



CONGESTION

What's at Stake in Toronto's
2023 Mayoral By-election



June 2023

Stuck: Toronto's Congestion Crisis

Toronto's traffic congestion is at crisis levels, ranking 7th globally and 3rd in North America for traffic delays per capita¹.

The average driver in Toronto lost 118 hours due to congestion in 2022², costing the region an estimated \$11 billion annually in lost productivity and opportunity.

One of the major culprits of congestion in Toronto is the infamous Highway 401 bottleneck that cuts across the north part of the city. This pinch point alone results in over 3 million hours of delays for commuters annually³. It's not the only source, a total of five out of the top ten bottlenecks in Canada are in the Toronto Region.

While many congestion challenges are localized, the root causes are systemic, and a comprehensive approach is critical to addressing congestion as a whole. Mayoral candidates must be ready to pursue solutions that can help ease the pressure points across our transportation network including: improving traffic management systems, bringing our roads to good repair, seeking to upload costly regional expressways, better utilization of bike lanes, and more thoughtful construction planning that ensures viable traffic detours.

As the City of Toronto's mayoral candidates discuss the future of the Gardiner, it is imperative to consider its role in mitigating congestion. The Gardiner serves as a critical goods movement corridor that diverts traffic and trucks away from local streets, making it a vital part of the solution. The Gardiner and DVP, while funded solely by the City of Toronto, are vital pieces of a network that bring people in and out of the city from across the province, and thus should receive funding from the provincial and federal government.

1 "Inrix 2022 Global Traffic Scorecard," Inrix, <https://inrix.com/scorecard/>

2 "Inrix 2022 Global Traffic Scorecard," Inrix, <https://inrix.com/scorecard/>

3 "Inrix 2022 Global Traffic Scorecard," Inrix, <https://inrix.com/scorecard/>

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Our transit system must play a key part in any congestion plan. The quality, frequency of service, and safety of the TTC demands urgent attention from the incoming Mayor. TTC ridership remains significantly below pre-pandemic levels. At the same time, the TTC is reducing service on many of its core routes, which only risks driving riders away. In a post-pandemic world, with elevated congestion, the City requires long-term funding from high levels of government to attract users back to transit and help our core's recovery. An efficient and effective transit system is a key solution to mitigate congestion and achieve our net-zero goals.

What's at Stake



The consequences of congestion go beyond mere inconvenience. Toronto's livability is a key driver of attracting top talent and businesses to the region.

Reduced transit service and prolonged travel times are serious barriers to the return to work and ongoing recovery of the downtown core. Moreover, they limit job opportunities and employers' access to top talent, hindering economic growth and development. As Toronto's population grows, so will the pain of these challenges, and no one will be immune to it.



A CFIB survey found that 58% of small businesses in Toronto consider traffic and congestion to be a significant challenge to their operations, and 36% reported that

they have lost customers due to congestion-related issues⁴. Congestion manifests itself as rising costs to both businesses and consumers, and puts any business that relies on transport in a perilous position, with no end in sight.



Tackling congestion through transit and maximizing roads must be a key area of focus for the incoming Mayor. Our

next Mayor must be prepared to advocate for cost sharing of the Gardiner and DVP, to ensure there is adequate funding to keep Canada's economic engine moving.

By the Numbers

Toronto is ranked 7th globally in terms of congestion and 3rd in North America in terms of traffic delays per capita.

Our congestion issues are getting worse. In 2022, **the average driver in Toronto lost 118 hours due to congestion.**

Congestion costs Toronto **\$11 billion in lost productivity and opportunity** cost per year⁵.



Canada's worst highway bottleneck is the stretch of Highway 401 that cuts across the north part of the City of Toronto.

This bottleneck alone costs commuters over 3 million hours of annual delays.



Five of the top ten bottlenecks in Canada are found in the **Toronto Region**.

The rehabilitation of the Gardiner Expressway alone amounts to over **44% of the City's Transportation Services capital budget**, this places a severe burden on the city's property tax base and constrains the amount the city is able to spend on all its other local roadways.



The Hard Hitting Questions

- ① How do you plan to work with the provincial and federal governments to address the expansion, service improvement, and maintenance of public transit in Toronto?
- ② What would it take for Toronto to meet the 1-hour challenge, where commuters can get to any location within city limits within an hour?
- ③ What is your plan to balance the costs of the Gardiner rehabilitation while maintaining the rest of Toronto's critical roadways?
- ④ Given that reducing single-occupancy vehicle use is a key strategy for mitigating congestion, what steps will you take to encourage and facilitate the use of sustainable transportation options such as cycling and public transit?



Long commutes home

Greg **commutes from his home in the suburbs of Hamilton to his office on the Harbourfront each day.** After a long day in the office, Greg **starts his drive back home at 6 pm** and immediately gets stuck on Queens Quay due to construction. He's then stuck again on the DVP on-ramp, and continues to crawl along both the DVP and QEW until the traffic finally eases up after Oakville. **At 7:55 pm he arrives home,** exhausted, hungry, and to his anxiously waiting young children.



Commutes from
**Hamilton to
Habourfront**

Commutes home from
6pm-7:55pm

Increased delivery times

Madochy Shipping, a small family run transport company, has fixed contracts to deliver medical supplies from a warehouse in **Milton to Mt. Sinai Hospital downtown weekly.** James Madochy, owner of the company finds that the commute, which **used to take his drivers 1.5 hours roundtrip 5 years ago, now takes them over 3 hours.** The 50% cut in capacity plus the increased costs of fuel and drivers has made his most profitable contract very unprofitable, jeopardizing the business.



Delivers from
Milton to Mt. Sinai

Commute 5 years ago:
1.5 hours

Commute now:
3 hours



“Congestion is a critical issue impacting our competitiveness. Today, both goods and people are getting stuck – and it’s stalling our economy.

We need to reduce the impacts on business and workers today and we need a Mayor committed to working with other levels of government to find sensible, long-term solutions to our congestion crisis.”

Jan De Silva

President & CEO – Toronto Region Board of Trade

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