

= Ontario Highway 404 =

King 's Highway 404 (pronounced " four @-@ oh @-@ four ") , also known as Highway 404 and colloquially as the 404 , is a 400 @-@ series highway in the Canadian province of Ontario connecting Highway 401 and the Don Valley Parkway (DVP) in Toronto with East Gwillimbury . The 50 @-@ 1 @-@ kilometre (31 @-@ 1 mi) controlled @-@ access highway also connects with Highway 407 in Markham . Highway 404 provides access to the eastern edge of Richmond Hill , Aurora and Newmarket , in addition to the southern edge of Keswick .

Construction on the freeway began soon after the completion of the Don Valley Parkway , with the first section south of Steeles Avenue opening in 1977 . Over the next twelve years , the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) undertook a continuous construction program to build the freeway to Davis Drive in Newmarket . This was completed on October 24 , 1989 . The route has undergone a periodic series of smaller extensions and widening in the years since , now travelling a further 15 @-@ 5 km (9 @-@ 6 mi) north to Woodbine Avenue near Ravenshoe Road in the town of East Gwillimbury . Future proposals may one day result in an extension to southeast of Beaverton .

Highway 404 is one of several freeways in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) with High @-@ Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes ; the southbound lane was one of the initial projects in the province and opened on December 13 , 2005 . The northbound lane opened on July 23 , 2007 .

= = Route description = =

Running parallel to Highway 400 approximately 15 kilometres (9 @-@ 3 mi) to the east , Highway 404 extends 50 @-@ 1 km (31 @-@ 1 mi) on a north ? south orientation between Highway 401 and Woodbine Avenue . There are 16 interchanges along its length , mostly of the Partial cloverleaf A4 configuration . Exit numbers on the freeway start at 17 , suggesting that the length of the Don Valley Parkway was considered in distance calculations ; there are no exit numbers posted on the DVP .

Officially , the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) jurisdiction over the freeway begins as the opposing directions of travel diverge south of the Highway 401 interchange . Northbound , two lanes from the DVP are joined by a third from the eastbound collectors of Highway 401 . These narrow to two lanes before merging with a single lane from westbound Highway 401 immediately south of Sheppard Avenue . An additional two lanes from westbound Highway 401 converge and form a separate carriageway with no access to Sheppard . Southbound , the freeway is divided into two carriageways , both of which provide access to the DVP . The outer carriageway also provides access from Sheppard and to Highway 401 , including the westbound express lanes , while the inner carriageway is intended for DVP @-@ bound traffic . The HOV lane also provides access to westbound Highway 401 via a dedicated tunnel , which passes beneath the other southbound lanes . To the east of Highway 404 is the Consumers Road office park . To the west and north of Sheppard Avenue is Fairview Mall , which has its own connection with the southbound lanes attached to the Sheppard interchange .

The highway continues directly north along the old Woodbine Avenue right @-@ of @-@ way to just south of Steeles Avenue , where it diverges to the west before continuing north . From just north of Sheppard , a northbound HOV lane is present alongside the central median . Southbound , the HOV lane continues as far as Highway 401 . Alongside Highway 404 to the east is an industrial warehouse and commercial office area , while on the west is a suburban subdivision of North York . Northbound , the freeway is six lanes wide from Sheppard Avenue to Finch Avenue , where one lane diverges onto an off @-@ ramp , re @-@ emerging north of Finch . Southbound , it is six lanes wide from Steeles south to Sheppard .

At Steeles Avenue , the freeway enters the Regional Municipality of York . To the east are industrial units , while on the west are residential suburbs . This land @-@ use persists north to the Highway 407 ETR interchange , a multi @-@ level stack interchange with two flyovers . North of Highway 407 , the freeway crosses Highway 7 , where the HOV lanes transition to standard through lanes . The freeway passes west of Buttonville Municipal Airport and then interchanges with 16th Avenue . It

narrows and the central barrier ends ; a grass median taking its place between the opposing lanes . The land @-@ use density continues to drop , with the appearance of some open spaces and farms interspersed with industrial and commercial buildings . By 19th Avenue , just north of the Honda Canada headquarters in Markham , the land @-@ use is agricultural on both sides of Highway 404 . Highway 404 continues north , forming the eastern boundary of the municipalities of Richmond Hill , Aurora and Newmarket . North of Wellington Street , the highway reduces in width to four lanes , which is its configuration north through East Gwillimbury . The route continues , passing east of the community of Sharon , eventually curving northeast and terminating at an at @-@ grade intersection with Woodbine Avenue immediately south of Ravenshoe Road (York Regional Road 32) .

