

# Region pushes for Hwy. 403 fast track

By NORMAN NELSON

Halton's top planner can't emphasize enough the need for construction of Highway 403 in Halton Region.

The province has already undertaken extensive design work on the Highway 403 extension from the intersection of Highway 403 and the QEW near Hamilton (called the Freeman Interchange) to the intersection of Highway 5 and Highway 25 just south of Milton.

The project is expected to be completed by 1998 at an expected cost of \$140 million.

However, planning commissioner Rash Mohammed is concerned that no timing or commitment has been established regarding the continuation of Hwy. 403 through Oakville to Trafalgar Road, something he terms the "missing link."

## Bus lane as well

A report he will present at today's regional planning and public works committee meeting urges council to press the province concerning Highway 403 extension across all of Halton, and also to request Queen's Park incorporate a bus lane to facilitate mass transit.

"It would be prudent to discuss with ministry staff designing Hwy. 403 as a basic eight-lane cross section throughout," said Mr. Mohammed. "The purpose will be to accommodate either a future busway or exclusive bus and high occupancy vehicle lanes."

He's concerned that some of the major structures — such as the bridges across Bronte Creek and Twelve Mile Creek — are being designed to accommodate only six lanes.

The region will commence a study later this year on future growth of public transit in Halton and Mr. Mohammed stressed, "it's important that the ministry be made aware of Halton's desire at this time and make the necessary provisions in the design of Hwy. 403."

## Traffic congestion

With traffic congestion on the QEW, Highway 5 and other east-west routes growing progressively worse over the last couple of years, Halton politicians had stepped up lobbying efforts for what they viewed as the absence of the critical link in the province's highway system in this area — the 403.

Area councils had all sent resolutions asking that the construction of Highway 403 completely across Halton before the year 2001 be seen as the provincial highway priority in this area.

Last year's provincial budget contained initiatives to spend an additional \$2 billion on transportation improvements in the Greater Toronto Area over the next five years.

Following the budget the province announced a specific \$690 million expansion program for highways and roads within the GTA, which included the \$140 million expansion of Highway 403 from Hamilton to the intersection of Highway 5 and Highway 25.

## For special needs

# Volunteers wanted for drop-in centre

By KAREN SMITH

A north Halton program for physically and mentally disabled adults is shy of only one thing — Milton participation.

Members of the recreation committee for special needs are seeking Miltonians to join a drop-in program currently dominated by residents of Halton Hills.

"Our purpose is to get people out into the community and socialize," says Shirley Raszewski, chairman of the organization. "These people are shut in. They don't get out very often."

Every Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., participants meet at the Royal Canadian Legion hall on Wright Street in Acton for an afternoon of recreational activities.

"Since our program is drop in by nature, participants are free to move from station to station or just sit back and socialize," adds Ms Raszewski.

Events include games, movies, sports, dancing, singing, crafts and guest speakers. A fishing derby, co-hosted by the Halton Region Conservation Authority and Four Seasons Anglers and Hunters, as well as a corn roast are two upcoming outings.

Currently, about 35 people aged between 20 and 90 years old attend the program weekly. Membership totals more than 50.

"We know there's a lot more people out there that don't even know about it," says Bonnie Ward, program supervisor for the Town of Milton's leisure services department.

Irene Pegg, one of the few members from Milton, helped get the program off the ground.

"You make new friends and you learn to do different things," said Ms Pegg, who is confined to a wheelchair.

Ms Ward says the shortage of Milton members may be due to problems with transportation. But committee members will help interested participants arrange rides to

Acton.

The special needs drop-in program is a co-operative effort between the leisure services department and the Town of Halton Hills parks and recreation department.

Ms Raszewski, a founding member of the program, says she believes it is the first such venture by the two towns.

Following a survey of disabled adults conducted by the Physically Handicapped Citizens Affiliation in January, 1988, the recreation committee for special needs in north Halton formed to design a drop-in program.

Its mandate is to provide disabled adults with facilities where they can pursue recreational interests, increase social networks, learn new skills and find opportunities that will contribute to their sense of well-being.

As well as Milton members, volunteers are needed to assist participants. Membership costs \$2 annually. To get involved, call Shirley at 875-1531.

## Traffic chaos ...

• from COUNCILLORS on page 1 mainly dealing with better signage.

Mayor Gord Krantz proposed an acceptable compromise that temporary traffic lights be requested.

Meanwhile, with the increased traffic expected on town roads, a staff proposal was adopted that any costs associated with the detour — such as wear and tear on town roads and detour signs — be absorbed by the region or province.

