

Transportation option questioned

Why support the worst option? That's the question Halton Hills resident Vic Hendrickson has repeatedly asked Town councillors and staff recently concerning their support to widen Highway 401 to 12 lanes and construct a new interchange at the 401/407. This is part of the MTO's work to plan for transportation needs to 2031 by creating a new highway from Highway 400 in York to connect at the 401/407 interchange.

Although the MTO had initially proposed a new highway across the south end of Halton Hills, local opposition persuaded the study team to re-investigate widening the 401 to 12 lanes, and that is now the preferred option. In a report to council, staff said widening the 401 would provide the essential transportation needs to 2031, at the lowest cost. The study team said the preferred alternative would provide the best balance of benefits and negative impacts.

Hendrickson said the widening – known as option 4-2 – would waste taxpayer money, cause gridlock for four or five years from Winston Churchill Boulevard to Milton, and transfer existing bottlenecks to Halton Hills. "Let the study team come up with new option that best meets most needs," Hendrickson said, noting the study team determined 4-2

was the worst option when it came to traffic and constructability because it has the worst overall network performance, the highest amount of truck delays, the highest use of local roads (and) the highest incidence of collisions.

At an earlier council meeting, Hendrickson asked how to explain that taxpayer money was wasted to make the worst choice, which could lead to a three per cent increase in collisions, and potentially deaths and property damage. At last Monday's council meeting, he repeated that with option 4-2 "we are getting the worst traffic solution."

At that meeting, council voted to sign off on stage one of the GTA West Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment, presented by the Ministry of Transportation, asking that the preliminary route area for stage two be revised to the Ninth Line, or at the minimum to remove residential properties that front on the Eighth Line. This would remove uncertainty about the future of potentially affected properties.

A frustrated Ward Two Councillor Bryan Lewis pointed out to Hendrickson that council had tried successfully to get provincial support for other alternatives – including a new corridor from Vaughn to Kitchener – and asked if his

concerns with widening the 401 were "personal." "What is it you want me to do as a person who represents the area you live in... I can't get my head around what you want us to do, other than say no," Lewis said, noting that other people had played the "safety card" and that council has to rely on its experts, and suggesting Hendrickson should not rely on "fear mongering."

Hendrickson repeated that council should not approve the worst alternative that will cause more collisions. "There's got to be a better way – we just haven't found it," Hendrickson said again repeating that he is not a transportation expert.

At an earlier council meeting, Mayor Rick Bonnette disputed Hendrickson's contention that taxpayer money was wasted to hire a consultant to help successfully fight option 4-3, noting the province erroneously said the 401 could not be widened, negating the need for a new superhighway.

He also questioned Hendrickson's contention that widening the 401 would cause more collisions than building a new corridor and asked staff for clarification. Chris Mills the Town's Director of Infrastructure Services and Engineer said that MTO did say that computer modelling showed the widening would increase collisions by one per cent, and the new corridor rejected by council would reduce collisions by three per cent.

Halton's second picture book, *Wings and Thingamajigs*, now available in additional languages

E-book translations of Halton Region's second children's picture book, *Wings and Thingamajigs*, are now available online. The Region published an English version of the book, and a complementary Storytelling Kit, as part of its Air Quality Education and Awareness Raising program in June. The second in a three-book series, *Wings and Thingamajigs* focuses on the implications of air quality and climate change on human health. The book builds on the themes presented in book one, *A Farewell to Featherwagons*, particularly the impact of transportation on the environment. A third book is planned for 2013.

"We are pleased to share our climate change messages with an even broader audience," said Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr. "*Wings and Thingamajigs* is now available in Cantonese, French, Polish, Punjabi and Spanish, reflecting the top five languages

spoken most often at home in Halton other than English."

Since the book was launched in June, copies have been distributed to libraries, schools and day care centres across Halton and there have been hundreds of visits to the related webpage www.halton.ca/thingamajigs

The book has been very well received by readers young and old. Here's what one parent had to say: "What I enjoy most about this book is that it really encourages readers to change their lifestyle in order to cut down on air pollution and climate change. The book suggests very simple ways for people to help the environment. Arranging alternative ways for travel is a very achievable option for reducing your footprint. I left reading this book feeling very motivated to help stop climate change." According to another young reader: "This is what I liked best: that the birds made thingamajigs and stopped

polluting. I like it because Alba Alba made a new friend who had the same breathing problem."

The first book in the series, *A Farewell to Featherwagons*, has been recognized internationally by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), and was awarded a 2012 Gold Quill Award of Excellence (Social Responsibility). It has also received local recognition with a 2012 Pinnacle Award (CPRS, Hamilton Chapter) and a 2012 Ovation Award of Merit (IABC Toronto).

For more information or to download electronic versions of both *Wings and Thingamajigs* and *A Farewell to Featherwagons* in any of the six languages now available, visit www.halton.ca/airquality or dial 311, 905-825-6000, toll free 1-866-442-5866 or TTY 905-827-9833. The first 100 people who complete an online evaluation will receive a hard copy of the book.

Halton police: Beware of phone scam for computer repairs

Halton police caution residents to beware of phone solicitors posing as computer company representatives.

There are variations to the scam, but generally the caller identifies themselves

as a representative of a computer service or repair firm and professes to know the resident is experiencing computer problems. The resident is tricked into accessing a particular website, providing personal information and eventually the caller gains access to their computer. The purported fee for 'assisting' the resident ranges, but in one recent case, a victim paid a few hundred dollars.

Police offer the following advice to avoid becoming victimized by persons claiming to be computer company representatives:

- DO NOT purchase any software or services
- Ask if there is a fee or subscription associated

with the 'service'. If there is, hang up.


- Never give control of your computer to a third party unless you can confirm that it is a legitimate representative of a computer support team with whom you are already a customer

- Take the caller's information down and immediately report it to your local police

- Never provide your credit card or financial information to someone claiming to be from a computer technical support company

Further information and prevention tips can be found at www.haltonpolice.ca under the 'Community Policing' tab - Safety and Security Tips.

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