

Editorial ? And when the infrastructure fails?

When the infrastructure is there and available and convenient, most of us are pretty quick to use it.

And why not? After all, is that not what it's there for?

But when the infrastructure fails, and that's occasionally going to happen, what then?

Commuters in the Greater Toronto Area received a lesson in the very possibility last week.

An accident closed the Toronto bound portion of the Burlington Skyway for several days. The accident occurred last Thursday afternoon. Since this incident sparked a criminal investigation, we're not going to deal much with the circumstances.

What we think people should be thinking about are the results of such an incident, because the result was a really big mess.

According to various media accounts, By Friday, it was reported most of the major traffic arteries in Hamilton were jammed, with business taking a beating because of delays in transporting goods and people. And that doesn't even take into account the human toll, of frustrated commuters stranded in gridlock and countless plans being disrupted.

Although there were reports that things had improved a bit as the weekend progressed, the inconvenience people were put to was enormous.

In fairness to the crews who were trying to get the bridge opened again, no matter how inconvenient things are, there are just some things that can't be rushed, especially when public safety is concerned. It was inconvenient, but under the circumstances, it needed to be done.

Another thing that needs to happen, we believe, is people have to understand this could happen again. True, the circumstances would likely be different, but a major traffic incident could happen that could close the bridge for days. That means people will have to find alternate routes. And in a lot of cases, the ones they find will be found by others too. That means more snarling of traffic.

There is a lot of infrastructure in our society, be it roads, hydro, running water, the internet, etc. When a major component is suddenly not available, that creates problems.

And we have seen lots of examples over the last several months that some of these things we depend on might suddenly not be there.

How long was your power out after the ice storm?

We have to be ready.