

# Province will keep eye on deal

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115 in Clarington, and will consult with private builders on some future links leading 407's traffic south to Hwy. 401.

Yesterday, Sampson said he expected bidders, recognizing a longer toll road brings in more money, will put all three extensions into a deal.

"It's a completed highway that generates revenue," he argued.

Mayor Don Cousens and Regional Councillor Gord Landon were encouraged to hear Sampson promise the eastern and western extensions would start construction at the same time.

"The commitments are getting better each time we talk," Cousens said.

"I have a sense that by April we'll see shovels in the ground."

Sampson also confirmed the 407 transitway — a separate corridor running the road's entire length and promised as a fast route for buses — is not part of the sale.

The province will keep the land and could build the route "somewhere down the road," said the minister, who admitted it has no plan to do it.

Sampson said the buyer will be required to widen the highway whenever "congestion volume triggers" in the deal are reached.

He also said the public's input into the highway's operation would be important, but didn't specify how.

Landon said he'd like other "triggers" put in the deal to build extra interchanges on 407, if they are needed.

The town and region have campaigned, so far unsuccessfully, for a full interchange at Woodbine Avenue.

Sampson said he would drive on Woodbine's current partial interchange last week with Markham MPP Dave Tsubouchi.

Anti-407 activist Jim Robb said the province is backing away from public transit. Meetings on the design of the extension were required for its environmental approval, he said, but none have been announced.

Sampson said the 407 was designed to be a "bypass highway," so it needs to be completed.

"You can't have a bypass highway that dumps them off in a residential area," he said. "That makes no sense whatsoever."

The province completed the highway to Hwy. 48, but had the final two kilometres beyond McCowan Road mothballed to protect Main Street, Markham.

Yesterday, Ward 5 Councillor Jack Heath said he'd never support any opening at the Hwy. 48 exit "until they put the shovel in the ground" for the Brock Road extension.



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