

Council supports one amendment, defers the other

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According to Babic, finances are also an issue. Should the government back out of GTA West, the price tag for the project would be too big for Halton Hills to carry.

Halton Hills insists if the GTA West is cancelled, they will still build the highway without the province's help, she stated. The 2010 HP-BATS report states the Town requires MTO's financial involvement. How does Halton Hills think they will fund this highway?

Babic then stated the highway would cost \$479 million, and that doesn't include land acquisition costs or utility relocation costs, according to HP-BATS.

This highway will only serve a small percentage of Halton Hills residents, and why would all taxpayers of Halton Hills have to fund the highway if the

province decides to cancel the GTA West project?

She then went on to speak about possible environmental issues, such as the crossing of the Credit River, and protecting the Green Belt.

Ward 2 Councillor Bryan Lewis then requested Babic stop saying staff is downplaying the project.

We have the same concerns that you do, maybe we say it differently, he said.

He then asked where Babic learned Halton Hills would pay for the project should the government pull out, and where she learned of the big price tag.

That's from HPBATS, she replied.

Politically, I've never heard that being presented, and in fact, that's one of the major reasons I believe the province is not going ahead, because of the dollar value

initially, he said. Being a representative of this area, I have never once heard the Town of Halton Hills would build. It's just not feasible, but yet you said that implied the town would build this without financial assistance.

I can virtually assure you, that's not going to happen.

Babic then said that was her observation because according to her, building the highway is the only reason why the lands would be put under protection.

I have been informed HP-BATS is going to kick in and a highway is going to go forward, she said.

Lewis then said he doesn't want people to be misled when it comes to the money.

When the issue was brought up later in the meeting, Lewis asked to defer the vote until the rest of the councillors, including Mayor Rick Bonnette, who



Halton Region manager of planning policy Steve Burke presents to regional Official Plan Amendments during council's regular meeting on March 21. Council would later defer one amendment and support the other.

Photo by Kathryn Boyle

are currently on a trip to China, are in attendance.

In a unanimous vote, council deferred the decision. But later, they realized they made a mistake and deferred voting on both OPA 10 and OPA 21, when they meant to just defer

OPA 21.

After a five-minute recess, clerk Suzanne Jones and Halton Hills executive director of planning John Linhardt changed the motion to defer the vote of OPA 21 to a later date and to support OPA 10.

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