

Officials offer mixed reviews about infrastructure funding

Carr sees announcement as promising; Chudleigh fears hospital expansion delay

Thursday's announcement of an agreement between the Province and the federal government to improve infrastructure to the tune of \$6.2 billion is garnering a mixed reaction among local politicians.

The framework agreement promises to invest \$6.2 billion into Ontario infrastructure over seven years.

It was signed by the federal and provincial governments under the federal infrastructure plan.

Of that money, \$3.1 billion is from the federal government and \$3.1 is from the Province.

The funding increases to \$9.3 billion when federal base funding and the federal gas taxes are included.

Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr said he sees this announcement as a welcome sign of commitment to address serious challenges facing Halton.

"This is promising news for Ontario municipalities who struggle with finding solutions to their aging infrastructure and accommodating population

growth targets of the Province's Growth Plan," Carr said.

He added this sort of collaborative investment is what regional council has been advocating for through its Fairness for Halton campaign.

"I look forward to working with both levels of government to make sure Halton gets its fair share of the funding," he added.

Previous efforts by Halton Region to get growth-related infrastructure funding commitments from the federal government have been largely unsuccessful.

The Fairness for Halton campaign was established to address the fact that Halton Region cannot accommodate the growth targets specified in the Province's Places to Grow Plan without extra funding from both levels of government for infrastructure and social service needs.

According to Carr, this announcement means calls for collaboration are being heard.

The next step, he said, is to see what this funding will mean

for Halton.

Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh, on the other hand, isn't ready to applaud the announcement.

The funding agreement comes on the heels of the recently-announced one-year delay to the start of construction to Oakville's new hospital — reportedly due to a lack of construction capacity.

"If there isn't enough 'construction capacity' available for Oakville's hospital then where is the Province going to find the construction capacity to complete \$7 billion worth of infrastructure projects?" Chudleigh asked.

His fear is the delay to Oakville's hospital will mean the hospital expansion slated for Milton will also be put on hold.

Milton has grown to more than twice the size the current hospital was built to serve.

The MPP has been collecting signatures on a petition at his constituency office at 174 Mill St. Copies of the petition are also available at

www.tedchudleigh.com.

There's also a letter available on the website that can be printed, signed and mailed to Premier Dalton McGuinty.

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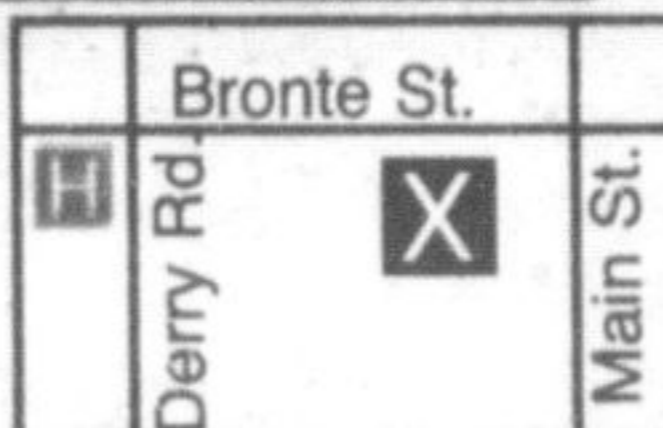
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