

Proposed super-highway to undergo intense study

By Jason Misner
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

The Province is committed to ensuring a proposed super-highway from north Burlington to Niagara is thoroughly studied even though a handful of politicians want the corridor's construction fast tracked, according to the spokesperson for Ontario's Minister of Transportation Donna Cansfield.

Erie-Lincoln MPP Tim Hudak, Hamilton Mayor Larry Di Ianni, Lincoln Mayor Bill Hodgson and Port Colborne Mayor Ron Bodner met with Cansfield last week to discuss "ways to accelerate" the construction of the Niagara-to-GTA Corridor (once-named the Mid-Peninsula Highway), Hudak stated in a news release.

He said he arranged the meeting as part of an ongoing campaign to build the "much-needed highway through Niagara and Hamilton."

But Cansfield's spokesperson, Neal Kelly, told The Champion the minister wants the environmental assessment of the proposed Burlington-to-Niagara highway to be prop-

erly and fairly completed. The assessment was put on hold three years ago for further study.

"The minister told the MPP and local politicians that the EA (environmental assessment) process has to be respected, but she also told them she sees the need for this type of highway," he said, stressing the Province wants all the municipalities to work together. "She knows there's a fair amount of congestion in the Hamilton-Niagara corridor. You can't build a highway in isolation anymore, everything is linked, (with) all the different modes of transportation."

Burlington Mayor Rob MacIsaac said he's pleased to hear the full EA, in which terms of reference were completed in June, will proceed as scheduled. Burlington and Halton had filed a joint court challenge of the highway three years ago that was eventually withdrawn.

"An accelerated process is what got the Province in trouble the last time around," MacIsaac said.

The EA is expected to start in the fall and take four years to complete, according to MTO staff.

Under the previous Tory government, plans for the 130-km, \$1.5-billion superhighway, previously called the Mid-

Peninsula Highway, was proposed to run from Fort Erie to the Niagara Escarpment area of north Burlington. Possible connections for the proposed highway included Hwy. 407 near Walker's Line, an expanded Hwy. 403 on Hamilton Mountain, Hwy. 401 near Milton and Hwy. 6 in Flamborough.

Back then, the highway was to be subjected to only a limited assessment, leading Halton Region and the City of Burlington to file a joint lawsuit. There were concerns from councillors and residents alike that the highway would bring more traffic, more pollution and destroy treasured natural

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