

# Is Milton on its way to traffic chaos?

*Relief coming soon, but congestion will likely get worse before it gets better*

By MELANIE HENNESSEY

The Champion

While local residents have long been saying the town's roads are congested or have "gridlock," some members of Milton council have mixed opinions on the issue.

In speaking with The Champion Friday, two councillors agreed Milton's roads have gridlock to a certain extent, another said the town has "traffic problems," while the mayor said he finds local streets have minimal congestion.

Ward 1 Councillor Rick Day said he doesn't think Milton has traffic like Toronto, but the town's roads can be gridlocked at the "most important times" during rush hour.

"The problem is pretty simple, isn't it? We build the houses before we build the services," he said.

He explained this happens because the Town uses money from development charges paid for new homes to help cover things like roads.

"The situation is complicated by the fact the Region is responsible for upgrading all of the more important roads," he said, referring to the major thoroughfares like Derry Road that run through Milton.

When asked what he thinks a short-term solution to the traffic congestion in Milton would be, Mr. Day said, "I would be taking all money scheduled for the new Town Hall and spending it on roads. If that means council has to meet in a school portable for awhile, so be it."

Ward 2 Councillor Mike Boughton concurred there can be gridlock to a degree when people are going to and from work.

"We do have a lot of traffic volume in town," he said.

But he noted he also thinks traffic flow in town has improved over the past year or so due to better traffic light synchronization.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Thompson Road is jammed up in the morning rush hour as commuters head for Hwy. 401.

"I believe the senior management team is doing the best they can," he said.

He also put forward a few suggestions to make Milton's traffic flow that much better — having 'advance green' lights at the intersections of Thompson Road with Main Street and Derry Road and turning some traffic lights into flashing 'stop/caution' lights after 10 p.m.

Meanwhile, Ward 4 Councillor Wendy Schau told The Champion she wouldn't say Milton's roads have gridlock.

"Certainly there are traffic problems in Milton," she noted.

She said some solutions to the problem are coming forward, meaning upcoming roads projects.

"Unfortunately it's going to take awhile to get these improvements in place," she said.

She pointed out that in the Sherwood Survey Secondary Plan area, arrangements have been made for developers to start providing funds up front for road construction.

"This sort of situation should not exist when that gets underway," she said. "It's better to put roads in ahead of time if you can, but if you don't have the money to do it, you can't do it."

In the meantime, Ms Schau said traffic could be addressed by residents using the Milton Transit system or the Town's trails for walking or cycling.

"As our transit system expands, hopefully people will take it instead of using their cars," she said.

Mayor Gord Krantz said there isn't traffic gridlock in Milton but rather minimal congestion, usually where small side streets intersect with major roads.

He acknowledged that traffic has increased and said he thinks it will keep increasing, pointing to the Province's Places to Grow plan that will direct hundreds of thousands more residents to the Milton area.

"Either we get out of our cars and use public transit or get used to it," he said.

He pointed out a lot of the vehicles on Milton's roads don't come from town, but are rather commuters from other municipalities — something he said contributes to the "perception of gridlock."

He suggested that residents who find themselves frustrated with local traffic could change the routes they take through town.

"It's better than sitting for five, 10 or 15 minutes in congestion that's alluded to," he said.

For example, he said a person could use an intersection that has traffic lights instead of just a stop sign.

Mr. Krantz and all councillors The Champion spoke with agreed the roads projects on the horizon for Milton will help alleviate traffic problems.

Here's a list of Town and Region projects.

## Town projects

- Widening of Thompson Road between Derry Road and Louis St. Laurent Avenue from two lanes to four, plus a left turn lane. Construction has already begun and will continue next year.

- A road underpass at the Thompson Road South railway crossing. Grading in preparation for a temporary track diversion is scheduled to start this month, with construction of the structure taking place early next year. It should be complete by next fall.

- Widening of Thompson Road between Main Street East and Derry Road to four lanes, anticipated to start in 2007 after James Snow Parkway is complete.

## Region projects

- Widening Derry Road between Bronte Street and James Snow Parkway from two lanes to four. Construction should be starting soon and completed next year.

- Constructing the remaining portion of James Snow Parkway between Main Street and Derry Road, scheduled for completion in early 2007.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at [mhennessy@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:mhennessy@miltoncanadianchampion.com).

## Comments from our readers

Local residents often write to The Champion to share their thoughts on traffic in Milton.

Here are a few excerpts from letters to the editor we've received.

"We have a town where trying to get down Main Street at 5 p.m. is like being in rush-hour traffic, and often comes close to gridlock." — J. Cross

"The new residential areas are already congested and have severe traffic and parking problems, and in my opinion the old boys let it happen." — Patrick Kelly

"What it seems the gridlock of Milton suffers from most is an abundantly obvious lack of properly operating traffic lights or an all together lack of traffic lights where needed most." — Joshua Rivett

"You have to be incredibly lucky to get more than two green lights in a row on any trip around town." — Al McKenzie

"Milton's carriage-sized roads are trying to support city traffic, with the absence of left turn lanes or advance green arrows at most major intersections, not to mention a lack of right turn lanes into the new subdivisions. In my opinion, Milton is on its way to becoming choked in its own traffic, much like Brampton." — Tim Szumlanski

"The traffic is congested, chaotic and extremely dangerous in some areas. I just hope there isn't a tragic accident before there's a realization on the seriousness of this problem." — Sue Leeder

From Downtown Milton... To Achilles Mazda... It's Only

18.3 Kilometers

19.7 Minutes

90.9 Furlongs

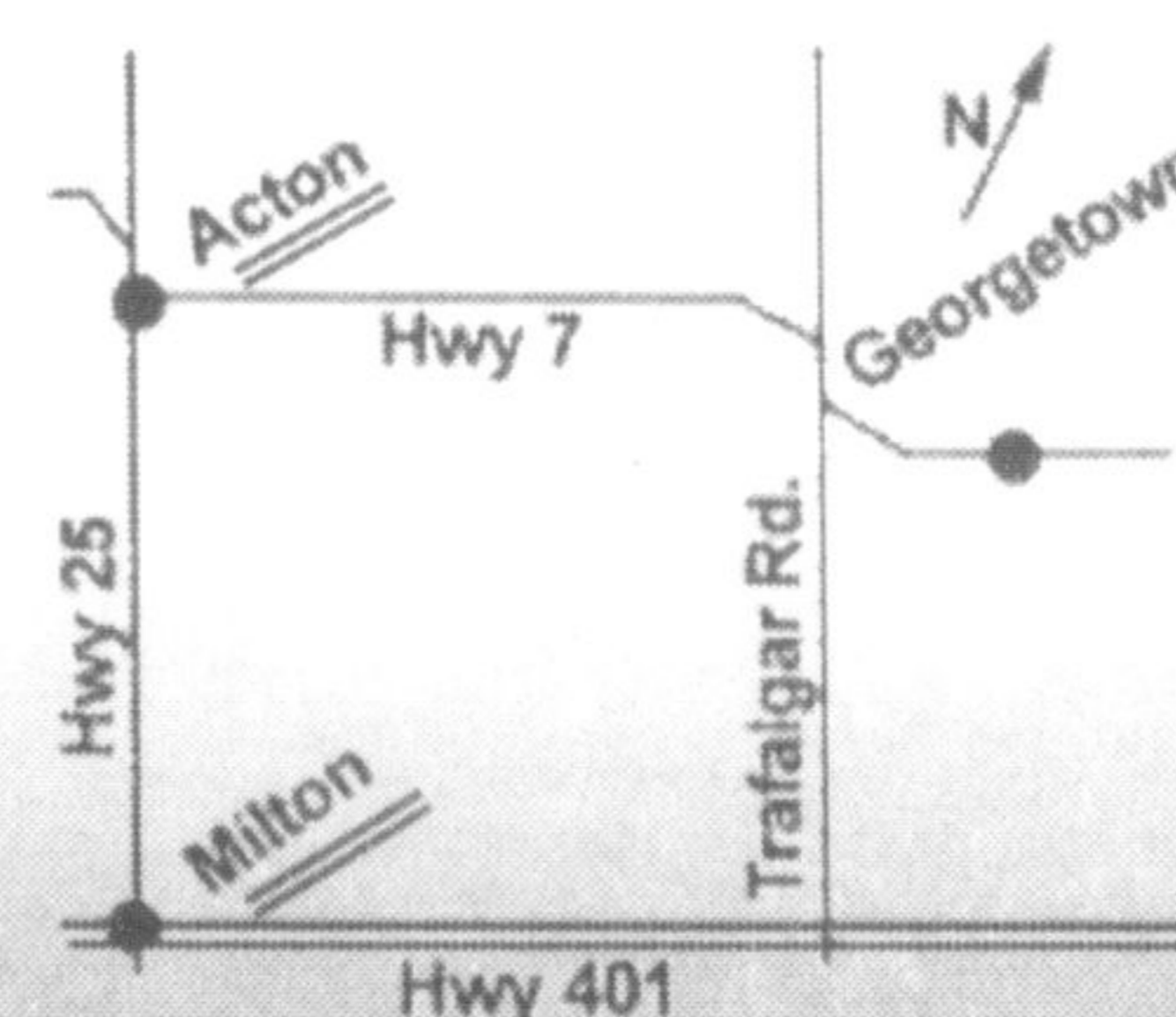
11.4 Miles

20013.1 Yards

909.7 Chains

60039.4 Feet

18300 Meters



No matter how you measure it, let Achilles Mazda show you why it's "Worth the Drive".



357 Queen St., ACTON

519-853-0200

info@achillesmazda.ca

Try Our New Toll-Free Number 1-(866)-620-3248

New Vehicles | Pre-Owned | Parts | Service