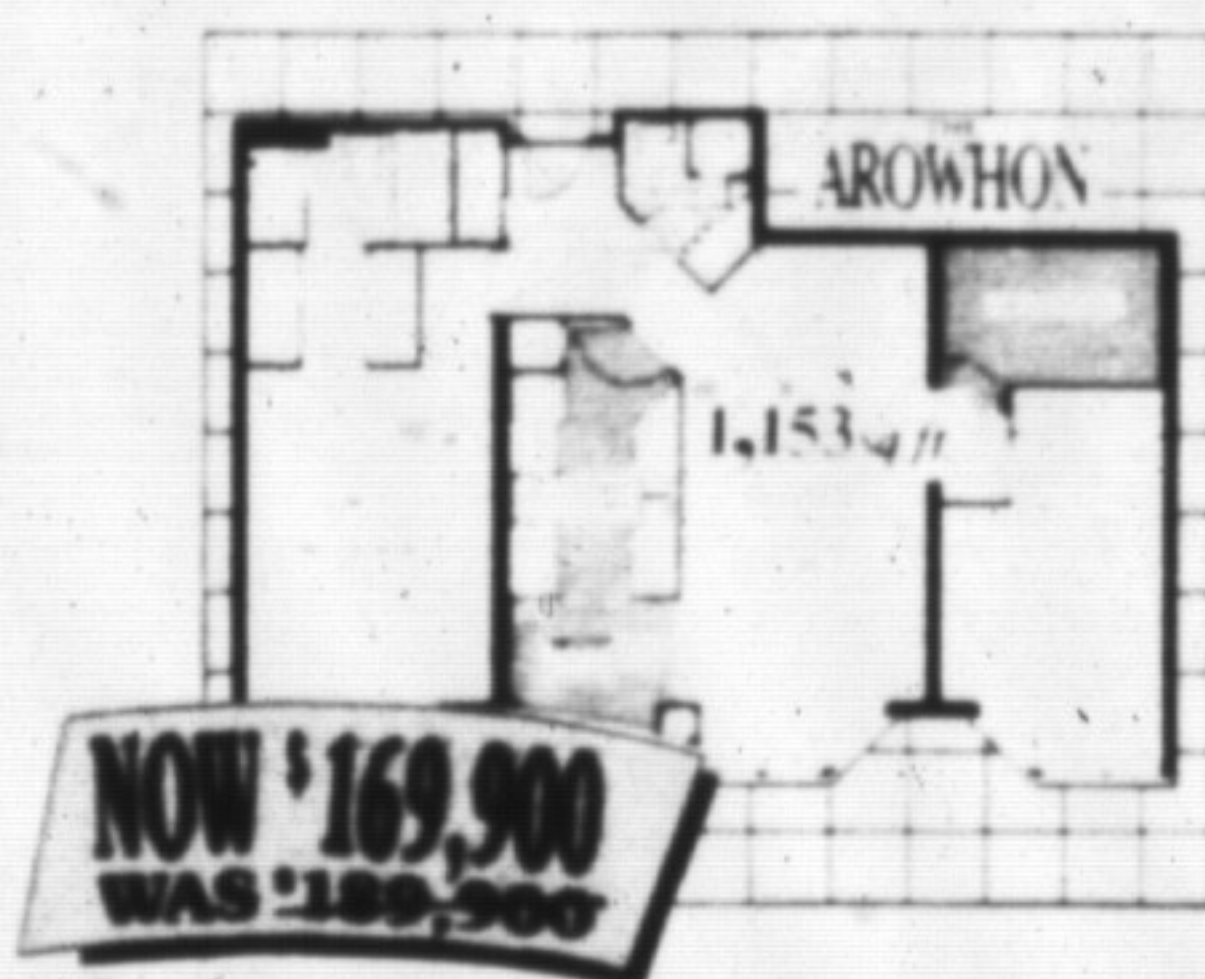
However, such Milton-based resolutions aren't binding on either body.

The proposed detour route around the closed overpass includes Thompson Road, Main Street East and the James Snow Parkway.

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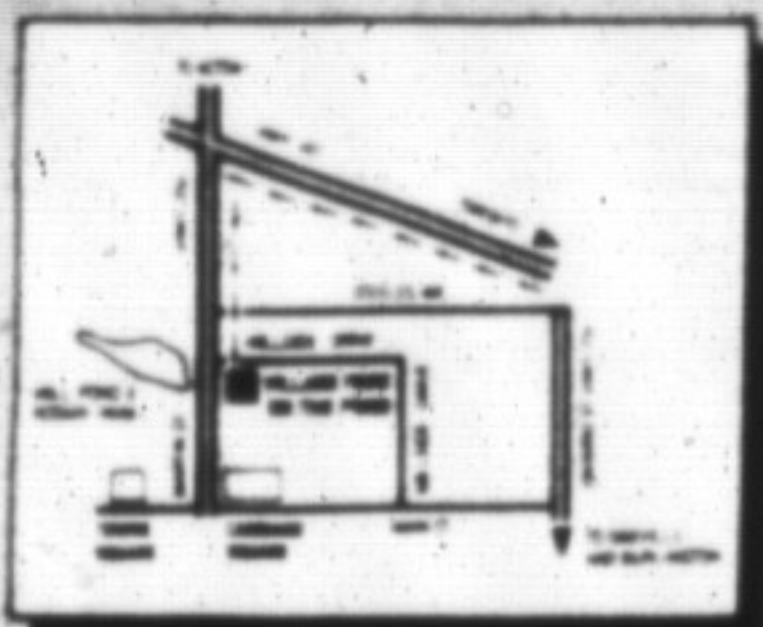
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