

Town repeats call to continue GTA West Corridor study

By Bill Rea

Caledon council is maintaining the position that the environmental assessment study on the GTA West Corridor should be resumed immediately.

Councillors last week ratified the motion that had been passed the previous week as council sat in the Planning and Development Committee.

Peel Regional councillors have dealt with a similar motion, but they took out references that called on the province to resume the study immediately. Instead, Regional councillors asked for a meeting with Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca and Regional Chair Frank Dale and the Mayors of Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga to discuss the importance of the Corridor and the completion of the study.

The Province announced in December that it was suspending work on the environmental assessment of the Corridor that traverses Caledon as it runs from Highway 400 west, through town and south into Brampton and Halton Region.

The motion passed by Caledon council noted the Corridor was established by the province in 2006 as a conceptual goods movement corridor in the Growth Plan for the greater golden horseshoe. One of the conclusions so far is a new 400-series highway will likely be needed along the Corridor. The preamble of the motion also stated the Town has incorporated the study area in its planning, including matters concerning the Coleraine West Employment area in Bolton, and that approved developments in the study area are being held up.

Failure to deliver the GTA West Corridor will lead to more wasted time for commuters and delayed goods movement, which will ultimately damage our overall economic competitiveness, the motion stated.

The motion also calls for a meeting with Del Duca and Thompson to discuss the importance of the Corridor.

Council also tacked an amendment to the end of the motion, calling on Thompson to write to Del Duca, stating that Dougall Avenue in SouthFields Village has been identified as a main street collector road in the Mayfield West Secondary Plan and that the town supports access being granted from it to Highway 10.

Councillor Rob Mezzapelli said he was opposed to the motion. He stated he's always been cautious when it came to the study, and he wanted the Province to rationalize why it halted it.

Thompson observed Del Duca's been asked that a couple of times.

Referring to the letter Thompson's going to send, Councillor Doug Beffort urged him to tell the Minister of the impact to residents if the proposed road doesn't go through, in light of the work that's already been done.

Councillor Jennifer Innis pointed out members of the public and other stakeholders have already contributed to the study.

It doesn't mean that we're going to build a highway next year, she said, adding they just want the study to proceed. I think they owe it to our residents and stakeholder groups.

The sudden suspension of the environmental assessment for the GTA West Corridor leaves the Town of Caledon and neighbouring municipalities hanging in terms of our planning process for this area, Thompson said. The GTA West Corridor included solid planning for goods movement for the region, public transit, commuter traffic and would help us plan for future employment and residential growth. We're at a standstill.

Our development is halted in the study area of the GTA West corridor, millions of dollars have been spent at all levels of government to date, and so we are calling on the Ministry to continue with the GTA West Corridor Study immediately, he added.

The Town has withheld approved developments in the EA Study area since 2012. This land is effectively blocked, and we have no explanation, despite trying repeatedly to get information on why the study is suspended.