= = History = =

= = = Initial construction = = =

A freeway east of Highway 11 was planned as early as 1954 , when the province extended Highway 48 south from Port Bolster . A large cloverleaf interchange was constructed with the Toronto Bypass , and plans formulated for a dual highway around the east side of Lake Simcoe , connecting with Highway 11 near Orillia or Gravenhurst . This route was dropped when Metropolitan Toronto began planning for the northern extension of the DVP in 1957 , as subdivisions encroached upon Woodbine Avenue north of Highway 401 . The six @-@ lane expressway was to follow the alignment of Woodbine from its southern terminus at Lawrence Avenue to north of Steeles Avenue , where the Department of Highways (DOH) would continue the road as a " new King 's Highway " .

In 1959 , the DOH announced that they would construct and maintain the new route once the DVP was completed to Highway 401 and designate it Highway 404 . The proposed route of the freeway was presented at a special delegation on December 13 , 1960 by Harold Barry , a representative of the department . Design work started in 1973 , and construction began following the awarding of a C \$ 6 @. @ 9 million contract in March 1976 . This contract included construction of the Finch Avenue interchange , overpasses at McNicoll and Van Horne Avenues and 4 @. @ 5 km (2 @. @ 8 mi) of six @-@ lane freeway between Sheppard and Steeles Avenues . Shortly thereafter , on April 20 , Ernest Avenue and Van Horne Avenue were closed to traffic at Woodbine . The first section of Highway 404 between Highway 401 and Steeles Avenue opened in late 1977 , including the flyover ramp from southbound Woodbine Avenue . The freeway was separated by a grass median with a steel beam acting as a barrier between the lanes . Construction north of Toronto proceeded quickly , with the contract for the section from Steeles to Highway 7 being awarded in 1976 and the section opening on November 10 , 1978 . The next extension , to Stouffville Road (then known as the Gormley Side Road) , was opened ceremoniously on December 9 , 1980 by minister James Snow ; the segment north of Highway 7 was four lanes wide .

The section of Highway 404 north of Stouffville Road was the subject of considerable controversy when work began to clear the route on May 15 , 1981 before the completion of an environmental impact assessment . The Ministry of Transportation and Communications was charged with violating the newly enacted Environmental Assessment Act , which it contested came into effect after construction of the Highway 404 extension had begun . Minister James Snow was charged with violating the act , and called upon to resign . The Minister did not resign , but paid a \$ 3 @, @ 500 fine . Despite the issues surrounding it , the extension between Stouffville Road and Bloomington Road was opened ceremoniously on the morning of August 10 , 1982 .

Construction on the segment north of Bloomington to Aurora Sideroad was already in progress by this point . It was opened to traffic in late September 1985 . Construction on the 6 @. @ 5 km (4 @. @ 0 mi) section from Wellington Street to Davis Drive began in early 1986 , and the section opened to traffic on October 24 , 1989 at 8 : 30 am . This final segment cost \$ 22 @. @ 1 million , ending the continuous construction program undertaken since 1973 at a cost of \$ 83 @. @ 3 million .

== Expansion ==

Studies and environmental assessments into various extensions began almost immediately after the completion of the route to Newmarket in 1989 ; it would take over a decade for any northward progression to take place . The completion of the route to Davis Drive was met with scorn as traffic in Newmarket rapidly increased as the bedroom community grew with the new highway access . Municipal officials warned prior to the opening of the route that major traffic delays would be faced along Davis Drive . Then @-@ mayor Ray Twinney began an immediate push to widen Green Lane ? at that time an unpaved rural route ? into a bypass of the town . Traffic delays were also compounded at the southern end of Toronto , where drivers whom had previously made use of Yonge Street , Bayview Avenue or Leslie Street would shift to make use of the new freeway .

