

Town to crack down on illegal land use with launch of enforcement campaign

By Rob Paul, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Town of Caledon is launching an enforcement campaign against illegal land use specifically illegal trucking operations to maintain compliance with its zoning by-laws and land uses.

The offences can impact the environment, decrease property values, and inflict noise, traffic, and pollution on their neighbours. It also allows offenders to compete unfairly against legitimate operators.

Caledon is blessed with some of the richest farmland in Ontario, said Mayor Allan Thompson. Unfortunately, that land, especially along our southern border, is under serious threat from those who take advantage of our proximity to the GTA to illegally park commercial vehicles.

Enforcement efforts can include placing concrete barriers to entrances and exits of identified illegal trucking terminals and bringing charges against property owners. Such actions are part of proactive enforcement undertaken by Municipal Law Enforcement staff as part of a task force set up to combat illegal land uses.

We will continue to utilize all available legal remedies to bring illegal land uses into full compliance with the Town's by-laws, said Mark Sruga, Director, Building Services and Municipal Law Enforcement Department.

In its 2020 budget, the Town allocated approximately \$620,000 to set up a task force to focus exclusively on proactive land use enforcement to address illegally parked tractor trailers and commercial vehicles. These funds will be used to fund additional staff positions assigned to this task force. Staff will also engage with and educate affected industry sectors (transport, real estate, logistics), local businesses and residents with the goal of finding solutions to this expanding issue.

To date Town staff have identified over 300 properties with suspected illegal land uses involving the storage of trucks. Enforcement is a challenge both because of the number of locations and the complexity of prosecution. A proactive, dedicated task force is key: for many operators, a fine is just cost of doing business.

These behaviours are harmful for many reasons, Thompson said. The noise, the lights, the traffic at all hours, not to mention the environmental hazards from potentially toxic fill used to create temporary parking and the oil, gas and other fluids seeping into the soil.

Prosecutions will be managed by the Town's Legal Services through the Provincial Offences Court. Where necessary, the Town will also launch civil litigation to seek injunctions and contempt citations.