

MPP Ted Arnott presses for MTO, Town meeting on truck traffic

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott will meet with MP Steven Del Duca, the Ontario Minister of Transportation, in January to talk about truck traffic on Hwy. 7 in Acton and the surrounding area.

Arnott approached Del Duca after Question Period in the Legislature last week. Arnott said that "Del Duca verbally agreed to a meeting possibly early in the New Year."

Arnott plans to invite Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette, members of Council and Town staff as well as Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr.

Arnott took action after receiving notice of a Town of Halton Hills resolution detailing the Town's concern with truck traffic and the need to partner with the MTO to study long-term alternatives, including placing an Acton bypass project on the Southern Highways Program (MTO's five-year plan for new highway construction).



MPP TED ARNOTT

Town seeks MTO's help to alleviate truck traffic

By Melanie Hennessey
Special to The IFP

Mayor Rick Bonnette is taking his push for provincial action on local truck traffic one step further.

The head of council received unanimous support from his colleagues at the Nov. 30 council meeting on a motion that asks Ontario Minister of Transportation Steven Del Duca to prioritize a long-term solution for truck traffic impacting Halton Hills by placing it on the Southern Highways Program—the ministry's five-year investment plan for highway construction.

It also goes on to ask the Province once again to partner with the Town by contributing financially to a study that investigates alternative ways to address truck traffic, including a review of the need for an Acton bypass.

With two quarry proposals on the table for lands just outside Halton Hills—the Hidden Quarry in Rockwood and another in the Town of Erin—the motion is a timely one, according to Bonnette.

"We may see significant truck traffic and we're trying to be ahead of it," he said.

"We're asking the Province to be a partner with us and help cost share."

Ward 1 Councillor Jon Hurst noted that truck traffic is a definite concern in the community.

"The truck traffic through downtown Acton is one of the main issues I hear about almost on a daily basis," he said.

'It's a huge safety concern.'

—Acton Councillor Jon Hurst—

Not only is the Acton councillor hearing about the issue, he's seeing it first hand as well. He told council that he recently watched a large transport truck with a 45-foot trailer negotiating the tight corner at Main and Mill streets in Acton.

"I was astounded the driver managed to make it around the corner with such ease, but then I noticed he was a local transport driver," he said, noting that's not the case for 80 to 90 per cent of truck drivers coming through town. "It's a huge safety concern."

Bonnette's lengthy motion notes that council has been concerned about the increasing truck traffic through the urban

areas of the municipality, including the downtown areas of Acton, Georgetown and Norval, for many years.

"It is widely acknowledged that the truck traffic in these downtown areas has serious implications for the social fabric of the community due to the increasing traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions and safety concerns that degrade the ability of residents to enjoy their downtown and the success of the business community," the motion states.

The Town already has Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott in its corner on the topic. Arnott recently spoke with Del Duca about the matter in the Ontario Legislature and hand-delivered a letter to him in support of the Town's request for bypass study funding.

The Town has applied to the Province for \$100,000 in funding to help offset the cost of a truck traffic strategy and Acton bypass study. Town staff intends to commence the study next year at a cost of \$200,000 and is proposing a 50/50 cost sharing arrangement with the Province. The Town's portion will be included in the 2016 budget and is subject to council approval.

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