

Congestion threatening economic stability and quality of life

By Adam Freill December 11, 2024

CANCEA traffic congestion report commissioned by RCCAO and ORBA reveals gridlock costs billions each year and erodes people's quality of life.

Rising congestion across the province, particularly in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), is more than a transportation problem; it's a crisis impacting Ontario's economy and the well-being of residents, indicates a new report commissioned by the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) and the Ontario Road Builders' Association (ORBA).

Researchers at the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) found that traffic gridlock in the GTHA negatively impacts the region by \$44.7 billion per year due to lost economic productivity, 88,000 fewer jobs, and the reduction of commuter's quality of life due to stress, health issues and time lost. The study warns that without increased infrastructure investment, congestion could surge up by 59 per cent over the next 20 years.

The study, *Impact of Congestion in the GTHA and Ontario: Economic and Social Risks*, reveals congestion consequences are already spreading beyond the GTHA, with Ontario's overall impact rising to \$56.4 billion in 2024. The report emphasizes the need for significant, immediate government action to alleviate congestion's toll on industries, workers, and households.

"Traffic congestion is strangling our economy and making daily life harder for millions of Ontarians," said Nadia Todorova, executive director at RCCAO. "Beyond the billions of dollars lost each year, congestion underscores an urgent need for continued critical infrastructure investment. Without a sustained commitment to improve our infrastructure, Ontario's economic growth and residents' quality of life will continue to be at risk."

"The report's findings likely come as no surprise to everyday people and workers in Ontario who spend hours on their daily commute instead of quality time with their loved ones," said Walid Abou-Hamde, chief executive officer at ORBA. "While we welcome and support the Ontario government's historic commitments to building and modernizing the province's roads, bridges and transit, we call on all levels of government to take immediate action by significantly increasing infrastructure spending and getting projects to market faster across all regions of the province."

In light of these findings, the two industry associations are calling on all three levels of government to prioritize infrastructure expansion, asking them to increase investment in core public infrastructure, to continue to collaborate with industry to find innovative solutions, and to explore ways to expedite the tendering and construction of major transformative transit and transportation projects.

The full report can be found [here](#).

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