

Province awards \$91M contract for Highway 400 bridge, interchange work in Bradford

The Trillium [Michael Owen](#) – July 17, 2024

The rubber is hitting the road on local highway expansions as the province made the second such funding announcement in Bradford since May.

Joined by Bradford Mayor James Leduc, members of council and representatives from the construction industry, Minister of Transportation Prabmeet Sarkaria announced July 17 the province has awarded a \$91-million contract to Dufferin Construction for the replacement of the bridge and interchange at Highway 400 and County Road 88.

Work is anticipated to begin this summer and finish in 2028 and is planned to widen the platform of the 400 to accommodate a future expansion to 10 lanes, widen the bridge and nearby portions of CR 88 to four lanes from two, and to reconfigure the interchange into a partial cloverleaf design similar to the one at Line 5, with loops in the southeast and northwest plus redesigned ramps.

The project is also planned to create a new lane to help connect the 400 with the future [Bradford Bypass](#), a four-lane 16.3-km controlled access highway intended to link Highways 400 and 404, which Sarkaria estimates will save commuters 35 minutes of travel time and for which he announced a [contract for the western design](#) in Bradford on May 9.

“As Ontario grows at a historic rate there has never been a more urgent time to build our highway and road network with it,” Sarkaria said at a construction site near the area carpool lot in Bradford. “Highway 400 and the much needed Bradford Bypass are crucial highways that link northern and southern Ontario, move people and goods through our province and connect people to good paying jobs.”

The minister estimates that congestion costs Ontario’s economy \$11 million each year in lost productivity and said Ontario’s population is expected to increase by about 40 per cent over the next 25 years, with the population of the Greater Golden Horseshoe expected to grow from 10 million to almost 15 million.

That growth is one part of why the province included in its 2024 budget more than \$27 billion in funding over the next 10 years to support the planning and construction of highway expansion and rehabilitation projects, according to Sarkaria.

Mayor James Leduc lauded the announcement and noted that Bradford is also seeing “exponential growth” as the town is expected to see the population increase from about 45,000 currently to [about 85,000 by 2051](#).

“The bypass is a much welcome addition to our infrastructure and will be vital to removing gridlock on our roads,” he said. “We’re thrilled to see the significant project reaching new milestones.”

Both Leduc and Sarkaria acknowledged that drivers travelling through the area would experience some delays during the construction, but both committed to trying to minimize the impact.

“We’ll work with the ministry to certainly mitigate as much inconvenience to our community as possible,” Leduc said.

According to Dufferin Construction crews, that inconvenience is expected to extend to the closure of the carpool lot at CR 88 in the fourth year of work, and commuters could instead be redirected to lots at Highway 89 in the north or Highway 9 in the south.

The mayor asked drivers to try adjusting their schedules accordingly and be patient because “it’s really about building for the next generation.”

That extends beyond roads to servicing Bradford’s Highway 400 employment lands, where the mayor explained the town has “hundreds of millions of dollars” worth of water and sewer infrastructure in the ground to accommodate future businesses.

Ongoing efforts by the town to [extend servicing](#) to the northern portion of the employment lands is being done in conjunction with the provincial project which requires the relocation of one of the town’s water mains, for which the town and province have agreed to split the cost 50-50.

“That’s just great partnership. That’s working together and that’s what the provincial government and municipal government should do,” the mayor said, praising the province’s commitment. “Then we can take that 50 per cent and reinvest it in our community in other areas — potentially as park upgrades and any recreational opportunities we can.”

The province is also expected to cover the full cost of shifting the south portion McKinstry Road about 300 metres east to align with the driveway of a service station south of CR 88.

During construction, the province expects the highway project to support as many as 2,200 jobs annually and contribute as much as \$286 million to the province’s gross domestic product.