

Del Duca tells Jones word coming on Corridor

By Bill Rea

Sixty days is now the magic number when it comes to word on the GTA West Corridor.

Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca said in the Legislature last Wednesday that a notice had been posted on the Ministry's website that there will be an update regarding this particular project that will be taking place within 60 days of that notice going up on the website.

He said that in response to a question that had been put to him by Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones, in which she was seeking an explanation for the lack of action.

The corridor was created to provide a transportation link heading west from Highway 400, and there has been considerable talk about a 400-series highway going in. Jones, speaking in the legislature last week, observed that more than \$14 million has been spent studying the Corridor, and there is still no completed environmental assessment. She said she got that figure through a freedom-of-information request, according to Hansard.

The responsible thing to do is to complete the environmental assessment, she declared. Landowners have been in limbo for almost 10 years, and communities across the region are unable to plan.

Jones told Del Duca that the Corridor was identified 12 years ago in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, according to Hansard, adding the Minister has consistently dragged his feet on the environmental assessment.

She also pointed out it had been two years since Del Duca had suspended the environmental assessment, with large amounts of money being spent with nothing to show for it.

Why the delay? she asked.

Del Duca said a notice went on the Ministry's web site some days previously.

Jones later said it went on the website Nov. 27.

The Ministry suspended work on the environmental assessment (EA) of the corridor in December 2015 to conduct an internal review of the work undertaken since 2007, and ensure that the project still aligned with current government policy and emerging technologies.

Jones said she spoke to Del Duca after the session in the legislature, and she said he told her that he had received a report from the panel studying the issue, and he had given himself 60 days to make a decision.

Jones couldn't say if that meant 60 working days, or 60 calendar days.

I believe that he's going to say something, Jones said. Lord knows what it is.

She added that people along the Corridor are frustrated at the lack of information.

Del Duca also used the Question Period session to boast about some of the investments the government has made to highways throughout the province, citing the recent widening of Highway 410, as well as Highway 427.