

Derry Road widening likely to start in July

By **MELANIE HENNESSEY**
The Champion

Ground could break as soon as July for the \$20-million Derry Road reconstruction project that'll double the width of the busy stretch from Bronte Street to James Snow Parkway.

That's what dozens of local residents learned at a public information open house hosted by Halton Region Tuesday evening in Milton.

Brenda Kingsmill, design supervisor with the Region, said work on Derry Road was supposed to get underway last year but due to issues surrounding property acquisition and approvals from various agencies, like Transport Canada, that didn't happen.

"We have tentatively set the end of July to start construction," she said, noting it's expected to be finished by fall, 2006.

In addition to widening the road from two lanes to four, traffic lights will be put in place at every intersection except for Fourth Line and Farmstead Drive, and a concrete median will also be installed, which will be landscaped with trees in some parts.

Residents want noise barrier

Ms Kingsmill said the response from the public on the road design has been pretty good, but noted some are concerned with extra noise increased traffic will create. She noted the current plan doesn't include a noise barrier.

Halton Design Services Manager Joseph Choi said he received a petition from a group of residents Tuesday evening in support of a noise barrier for a section of Derry Road. He wasn't able to confirm if it was from the same group of residents that petitioned the Region for the wall a couple

years ago, noting he still has to assess the document.

He said when the project went through the environmental assessment stage, the noise level and its impact on residents was examined. The assessment concluded the increased noise level won't be high enough to require a fence or barrier.

But, Mr. Choi said there is a retrofit policy that could be used if there are enough homeowners in support of installing a sound barrier. It would also have to be approved by Regional committee and council.

These homeowners would have to pay 25 per cent of the cost for the wall, which Mr. Choi said could be paid as a lump sum to the Region or financed over 10 years on their tax bills.

Pathway popular

There were some residents at the meeting that had some positive thoughts on the Derry Road project, particularly about the asphalt multi-use path that will run almost the full length of the road between James Snow Parkway and Bronte, except for the south side between Santa Maria Boulevard and Bronte, which Ms Kingsmill said is a future project. Existing sidewalks will be replaced.

"Right now it's not safe to walk on Derry, so the pathways will be nice," said Porter Way resident Lynne Gatzke.

But, Ms Gatzke also had concerns with the length of time the road will be under construction, noting she uses Derry Road sometimes to go to work.

"It'll be a mess for a long time," she said.

Ms Kingsmill said the Region hopes to keep Derry Road open during construction but said there will be some detours set up.

Ms Gatzke said she realizes once construction is done, the road will be much improved and safer.

Chapman Crescent resident Ligaya Laporte shared similar sentiments. With her three children crossing the busy road to get to Guardian Angels school every day, she and her husband Dale agreed the sooner more traffic lights are put in the better.

"It's very busy at a couple of the intersections that don't have any lights so we're looking forward to that," she said.

Mr. Laporte noted, "We can't wait until traffic is slowed down."

Other aspects of the project include cre-

ating left turn lanes at every intersection, except for Fourth Line, leaving breaks in the centre median for access to businesses and installing more street lights.

Milton and Regional Councillor Barry Lee, who also came out to the information centre, noted the turn lanes will be a huge asset to the road.

"I think when it's (construction) completed it's going to be a huge improvement," he said.

"This is going to be the main street of the new town."

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