

Local businesses still facing challenges with Airport Road closure

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Last month, many business owners located on Airport Road in Caledon East arrived at their store fronts and were greeted with a paper notice letting them know of the closure from Emma Street to Hilltop Drive that would be taking place from July 6 to September 7.

This was a surprise to owners as they were aware of the Airport Road Improvement Project but did not know that they would face a full road closure instead of the single lane closure they had been told of prior to July 2.

Since the road closure and construction has taken place, many businesses have seen a significant drop in clients and some business owners are worried.

On July 28, members of the community stood before Town Council to talk about improved signage and stronger communications from both Council and the Region of Peel who are in charge of the Project.

Since the meeting, the communication between Council and business owners has improved and there have been more meetings between all parties to find new ways to help the businesses.

Currently, the business owners and Council are attempting to create events to help promote the businesses and get more residents and tourists to support local businesses.

However, businesses are still facing many challenges and losing clients, making it hard to get by.

Ramzia (Shammy) Birko, owner of Frank's Barber and Hair Salon, is one of the business owners dealing with the challenges of the airport road closure.

She says she has faced new difficulties as in the past few days she has had large trucks and construction vehicles working on the road right in front of her business, making it difficult for clients to walk in. They are also contending with loud noise and vibrations.

'For the past few days, I've had big machines and dump trucks going back and forth and digging on the street in front of my business. I've had customers say it feels like an earthquake because the ground was shaking and with all the big machines and work being done one client said she felt unsafe as you must be careful when around these big machines,' says Birko. 'So, I decided I'm not going to open today until they finish this part. The employees are being very safe when using the equipment, but being around those big machines and so close to the business, you're going to worry about your safety?.'

Another difficulty that Birko has seen is the signage in the area to let members of the community know that the businesses are still open.

'There are a lot of signs around, but they can sometimes be really confusing. When you see at the entrance of the street that there is a big sign that says, 'Stop, the road is closed,' but a smaller sign that says businesses are still open but there are police officers with lights on and everything. I'm still seeing people turning around because they see all of that and think that the road is closed,' says Birko.

Since the start of the construction, Birko has said that she has lost roughly 50 per cent of clients and sees a very small number of people per week.

However, there are still many people supporting these businesses, including several members of the Caledon East community that Birko says walk daily through the area to help support them.

Members of Council, such as Christina Early, have also been there to help support especially when it comes to fixing signs and having communication with businesses.

To help get the word out, a number of businesses have also taken to social media to let the community know that they are open and are taking clients.

One new initiative that Birko says business are looking to do is a passport initiative where participants will get a passport and by going to different businesses and supporting them, they receive a stamp. A passport full of stamps will result in a prize.

However, one major way that people can support these businesses is by spreading the word that they are open and, of course, stopping by.

More information about the Airport Road Improvement Project can be found at peelregion.ca/construction/project-19-4060-june-29-2026-update.