



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Signs like this one illustrate the opposition of some Guelph Line residents to a proposed road renovation that would destroy up to 300 trees between Hwy. 401 and No. 15 Sideroad.

## Region surprised by outcry against Guelph Line plan

By IRENE GENTLE  
The Champion

A small group of residents are hoping Halton Region will kill a \$4 million plan to straighten out a knoll-ridden stretch of Guelph Line between Hwy. 401 and No. 15 Sideroad.

But the Region believes the road improvements are a safety issue and seemed surprised at the 11th-hour opposition to an undertaking that has been in the works for years.

"We've been working on this project since 1994," said Tony Finelli, design supervisor for Halton's planning department. "We thought there was a positive reaction until just recently."

That was when the objections of the Guelph Line Preservation Committee, or GULP, became known.

GULP is a citizen's group spearheaded by eight Guelph Line and area residents who believe road improvements won't make the area safer.

But controlling speed through road design will, said GULP member Tami-Anne Dams.

"The major problem on this road is speed and traffic management," she said. "The design they have (planned) doesn't facilitate lower speeds."

Currently, the Guelph Line strip has an 80-km speed limit.

And despite poor sightlines, improper drainage and a lack of shoulders, that's what the road is now built for, said Mr. Finelli.

### Work long overdue: Lee

In the opinion of Ward 3 and Regional Councillor Barry Lee, the reconstruction is long overdue.

"It's deficient, it's dangerous, and it has been established as a priority for many years," he said. "The safety issue is a big factor. In the past two years there have been 29 accidents on that stretch of road."

He said this is the last phase of an ongoing plan to refine Guelph Line. Stretches through Lowville and Campbellville have already been tackled.

Ms Dams admitted some work

needs to be done on the road. But a flat, clear street will just encourage speed demons to drive faster.

"We're still a rural area. We still have wildlife," she said.

"The project needs to be scaled down in design."

The location may be rural, but the road isn't, noted Mr. Finelli.

"Guelph Line is an arterial road," he said. "It's not a local road."

A key issue for the Region is a hazardous blind spot known as Hutchinson's Hill.

But the hill would be fine if driver's took their time, said Ms Dams.

"Speed kills, it's not the hill," she said.

And drivers are becoming increasingly impatient, a situation that will likely worsen if the road is improved, she added.

But a better road with superior sightlines will help police catch lead-footed drivers, said Mr. Lee.

"A properly constructed road certainly gives you more opportunity to control speed," he argued.

According to Ms Dams, Guelph Line has become increasingly well


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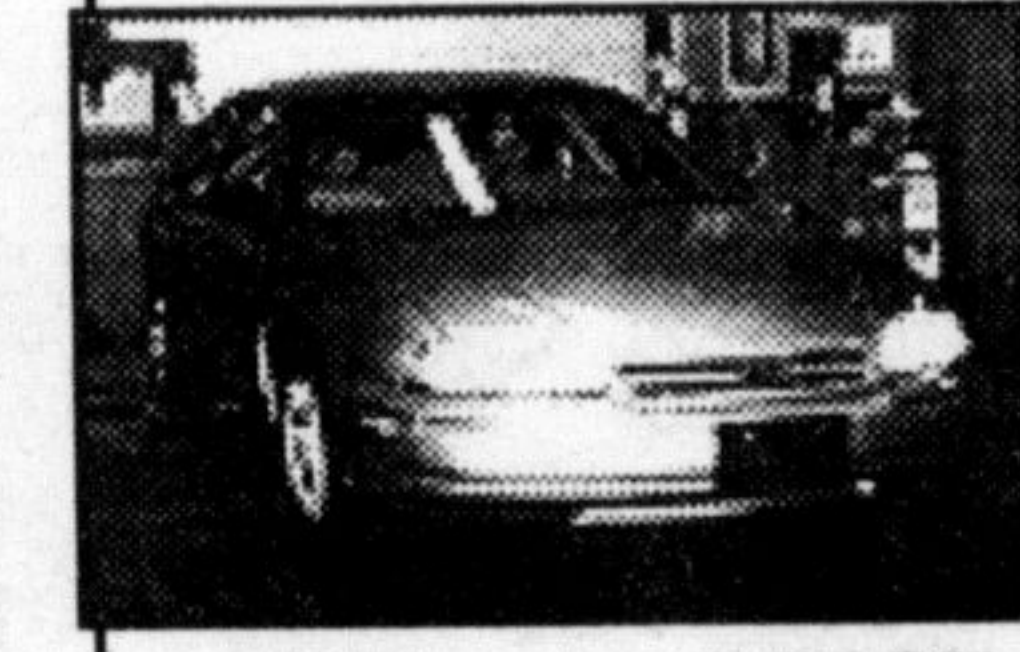
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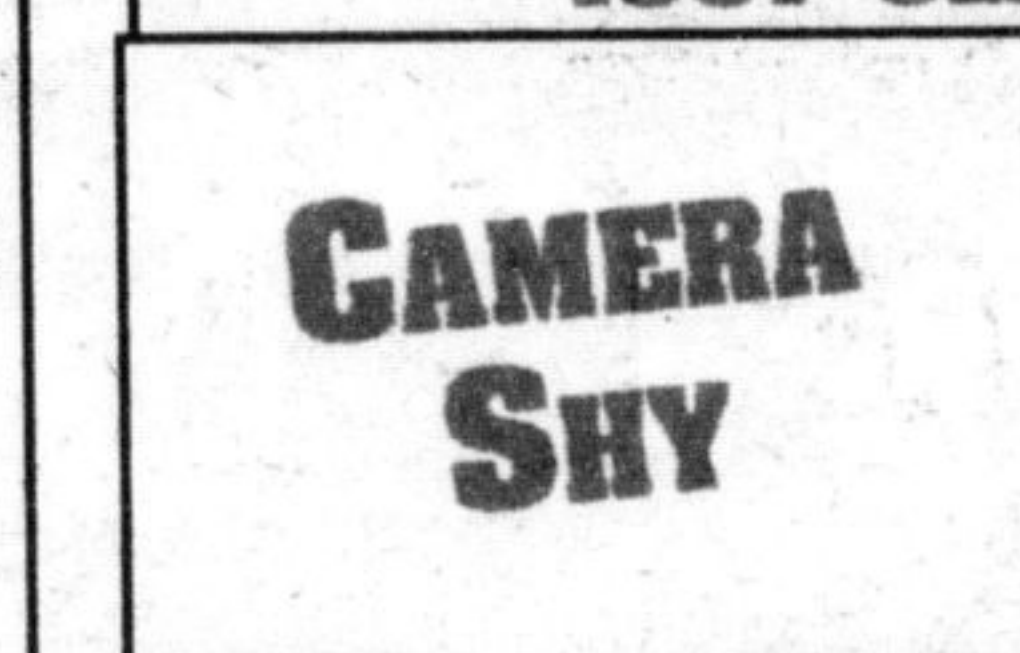
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