By 1992 , York Region was moving forward with plans to expand Green Lane into a four lane road , while the province was urged to consider extending Highway 404 north to it , and eventually around the east side of Lake Simcoe . The province studied this and other options over the following years , before a formal announcement was made by Minister of Transportation Tony Clement on June 22 , 1998 along with York Region chairman Bill Fisch . The plan called for an extension of Highway 404 north to Green Lane , and expansion of Highway 9 (now part of York Region Road 31) , the western extension of Davis Drive outside of town , to five lanes between Highway 400 and Bathurst Street . At the time over 20 @,@ 000 vehicles used Davis Drive on an average day .

In the interim period , work went into expanding the six lane freeway through Toronto and Markham . In early 1998 , the MTO announced plans for two contracts to widen Highway 404 south of Highway 7 . The first contract converted the grass median into an additional lane in each direction with a central barrier between them . High @-@ mast lighting was also installed , replacing the unique luminaires used on the freeway . The second contract resulted in an additional lane in each direction on the outside of the existing freeway south of Steeles Avenue , making it ten lanes wide . The proposal to eventually convert the inner lanes into HOV lanes was announced at the same time . The next year , Highway 404 was widened to six lanes between Highway 7 and Major Mackenzie Drive .

On June 19 , 2003 , Transportation Minister and Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees opened a new interchange at Regional Road 73 (16th Avenue) . Traffic was permitted onto the ramp following the ceremony , also attended by Thornhill MPP Tina Molinari .

One of the three original HOV lanes in Ontario opened on Highway 404 in late 2005 ; the other two were the lanes on Highway 403 . In early 2004 , construction began on a new ramp to westbound Highway 401 , curving beneath the southbound lanes of Highway 404 . On December 13 , 2005 , the southbound HOV lane was opened to traffic . Work on the northbound HOV lane began shortly thereafter , opening at 8 : 30 am on Monday , July 23 , 2007 .

== Extension ==

The MTO formally announced plans to alleviate traffic in Newmarket on August 28 , 2000 : a three contract project to widen and extend Highway 404 . The first contract added an additional lane in each direction in the grass median from Major Mackenzie Drive to Bloomington Road . A second contract then extended those two lanes north to Aurora Sideroad . These two projects both began in the summer of 2001 and were completed in December . The third contract called for a four lane extension from Davis Drive to Green Lane and the reconstruction of Green Lane into a four @-@ laned arterial road between Leslie Street and Woodbine Avenue . This contract began shortly after the announcement in September 2000 . The extension was opened to traffic on February 8 , 2002 at a ceremony attended by York North MPP Julia Munro and Bill Fisch .

On May 16 , 2006 , the MTO announced plans to extend Highway 404 by 15 kilometres (9 @.@ 3 mi) from Green Lane to Ravenshoe Road at the south end of Keswick . The first contracts were awarded later that year for the construction of the northbound bridge over Green Lane , followed by two structures over Mount Albert Road , west of Woodbine Avenue , begun in late 2008 and completed in 2009 . By April 2011 , the extension had been cleared and graded . Completion was

originally scheduled for December 15 , 2012 with landscaping work to continue the following spring . However , due to soil conditions and utility relocation issues , the project was delayed by nearly two years . The C \$ 99 million extension opened on September 17 , 2014 .

= = Future = =

The MTO proposed to extend HOV lanes north from Highway 7 to Aurora Road including additional regular lanes , high @-@ mast lighting , and overhead signage . Construction is slated to begin in 2016 and will be completed in the next 2 years . Consultation with the public is ongoing regarding future expansion of the route between Highway 407 and Green Lane .

Long term proposals by the province call for Highway 404 to be extended to Highway 12 , between Sunderland and Beaverton . This extension would follow a new alignment to Port Bolster , east of which the freeway would incorporate the existing two lanes of Highway 48 . It has drawn criticism from various environmental groups who claim it will only serve to accelerate urban sprawl north of Toronto .

= = Exit list = =

The following table lists the major junctions along Highway 404 , as noted by the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario .