

Caledon may become Highway 413 road kill, Sinclair fears

‘The GTA West Corridor will be the biggest project that ever goes through Caledon,’ Ian Sinclair, candidate for mayor of Caledon, has stated.

‘We’re talking about thousands of acres of land being allocated to highway, hydro right-of-way, and possibly natural gas transport,’ Sinclair said in a statement issued last week. ‘MTO (Ministry of Transportation of Ontario) has been in discussion with Hydro One and the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) to coordinate the GTA West Transportation Corridor route planning with a possible future transmission corridor in the vicinity of the study area.’

‘The road will literally cut Caledon off from our southern neighbours the same way Highway 401 bisects the GTA and the 407 Vaughan,’ he added. ‘We’ll be separated by the 413.’

Sinclair commented the Province realizes the Ontario economy is losing billions of dollars every year due to the inability of transport trucks to get to their destinations in a timely fashion, stating that congestion in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area costs about \$6 billion annually and results in about 26,000 fewer jobs being created.

He observed that Highway 401 is desperately over-used and the 407 is apparently reaching capacity, which means the Province needs another option. Sinclair said the 413 will be the new highway to ensure traffic can move from the Highway 400 on the east through to the 401/407 area in the west.

‘Current maps show it coming across Mayfield and up towards Old School Road,’ Sinclair said. ‘This will have a massive impact on Caledon in so many different ways.’

‘But what amazes me, is how ill informed the people of Caledon are about this project,’ he added. ‘I talk to people when I go door-to-door and they aren’t aware of, or concerned about, the 413 corridor.’

‘There has been little detail about this massive project in the local papers, and I only remember having to deal with one question from a lady during the debate in Caledon East,’ he remarked. ‘Some folks in Valleywood and SouthFields are keeping their eyes on it; and I don’t blame them. They were already blindsided once by the Town when the Highway 410 to 10 extension was constructed. They now have a highway on two sides of their community, and they may end up with another monster on the north side.’

‘Why has the Town council not made this a priority; not just in their planning, but in the communication process to the people of Caledon?’ Sinclair asked. ‘It’s a mystery to me.’

‘There has been virtually no information from the Caledon councillors to the people who are going to be impacted the most,’ he added. ‘There are many properties that are currently ‘frozen’ until it is determined exactly where the final route will be, so why is this not a hot topic for anyone who lives near this major corridor?’

He also commented that the preferred route for the new transportation corridor will be presented at the second round of Public Information Centres, which are tentatively scheduled for the winter of 2015-16.

‘This is coming at us fast,’ he said. ‘The Province is in stage 2 of this process and our Town is in stage zero!’

‘The lack of planning and public discussion has to be the biggest concern,’ Sinclair said. ‘At the candidates’ debate in Caledon East, one incumbent candidate replied that, ‘We have to get ahead of this thing,’ which is correct, but why haven’t we started yet? What exactly are we waiting for?’

‘There are major environmental issues to be discussed,’ he added. ‘There was a major study produced by the CVC (Credit Valley Conservation) regarding projected Credit River watershed contamination levels back in 2007. The report does not take into consideration the impacts of this Transportation Corridor.’

‘This CVC study is a 269 page document that probably cost the taxpayers of Peel well over \$100,000 to produce, and now it’s likely just useless paper as a result of inadequate planning and coordination,’ he commented.

‘There is a huge amount of land use planning work that can and must be done in advance of this highway,’ Sinclair added. ‘Where are we going to zone our industrial, where will the commercial properties be and where are we going to place our new residences to avoid health impacts? Because we aren’t out in front of this, we risk fragmenting the entire area along this highway while juggling pressures from various developers.’

As well, Sinclair pointed out that Bolton is currently facing traffic problems, which he said were caused by poor transportation planning.

‘What’s going to happen when Highway 427 extends north and connects to the 413, less than a kilometre from the Highway 50 - Coleraine connection?’ he asked. ‘Who’s looking at that? No one.’