

Valleywood residents eye safer access as work begins on future Highway 413

By Riley Murphy

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

For Rob Harrison, the announcement that work is beginning north of Old School Road on Highway 10 in preparation for a new bridge over the future Highway 413 is "a very positive indication things are going to change."

For the past 20 years, Harrison, Director of Infrastructure and Services for the Valleywood Residents Association (VRA) and President Nancy Dinardo, have been communicating with various Council members, mayors, Town staff, the MTO, and numerous others to convey his concerns about the safety of his neighbourhood.

Before 2000, residents of the Valleywood Subdivision expressed concerns regarding the route for the 410 extension, "because the pre-existent community would be boxed in two sides by Etobicoke Creek and the remaining two sides by the 410 leaving only the Valleywood overpass as our access egress until it is blocked with an event," Harrison explained, noting they only have one access point in and out through the highway.

In these cases, the second route is currently a locked MTO maintenance gate off of Snelcrest Dr. that "cannot be used until the 410 has been closed and purged in both directions by OPP," says Harrison.

Harrison shared that this was explained to him at a May 15 Community Traffic Meeting in Valleywood.

Harrison suggested in an emergency it could possibly take a long time before the gate would be unlocked to allow for an alternative access/egress.

Harrison says he fears the time it would take, not only for the closure of the highway, impacting overall response time, but also that ambulances cannot turn south through the concrete lane divider to the nearest hospitals.

Harrison said they truly don't have a viable secondary access egress when their bridge is blocked with snow, or more recently, lineups of cars.

Another significant concern is emergency response times when these access points are closed, he explained.

According to the Town of Caledon Fire Master Plan from 2020, the Mayfield West Rural Service Centre - N.F.P.A. 1720 Suburban Demand Zone Performance Benchmark, Monday through Friday Daytime, is ten firefighters in ten minutes arriving on scene with zero percent roads and calls covered.

Harrison shared that he fears the highway being plugged would possibly lower response time.

With Caledon Fire Station 307 sometimes serving outside of Valleywood, Harrison shared that he has concerns about the fire trucks and ambulances being able to reach other neighbourhoods with only one in and out point that could potentially be blocked.

Harrison shared when 410 traffic is moved east, existing pavement can be downrated to the status of Regional arterial roadway, thus enabling use of the gated access/egress.

"It's very exciting to see the progress of the announcement made," said Harrison. "And we [the VRA] look forward to working with all entities to pick up the safety expectations."

‘We’re apprehensive, but we’re hopeful and we’re thankful. We’re happy with the support of the Councillors who have supported taking a deeper look into this,’ he says. ‘Especially Mayor Annette Groves who has been with us on this since 2005, and Councillors Tony Rosa, Doug Maskell, and Mario Russo more recently.’

At the May 6, 2025 General Committee Meeting a motion was put forward by Mayor Groves to ‘To direct staff to initiate preliminary assessment of access alternatives for the Valleywood and

Mayfield West communities using funding available from the Valleywood Interchange Reconstruction Project.’

The motion carried, with the Town of Caledon Engineering Services staff directed to negotiate a proposal from Aecom Consulting Engineers, or other qualified engineering consultant, to complete assessment of access alternatives to the Valleywood and Mayfield West communities; assessment to consider access at Snellcrest Drive, Dougall Avenue, and other feasible and cost-effective access alternatives.

Staff was also directed to prepare a report regarding the background and past decisions

that led to the current state of the access for the Valleywood and Mayfield West Access

Communities.

‘At the end of the day, any version of a Valleywood intersection will need to contend with the additional traffic of 40,000 more people living on the west side of Highway 10,’ says Harrison. ‘The existing interchange cannot.’

Harrison suggests a ‘simple and predictable’ intersection similar to the one at Mayfield Road and Main St (Highway 10).

‘When the 410 traffic is relocated east, common sense can prevail using so much less land, rendering the surplus for typical uses,’ he says. ‘The fact that access from Highway 10 to communities south of Old School Road could now exist improving Fire Emergency efficiency currently challenged.’