

Caledon Citizen

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The real reason for the inaction on the Highway 410 extension?

The 410 Highway extension that will parallel Heart Lake Road from Bovaird Drive to Mayfield Road might be especially good news for the City of Brampton, but it does little to relieve the frustrations of northern commuters who face a daily bottleneck at Caledon Village before they encounter the present-day Heart Lake Road gridlock.

Awarding of the multi-million-dollar contract was announced in May, after almost a quarter-century of talking about it. The move will overcome a bottleneck of about 2 1/2 miles past Heart Lake Conservation Area, and might get northbound commuters on to the 4-lane Highway 10 a few minutes sooner.

But they'll still lose that time when they get to the top of the Caledon mountain, where they'll have to merge into two narrow, rough lanes as they pass through the village.

This will hardly discourage the dangerous alternatives of using Heart Lake Road, or Horseshoe Hill Road. Not that there's anything wrong with those well-paved Caledon roads, but their Highway 9 intersections are both uncontrolled, and during rush hours it's almost worth one's life to turn left into Highway 9.

Back to the village, we recall staffing an information session on the proposed widening more than five years ago. Since then, the Old Town Hall, home of the Caledon Townhall Players, has been moved, the gasoline outlet at the intersection closed, and the surveys for the turns at Highway 10 and Charleston Sideroad (the former Highway 24) completed.

The underground tanks have been removed at the station. As nearly as we have been able to determine, all contaminated soils have been excavated, but there is no indication that construction will get under way in the foreseeable future.

In fact, the Ministry of the Environment has approved the remedial measures taken at the station, has given the property a clean bill of health, but the Ministry of Transportation says it hasn't purchased the strip of property for the wider right-of-way because it's not satisfied that it doesn't still

pose a risk.

In fact, there had been talk of contaminated wells elsewhere in the village. It would be difficult to blame that on the former service station, given that a mere excavation appears to have cleared away all the local contamination. Nor should it be forgotten that there's a certain amount of spillage at all service stations, and there's always a major cleanup when stations are closed.

In Caledon's case, the other factor with respect to contamination of area wells is that there have been numerous businesses handling a wide variety of substances over the past century. Who is to say which one or more of them spilled chemicals that eventually leached into the groundwater?

In the circumstances, we can't help wondering whether the province wants to solve traffic problems, or prefers instead simply to put its roads where the votes are.

Brampton, after all, is one of the fastest-growing cities in Ontario, with a huge number of uncommitted voters. Work such as the Highway 410 and 427 extensions will likely be under way before the next provincial election, and the government could see the construction as winning more than a seat for the Liberals.

Perhaps there's a similar explanation for mysterious circumstances to the north, where Shelburne council seems to be getting nowhere in its bid to have the province build a bypass for Highway 10 and a truck bypass for Highway 89.

It seems the province was committed to a Shelburne bypass study prior to the last provincial election. It said so in a letter to town council, and the Town committed about \$60,000 for its share of the costs, believing the study would be done within a stated time.

Shelburne's money remains in a reserve. But time has passed, and the ministry has yet to get the study under way.

Does the real reason for all the inaction lie in the fact Dufferin-Caledon is seen by the McGuinty government as forever unwinnable - the safest Conservative seat in Ontario?

Experts warn of another 'Summer of the Gun' in Canada's major cities.



Our Readers Write

Rhetoric surrounds issue

It has been a disappointment to watch the progress and listen to the political rhetoric concerning the expansion to the senior citizens' residence in Caledon East. Is it any wonder that Alex Rodriques, and others who have spoken to me, are frustrated with the delay?

This site was approved for development and was fully funded from Regional housing reserves when I was the regional councillor for the area more than three years ago.

Council knew that federal funding, when available, would not cover all of need for this type of housing in the Region. Council approved the immediate building of three sites, one in each of Caledon, Brampton, and Mississauga.

The Caledon East site was chosen because it was already a Peel housing facility on a very large lot with full municipal services and close to all community amenities. There was a demonstrated need for the facility and the site could be developed and fully occupied in the shortest period of time.

I chaired a series of public meetings with seniors, the neighbourhood, and related service and support groups. At that time we dealt with issues related to building density, traffic, parking, design criteria, neighbourhood impacts, and, other services that could be provided for seniors in a newly expanded facility.

The Abbeyfield Committee asked us to consider including a provision for their type of seniors' residence on the site. It was agreed that we would identify a "footprint" for them should they wish to proceed. It was understood that the Abbeyfield request would not delay the Peel expansion.

Having reached these understandings, we committed to a two-year timeline to approve a minor zoning change, design and build the Peel Housing project, and, have it occupied.

The presentation that I heard at a public meeting a few weeks ago, was little changed

from the point that we were at three years ago. The reality is that this project had been allowed to virtually drift and get tied up in unnecessary additional process for most of this term of office.

There is very little justification that can be offered for this delay. It is inexcusable that any project that will bring desperately needed seniors facilities to our area is delayed for no good reason.

The Caledon East project should have been completed and fully operational by now. Instead, we are witnesses to a flurry of political statements that mask the fact that an already approved and funded expansion still, to this day, hasn't happened.

The good news is that the project is moving forward again. We all need to provide strong community support for the project, the existing residents, and, those who continue to wait for appropriate housing and facilities.

It is particularly important that we reach out to the Abbeyfield committee as they strive to raise their share of the money needed for their part of the facility.

Richard Whitehead
Caledon

Hard-working HHTA members

Regarding your May 23 editorial "Concerted tourism efforts needed locally," please help me understand why you would so strongly suggest that "we should be building on this distinction" (the greenest town in Ontario) - a good idea to spend dollars on. I am not a marketing expert, however, I cannot imagine that this message would bring people to Caledon, make it a unique experience or a tourist destination.

Headwaters Tourism Association participates in several local shows which is one way they contact local residents, i.e. Bolton Home Show, Erin Home Show, etc.

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