

Hands up if you believe in magic!

by SHERALYN ROMAN

With a simple flick of the wrist and based on nothing more than magical fairy dust, Doug Ford has once again promised the electorate the moon when it's been shown over and over again that when it comes to fulfilling promises he suffers from failure to lift off. Here we are in the midst of an entirely unnecessary election and magical GO trains servicing south Bolton, and mystical tunnels boring underneath already existing highways, are both allegedly coming our way. Hands up if you believe in magic.

For most of us grown adults, the answer to the question of magic should be a resounding NO.

Gone are the days of the tooth fairy and Santa, and so too should be the days of believing in Mr. Ford and his ridiculous promises. Sadly, as time has shown us over and over again, there are still enough believers out there that the conservatives know such tactics are successful. It appears our very own Mayor might be one of the people duped. Advocating about the need for public transit is one thing, and an issue on which I am in full agreement, but proudly pouncing on the GO train election promise as a *fait accompli* for Caledon and sharing it widely on Town of Caledon social media channels seems a questionable decision. Simultaneously, using that same communication to sing the praises of CAO Nathan Hyde for *taking a modern, integrated approach to land-use and transportation planning,* and suggesting that Bolton South, presumably by him alone, has been purposefully *designed to give Caledon the density it needs to support GO Transit expansion?* strikes me as even more odd, given that talk of a GO train serving Bolton has been on the table for years.

It's true. The facts are that a GO train has been talked about for what feels like forever. As just one example, in March of 2022, this very publication covered an announcement made jointly by Premier Ford, former Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson and former Vaughan Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua, sharing this news: *“The Province of Ontario announced today that the lands at Humber Station Road and King Street will be designated for a future Caledon GO rail site,”* and further, that the Ontario government *“publicly committed to multiple new transportation options for Caledon, including the long-awaited Caledon-Vaughan GO rail line.”* The only thing different between these two announcements about a (thus far) fictional train is where it would be located since current Mayor Annette Groves has it placed squarely in Bolton, in her words, *“next to the Home Hardware on the south side.”*

Talk about magic. First of all, this latest iteration of GO train announcements was an election promise. ONLY that, nothing more. Lots of promises are made during an election. Promises like, *“we won't touch the Greenbelt,”* and *“we'll cut hospital wait times,”* and *“make housing more affordable,”* were all campaign promises too. I don't know about you but I haven't noticed any of those changes yet. So, I ask this with all due respect Madam Mayor, do you believe in magic? Or do you know something we don't know about how Premier Ford and Metrolinx, perhaps along with some friendly developers, are going to somehow magically, finally, make good on the promise of a train? I hope I'm wrong, and I applaud both current and previous Councils for continuing to advocate for public transit, but surely you must see this for what it is, a blatant attempt to distract us with a big, shiny announcement about nothing?

As for cutting gridlock by building more highways, I don't think anyone with an ounce of common sense believes that boring a hole through the earth, under an already existing highway that sees close to 360,000 vehicles travelling across it daily, is what anyone had in mind! And the cost of such misadventure? Not that Mr. Ford has an answer to that question. When asked, he deflected by citing a cost *“in the billions”* (\$50+ billion apparently) a number that only represents the *“lost productivity”* of people stuck in traffic. It's another piece of magic, a fictional number and surely one that pales in comparison to any actual cost of building a tunnel. But I'm getting ahead of myself. The cost is irrelevant because we still don't know if such a project is even feasible because the feasibility study hasn't been completed yet! Not that this has, in any way, hampered the Premier from making a magical election promise to build it. I'm beginning to wonder what colour the sky is in Mr. Ford's world?

Hands up if you believe in magic, dear readers, because if you do this past week was a banner one for magical announcements. The reality is a different story. If you're commuting to work, I wouldn't plan on taking the train any time soon, nor using google maps to

reroute your trip through a tunnel. You'd be better off throwing some magical pixie dust in the air to get to work on time.