

Derry Rd. underpass could be built sooner than planned

By Tim Foran
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Residents of west Milton who flooded the e-mail inboxes of regional councillors earlier this year asking for Halton Region to speed up construction of an underpass on Derry Road might be getting what they asked for.

During a 2010 budget information session last Wednesday, Halton's Public Works

Commissioner, Mitch Zamojc, told regional councillors staff are proposing to begin design work next year on the underpass, a grade separation below the CN railway tracks west of Bronte Road. The proposed 10-year capital budget forecast envisions construction beginning in 2012, subject to council's approval. That would be four years earlier than originally planned.

Zamojc said after the session that the

widening of Derry between Bronte and Tremaine Road that's currently underway might include construction of a bypass that will be necessary when work on the underpass begins.

"I am relieved and delighted to hear that," said Milton resident Zeeshan Hamid, who began a petition asking for the underpass in August. "The underpass cannot happen too soon. I hope the council will continue to consider this need a priority."

Burlington Councillor Jack Dennison referenced the petition last Wednesday, noting jokingly that councillors might have received 'one or two e-mails' on the subject. Dennison was referring to the fact that the petition wasn't sent as one e-mail. Instead, council members received an e-mailed copy of the petition each time an individual signed it. Hamid's personal website lists almost 300 people who have signed the petition.

Wanting to make sure Regional staff weren't recommending the project be pushed up due to public pressure, Dennison asked Zamojc if the underpass would come at the expense of other higher priority projects. Zamojc said it wouldn't. However, at Dennison's request, Zamojc said his staff would present information to councillors on which capital projects are due to come after

2012. The information would likely be included when staff review the proposed 2010 budget in detail with the planning and public works committee next Wednesday. Council will vote on the budget December 16.

The underpass will be paid for through development charges, which is money collected from developers for specific growth-related projects such as road expansions. However, while development charges are not a tax and can't be treated as general revenue, the Region uses the money to pay for growth-related projects across the region — not just per lower tier municipality — based on prioritization done in a Transportation Master Plan.

The master plan is developed to ensure the most critical projects are completed first, according to the Region. For example, the expansion of Derry Road between James Snow Parkway and Mississauga has been undertaken with the use of development charges as it's a major commuter route, despite the fact there's no residential development going on in that specific stretch of Milton.

Tim Foran can be reached at tforan@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

Region wins award for forest plan

Halton Region has received the Niagara Escarpment Achievement Award for its forest management plan.

The recently-announced award recognizes the plan for the high standards it sets to protect and maintain an extensive woodland corridor, in particular six of the Region's 14 forest tracts covering 423 hectares that are part of the Hilton Falls Conservation Area in the Niagara Escarpment.

The Region's forest management plan dates back to early 2005, but an addendum to the plan was prepared just over a year later that was focused on the six forest tracts in the escarpment: Cox, Britton, Robertson, Turner, Mahon and Currie.

All but the Cox tract are located within the provincially-significant life science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) known as Halton Forest South.

"The Halton Forest South ANSI includes the major portion of the largest continuous tract of forest and wetland along the Niagara

Escarpment south of Grey County," noted the Region's 2006 forest management plan addendum.

Halton first started buying up lands for forestry use 70 years ago, according to the Region's website, www.halton.ca/ppw/planning/Forest.

Today, it owns 665 hectares of forest, which include wooded areas, wetlands and meadows, in 14 separate tracts. Nine of them are in Regionally-designated environmentally significant areas containing natural features or ecological functions of significance.

Of the more than 500 plant species identified within the forests, 65 of them are considered rare or uncommon in Halton Region or the GTA, and three are provincially rare. The forests also provide a home to the Jefferson Salamander, an animal listed as a threatened species.

However, the forests also provide recreation opportunities for Halton's residents, including deer hunting in 12 of the 14 tracts.

 **The Corporation of the Town of Milton**
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Notice of Budget Committee Meeting

Please be advised that the Corporation of the Town of Milton will be holding a Budget Committee Meeting to consider the 2010 Operating and Capital Budgets on:

PUBLIC MEETING: December 7, 2009 (and December 8, 2009 if necessary)
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall
Council Chamber, Town Hall West
150 Mary Street, Milton

Members of the public are invited to register as delegations to speak to the Budget Committee on December 7. If you wish to do so, please fill out the form for appearing as a delegation, available on the Town's website at www.milton.ca, or contact the Clerks office at 905-878-7252 ext. 2131.

Budget documents are available on the Town of Milton website or can be viewed or purchased in CD format at Town Hall East, Corporate Services Department located at 150 Mary Street.

Questions or comments may be directed to Sheryl Hill, Senior Manager, Finance at 905-878-7252 ext. 2151 or sheryl.hill@milton.ca.

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