

Commuters in for an unpleasant surprise

OUR READERS WRITE

Caledon Citizen readers will already be aware that the proposed Highway 413 GTA Corridor highway project was cancelled in February 2018 by the Wynne government and that the new Ford government recently announced that it was reconsidering the 413 project and was initiating an environmental impact study.

The 413 GTA Corridor highway was to be a limited-access, multi-lane link from Highway 400 at Major Mackenzie connecting with Highway 401 at Milton, a prime purpose of which was to relieve pressure on the Highway 400 south of Major Mackenzie Drive and Highway 401 west of 400 and especially to reduce traffic through the 400/401 West interchange which is one of the highest traffic density intersections in the whole of North America.

Citizen readers will also be aware of the 6.6 kilometre, \$660 million extension of Highway 427 up to Major Mackenzie Drive, which is presently under construction. I have long been puzzled by the need for this extension in that it largely (up to Rutherford Road) parallels the six-lane section of Highway 50 which is not normally a major source of congestion.

I assumed that the prime intent of the 427 extension was to give trucks servicing the Vaughan CP Intermodal freight facility and other warehousing facilities direct access to Highway 427 without needing to take Highway 50 south.

I recently had cause to take Highway 27 south from Nobleton and was surprised to see major construction activity at the intersection of Major Mackenzie and Highway 27 where a new hundred and fifty metre, multi-lane bridge is being built across the Humber River. Further research determined that the bridge will form part of a major eleven kilometre long, \$120 million, six-lane upgrade of Major Mackenzie Drive all the way from Highway 400 to Highway 50 with a connection to the northern end of Highway 427.

This essentially will replicate the eastern section of the proposed 413 highway and allow south-bound traffic on Highway 400 to easily connect with Highway 427 and from thence to Highways 407 west and 401 west (and the reverse of course).

This essentially makes Highway 427 the north/south leg of a West Vaughan bypass which I believe will result in a significant increase in traffic on Highway 427.

With an assumed increase in traffic onto Highway 427 from Major Mackenzie Drive, Bolton and district residents hoping for an easier commute south by using the Highway 427 extension might be in for an unpleasant surprise, especially when they reach to existing 427 choke-points at Zenway and Highway 7. I note that the Ontario government has already projected a ten percent increase in traffic on the Finch Avenue-407 section of Highway 427 from 2018 through 2021 (137,000 vehicles per day from 125,000)

The good news should be that truck traffic taking the 427 extension south will relieve pressure on Highway 50 south of Major Mackenzie at least before joining Highway 427 South at Zenway or Highway 7.

And then of course we can look forward to the planned 15,000 increase in the Bolton population over the next fifteen years or so that will add yet more traffic to the north/south highways which will result in a whole new set of problems that I hope our Provincial and Regional politicians and planners are already thinking about!

Tony Smith

Bolton resident