

New Section Of Highway 407 Opens In Durham

TORONTO: Ontario is improving traffic flow and reducing congestion in Durham region, with the next phase of Highway 407 from Harmony Road to Taunton Road in Clarington now open.

The first phase of the Highway 407 extension, which opened last year and included a new Highway 412, is already seeing approximately 40,000 vehicles per day, improving travel times across this growing region.

The new addition of 9.6 kilometres to Highway 407, including two new interchanges, will allow even more commuters and families travel across the region faster.

The final phase, scheduled to open by 2020, will connect Highway 407 to Highway 35/115 and includes Highway 418, which will provide another north/south connection from Highway 407 to Highway 401.

Toll rates for Highways 407 and 412 are lower than tolls on Highway 407 ETR. The province's rates are, on average, approximately 15 per cent lower during off-peak periods, and approximately 30 per cent lower during peak periods, as compared to Highway 407 ETR.

Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation, said: "I am pleased to announce that this new



stretch of Highway 407 is complete and is now open to everyone travelling in Durham Region – creating infrastructure that will fuel the economy and create jobs, connecting people and businesses while making commutes less stressful today and tomorrow. Our government is providing alternate options for travellers, and I look forward to the completion of the last phase of the Highway 407 project in 2020."

QUICK FACTS

- Ontario will use the revenue from the tolls on Highways 407,



- 412 and 418 to help fund a variety of programs and services, including:
- Motorists will only pay fees

- once for the use of Highways 407, 412, and/or 407 ETR. This includes transponder leases, month-

ly account charges, and video toll charges.

- Motorists can continue to use one transponder and receive one invoice on the privately operated Highway 407 ETR, and on Ontario's Highways 407 and 412, making the tolling process straightforward and seamless.

- Ontario is making the largest infrastructure investment in hospitals, schools, public transit, roads and bridges in the province's history. For more info or happenings in your community, go to Ontario.ca/BuildON.

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Iran Protests Spark New Debate On Bettering Ties

OTTAWA: Several days of deadly protests in Iran have rekindled the debate over the Trudeau government's ongoing efforts to restore diplomatic ties with Tehran.

At least 21 people have been killed and hundreds arrested during six days of protests across Iran that have been described as the most significant challenge to the country's ruling regime in nearly a decade.

The unrest began Thursday when demonstrators gathered to express anger at unpaid wages and rocketing inflation before spreading into expressions of dissatisfaction with the current government.

In response to the deaths, Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland's office issued a statement Tuesday in support of the demonstrators while calling on Iranian authorities to show restraint.

"Canada is deeply troubled by the deaths of protesters in Iran," Freeland's spokesman, Adam Austen, said in a statement. "We call on the Iranian authorities to uphold and respect democratic and human rights." But the protests have also cast a fresh spotlight on the Liberal government's plan to renew ties with the Islamic republic, which the Harper Conservatives cut in 2012.

The Liberals pledged during the federal election in 2015 to restore relations with Iran, and Global Affairs officials have since held several rounds of quiet discussions with Iranian counterparts. A senior official from Iran's foreign ministry told the state-run Mehr News Agency on Dec. 18 that the two sides had recently wrapped up a fifth round of talks, and that another had been planned for early in 2018.

"We are planning to deploy an Iranian delegation at the directorate-general level to Canada following the New Year holidays," Mohammad Keshavarzadeh, general director of American affairs, was quoted as saying.

Austen did not respond to questions over whether the protests would affect planned talks or the government's plan to re-engage with Iran. Federal opposition parties, academics and members of the Iranian-Canadian community were already sharply divided over the Liberal plan to restore diplomatic ties with Tehran.