

Editorial ? City of Peel is not out of the question

Although the issue has sort of chilled out over the last week, the fact remains that Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie has expressed a desire to get Mississauga out of regional government.

What exactly might replace the current form of running things if the big city to the south were to go it alone is not yet clear, and that includes the future of Caledon and Brampton.

Crombie, like her predecessor Hazel McCallion, might believe Mississauga has matured to the point where it can handle things on its own, but we also believe Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson made a very good point when he advised her to be careful for what she wishes.

Aspirations to take Mississauga out of Peel could result in that City being abolished, to be replaced by a City of Peel.

Some might wonder if that's very likely. The problem is there is precedent.

About 20 years ago, some politicians within the former City of Toronto were hankering to get out from under the Metro level of government. This was in the days when Toronto consisted of 16 wards, and was surrounded by four cities (Etobicoke, York, North York and Scarborough) and one borough (East York). The cry went up from some in the Toronto council chambers for deliverance from Metro, and an aspiring premier named Mike Harris heard their cries, and promised to look into scrapping Metro if he was elected. He was, and about a year and a half later, he started to make good on his promise.

He didn't exactly scrap Metro. He announced he would abolish the six component municipalities in Metro, amalgamating them into what was commonly referred to as the Megacity.

And to add insult to injury, he basically announced the merger was a done deal. Angry residents, led by several active community leaders like Kathleen Wynne, voiced their opposition, and even organized a referendum, the results of which Harris simply ignored. No one envisioned a Megacity 20 years ago, yet they got one. Thus a City of Peel is not very far-fetched.

The creation of such an entity would be entirely the work of the Province. Granted, given the fight she helped lead some 20 years ago, it's doubtful that such changes would take place on Wynne's watch. But minds can change, and Wynne will not be in office forever.

?Be careful what you ask for,? was the way Thompson phrased his warning to Crombie.

How right he is.