

As part of extensive habitat restoration work, LINK427 is implementing species at-risk protections to provide overall benefit to species throughout the Highway 427 Expansion project area. This mitigates potential adverse impacts to at-risk species from construction and enhances the natural environment in the project area. LINK427 is taking mitigation measures including restoring wildlife habitat for at-risk species such as bats and barn swallows. Other mitigations include extensive vegetation restoration and the planting of native species, as well as the construction of new habitat structures such as bat roosting and barn swallow nesting boxes for at-risk species to live in.

Restoration work is taking place in environmentally sensitive areas throughout the project. The work is required as some species potentially impacted by construction are listed under the Endangered Species Act (2007). Protections that have been put in place include new habitat construction, snow and sediment control fencing, as well as respecting construction timing windows for migratory species.

### Bat Roosting Boxes

There are four types of at-risk bats that live in the project area. They include eastern small-footed bats, little brown bats, northern long-eared bats, and tri-coloured bats. LINK427 has constructed bat boxes throughout project lands to mitigate impacts of construction on roosting bat populations.

This bat box installed near West Robinson Creek allows bats to enter the structure from the base of the box. The box is designed to mimic a barn or attic where bats often roost. The mesh, shown at the midpoint of the structure, is a guano collection device installed to allow LINK427's biologists to collect samples from the bats. This will allow them to determine which bat species are using the bat box.



*A bat box installed near West Robinson Creek.*



*The bat condo installed near Major Mackenzie Drive.*

LINK427 also constructed a bat condo in the project area in February 2020. Larger than a typical bat box, the bat condo can house thousands of bats living in it at once. Bats enter from through slots on the side of the structure and from under the roof to roost inside. When a bat is resting or sleeping inside the bat condo, they will hang upside down from their feet. To allow LINK427's biologists to collect guano and determine which bat species are roosting inside, the bottom of the bat condo opens up.

### Barn Swallow Nesting Boxes

Barn swallows are another at-risk species found within the project area. A barn swallow is a bird that tends to nest in older structures, under bridges, in culverts and under ledges. LINK427 has constructed Barn swallow nesting boxes to provide habitat for them. Barn swallows typically forage for insects over open grasslands. Through part of LINK427's restoration work, foraging habitat will be created to ensure barn swallows in the project area are able to find food.



*A barn swallow nesting box near West Robinson Creek.*

### Environmental Monitoring

In addition to providing habitat restoration for species at-risk, LINK427 is implementing extensive vegetation plantings throughout the project area. This will help with erosion control and provide habitat for all types of wildlife found in the project area.

Throughout construction of the Highway 427 Expansion Project LINK427 conducts careful monitoring of forest, grassland, terrestrial, and aquatic habitats. This monitoring, including regular inspections, enhances environmental quality, ensuring restoration work on the project is proceeding as planned. In the years following completion of construction, vegetation and habitat enhancements will be monitored, to ensure successful establishment of vegetation communities and species at-risk habitat.

### What is the Highway 427 Expansion Project?

The Highway 427 Expansion project will extend the highway 6.6 km, from Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive and widen the existing highway to 8 lanes between Finch Avenue and Highway 7.

### Who is LINK427?

LINK427 is the consortium selected by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and Infrastructure Ontario (IO) to design, build, finance, and maintain the Highway 427 widening and extension.

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