

MAYOR SAYS THERE ARE BETTER OPTIONS THAN WEST CORRIDOR HIGHWAY

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Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette says there are better solutions to easing gridlock than building highways.

The provincial government stated its intention to revive the GTA West Corridor, a 400 series highway that would pass through Halton Hills. The proposed highway was shelved by the previous Liberal government in early 2018.

Speaking at the Ontario Road Builders Association annual convention Feb. 5, Transportation Minister Jeff Yurek said, "We will restart the environmental assessment (EA) for the GTA West Corridor. The EA will identify and address transportation needs in the corridor through York, Peel

and Halton regions."

While the mayors of Brampton and Caledon welcomed the news, Bonnette was less enthusiastic.

"A major highway cutting through farmland is not a significant advantage for Halton Hills," Bonnette said. "The money would be better invested in transit and addressing the concerns with Hwy. 7."

The mayor said bypasses are needed around Norval, to ease the bottleneck that occurs there, and Acton, to allow trucks an alternate route that avoids narrow downtown streets. Bonnette said two-way, all-day GO Transit trains would also remove a significant number of cars from the roads.

"Premier Ford has said on a few occasions that he recognizes there's gridlock

in the GTA," Bonnette said. "That, to me, is good news, but it doesn't necessarily have to be a highway. As soon as it's built, we'll be looking at needing another."

If the highway is to go forward, the mayor said Halton Hills needs to be consulted because it would have a significant impact on the town. He said property owners have already had to live through years of uncertainty.

The highway could also impact land set aside by the town as employment lands.

Bonnette said he understands the need and is not opposed to highways, pointing out he was in favour of the Halton Hills, Brampton-Peel highway that was agreed upon and approved nine years ago that included a Norval bypass.

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