

The proposed 4-3 highway option has been a contentious issue for local politicians for months. Now Halton Region has joined the Town in saying the Province should foot the bill for any planned new highways.



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The

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- D.V.A. approved

Region, Town say Province should pay for highways

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It's the latter option that has both Halton Region and Halton Hills Councils concerned.

Halton Hills Director of Infrastructure Services Chris Mills estimated that link would cost at least \$600 million plus land costs.

"We're basically saying to the Province...forget about it, we're not paying," said Bonnette at the regional meeting.

His seconder, Milton Councillor Colin Best agreed.

He argued that the Drummond Report also already pointed out the Province is out of money, and Halton Region is already paying the full shot for a \$30 million Hwy. 401 interchange at Tremaine Rd.

"They can't even afford that small part, let alone the billion dollars for this development, which we don't even know exactly when it's going to happen. It could be 2031 or it could be 2051," said Best.

The timing of the project was also at issue.

Originally the study was to look at transportation and transit needs up to 2031 but now the Province's timelines are becoming more vague.

"The MTO team seems to keep moving the yardsticks," said Bonnette. "One time it's up to 2031 and now they're saying it's beyond 2031. First they say the 401 couldn't be widened, but we (Town) proved the 401 could be widened with very minimal impact on Halton Hills and Milton. So now they say we have to look at somewhere else.

"While we support additional study, we ask they stick to the 2031 timeframe. But if they go beyond 2031, bring all the options back to the table."

One of those options is 4-4, a new highway north of Halton Hills, which connects Vaughan with Guelph.

At the Halton Hills council meeting, Wards 1&2 Regional Councillor Clark Somerville said that option is the one that still makes sense. He added he would like more focus point on transit such as the all-day GO service.

Mills said the GTA West study should also take a detailed look at widening existing roads to reduce the impact on agriculture in south Halton Hills.

The GTA Study Team told both councils the three alternatives will be evaluated this spring, seeking the best balance between "accommodating future transportation needs and potential impacts to natural environment, land use, cultural environment, economic environment, in addition to costs and constructability."

The evaluation and conclusions will be presented during a second round of public consultations this spring.



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