

Roadmaps and other things

by SHERALYN ROMAN

First of all, if you are reading this on publication day, January 30, congratulations?you've almost made it. The longest month of the year, clocking in at 3,642 days is almost over. All that darkness, the exceptionally snow-covered environment and the bone-chilling, frigid, cold will soon be over. January, the bleakest month of the year, is just about done. If you did it ?dry? (as in sober) you're some kind of super-human. Now, on to more pressing matters.

So much to talk about, but let's start with a spot of good news. As part of the provincial government's ?Roadmap to Wellness,? we were pleased to see that new facilities for treating PTSD, one of which is to be located here in Caledon, were announced last week.

First responders are in a class of their own when it comes to what they see, hear and experience each and every day, in the course of their normal, everyday job duties. Human suffering and extreme trauma, coming face to face with danger, running into the flames, not away from them, its first responders who the rest of us call when the worst is happening to us. Recognizing PTSD as a mental, physical and emotional health risk, and providing the tools and resources necessary for rehabilitation is a good thing. As Premier Ford said, ?We owe a huge debt to our first responders, who make incredible sacrifices every day to keep families and communities across Ontario safe.? This is a good thing, perhaps one of those few times I might ?heap? praise upon Mr. Ford. Respectfully, and perhaps somewhat related, next up Mr. Premier, may I suggest we also consider a ?Roadmap to Road Safety??

Mr. Ford, not to downplay the great announcement referenced above, but unless you've been living under the proverbial rock, or in January's case, a massive snowdrift, there is another pressing and urgent issue happening in Caledon and the surrounding area, and it too requires a roadmap. To borrow your phrasing, I'll call it a Roadmap to Road Safety. By now, you must know that traffic in Caledon (indeed throughout our province) is a nightmare. Delegations at successive ROMAs, petitions presented in your provincial legislature, personal appeals to, and meetings with, successive transportation ministers of your government including Caroline Mulroney and Prabmeet Sarkaria, have each attempted to draw your attention to the daily dangers Caledon residents face on our roads. These are roads that will only get busier with your demand that Caledon accommodate 13,000 more homes by 2031, a demand made worse by our own Mayor (while quoting one of your favorite phrases, ?open for business?) committing to building 35,000 more homes instead!

Combined with what you must surely know are huge numbers of illegal truck yards located here and along our borders and a steep rise in licensing fraud, fraudulent truck schools and more, the time for action is NOW. Truckers for Safer Highways and many major trucking associations are all calling for the province to do something sooner than later. Just last week, from January 19 ? 25, 2025 there were FIVE fatalities and four critical injuries related to truck/vehicle accidents and five of the accidents that led to these grim statistics involved school buses!

We need a Roadmap to Road Safety now. Not another highway, Mr. Ford, but a way to deal with the flagrant disregard for public safety on our existing roads. It may even help to alleviate some of the crisis faced by our first responders who have to deal with horrific traffic accident scenes and their aftermath happening virtually every day.

Unfortunately, I fear you may be otherwise occupied. It seems you need a larger ?mandate? in order to keep governing the province. Last time I looked, you already controlled the legislature with more seats than the other three main political parties combined. Your current mandate could extend all the way to June of 2026 which is plenty of time to deal with the threat of Trump tariffs, although I would have thought that is the responsibility of both the federal government and provinces/territories combined.

I suppose being in power potentially through to 2029 has a much nicer ring to it. Listen, Mr. Ford, some of us ?folks? (yes, even me) actually liked hearing the tough talk about defending our province against Trump tariffs, but we all know that's just an excuse for calling an election now. The timing seems further questionable when many of us ?folks? are also receiving, or about to receive, a \$200 ?gift? from the government coffers ? yes, the very same ones we pay into regularly ? for things like protection on our roads, the

ability to roam, hike, bike and enjoy the greenbelt, to reap the benefits of our healthcare system, and more. Let's focus on fixing those roads, on not replacing bike lanes at a cost higher than installing them in the first place, on pouring more money, doctors and nurses into our healthcare system, AND on preserving and protecting the greenbelt from developers. You remember the Greenbelt, don't you?

January has been a long month. Inaction on the part of the government to address the serious and ongoing carnage on Caledon roads and beyond; the failure to provide municipalities with the tools and resources to deal with illegal truck yards, and the abject failure to address truck and motor vehicle licensing issues are just some of the areas that require your urgent attention. Poised to call an unnecessary election now makes January feel even longer than its current 3,642 days. Dare I say it, but traffic, opening the 407, focussing on healthcare and the greenbelt (plus so much more) are all matters that are a much more important part of your purview than requiring a mandate to deal with #47 south of the border.