

GTA?West word might wait until 2018

By Bill Rea

It looks like Caledon residents who have been waiting a long time to learn the status of the GTA?West Corridor are going to have to wait a while longer.

Notification of an Order in Council at Queen's Park has indicated the Advisory Panel for the Greater Toronto Area West Highway Corridor has had its term extended to April 20, 2018.

The panel was formed in April 2016, and the plan was for it to be in place for one year.

Mayor Allan Thompson came into possession of this document, but he didn't receive it first hand. He said he got it through Councillor Barb Shaughnessy, and she apparently got it from an interest group that the Province sent it to.

It was not, however, sent to the Mayor, "which I find really disappointing," he said.

The Ministry of Transportation 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.

To assist with the review, an advisory panel, made up of industry experts, was appointed.

The broad corridor snakes through the southern part of Caledon. It's proposed the corridor will eventually contain transportation features to facilitate east-west movements. That includes the possibility of a 400-series highway.

Thompson said this action shows no regard or respect for municipal government, also pointing to the inconvenience being experience by those who have interests in lands affected by the corridor.

"It leaves us with our hands tied," he declared.

"I'm just grateful that Councillor Shaughnessy shared it with me," he added. "I thank her for that."

Shaughnessy wouldn't say where she obtained her copy of the notice, apart from saying it came from an outside planning company.

"It seems unusual that the town of Caledon didn't have it," she remarked.

Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca was in Caledon in December, addressing a gathering of the Dufferin-Caledon Provincial Liberal Association, and he said he had been hearing calls for some news on the issue, and was waiting for input and advice.

"I expect to have an update from them in the relatively near future," he told the citizen at the time.

"I understand the concern and impatience," he added, pointing out residents, affected municipalities and other stakeholders are anxious to know what's coming.