

# Ontario looking at tunnelling under Highway 401 to ease Toronto gridlock

September 25, 2024 By Rock to Road Staff

TORONTO – The Ontario government has launched a technical evaluation to examine the feasibility of building a tunnel under Highway 401.

This proposed expressway would stretch across the city of Toronto, beginning in the west near Brampton and in the east near Scarborough. The Ontario government states this project is expected to significantly reduce traffic in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) while supporting economic growth during construction and in the long-term by helping to get goods and services to market sooner. This new road would not be a toll highway.

Engineering services will be secured through the Ministry of Transportation, with support from Infrastructure Ontario. The feasibility work will include the following:

- Examining various options to increase Highway 401 capacity, including potential routes within the existing right-of-way, number of lanes, length, and the number and design of interchanges connecting to other highways;
- Refining the province’s understanding of the proposed tunnel’s economic contributions, both in the short- and long-term, as well as the project’s impact on reducing gridlock;
- Reviewing best practices from similar projects in other jurisdictions;
- Conducting initial soil boring testing to improve the province’s understanding of the route’s geology and its impact on design and construction;
- Preparing to start the environmental assessment processes for the project; and
- Conducting an initial market sounding, with feedback informing any potential procurement and commercial structuring strategies.

The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) commended the Ontario government for, what it called, its bold step toward easing congestion in the GTHA

“Congestion in our region isn’t just a nuisance—it’s a crisis impacting businesses, people’s daily lives, and their health and well being,” said Nadia Todorova, executive director of RCCAO. “Other jurisdictions regularly use tunneling technology to address similar challenges. This expressway proposal shows that Ontario is ready to be proactive and innovative in finding solutions that benefit everyone.”

RCCAO stated it is committed to supporting the government throughout the feasibility study by bringing the expertise and technical knowledge of its members to the table.

“We will collaborate with the government to ensure this project is executed efficiently and achieves its intended goals,” said Todorova.