed and constructed.

Our industry and its associations are essential partners with government in the planning, development and building of complete communities and the required infrastructure to meet the needs of the rapidly and inevitably growing population in the GTA. We take this role very seriously as we work toward responsible planning and development of communities.

The Province's Growth Plan mandates all regions plan for population growth to 2051. The key to land use planning is to plan for growth ahead of time, and that includes transportation planning. This future-focused planning is vital to enhancing the quality of life of every present and future resident of the GTA and Ontario.

This is the real debate and where BILD and OHBA's focus will remain. We are committed to leading an essential discussion, with due respect for all participants, on how we build great communities across Ontario.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Wilkes".

Dave Wilkes  
President & CEO  
BILD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Vaccaro".

Joe Vaccaro  
CEO  
OHBA