

Mayor backs Hwy. 48 proposal

Roundabouts 'working' on Ontario highways

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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A roundabout is being considered for the Hwy. 48 and Bloomington Road intersection.

The Ministry of Transportation is conducting a preliminary design study and class environmental assessment for improvements to the intersection.

"I think it will work," said Mayor Wayne Emmerson, who has never made it a secret he wants more of them throughout Whitchurch-Stouffville.

"We have to start to do something because no one is stopping at red lights anymore and there have been a lot of accidents at that intersection and hopefully it will curb it all," he said.

The study was not precipitated by any one event. Whenever the MTO looks to improve its roads, roundabouts are one of the considerations, according to Astrid Poei, communications co-ordinator for the MTO's central region.

Since 2009, the MTO has constructed six roundabouts on provincial roads in Picton, Mattawa, the junction of highways 5/8/52 in Flamborough/Hamilton, highways 401 and 3 in the Windsor area and in the new Hwy. 26 Clearview/Collingwood/Wasaga Beach juncture, according to Ms Poei.

One on Hwy. 406 in Welland is expected to open later this year.

"When it's something new, they're a little apprehensive. But once we show them what you can do, I think they are more accepting," Ms Poei said of drivers.

SOUND OFF

How do you feel about Stouffville's roundabouts? E-mail us at jmason@yrmg.com

The MTO considers installing roundabouts because they are capable of handling more traffic. If no one is in it, you just keep driving.

They are also more environmentally-friendly than stop signs or lights because of less idling time, according to Ms Poei.

Speed is another factor. Vehicles slow to between 30 and 40 km/h within the provincial roundabouts, according to Ms Poei.

"Roundabouts have been shown to improve safety at intersections by reducing crash risk and severity," according to a 2010 discussion paper on roundabouts and commercial vehicles by the Ontario Trucking Association.

One local gravel pit operations manager is not completely sold on them.

"In all honesty, my trucks would try to avoid it," said Lorie Andrews, of Central Sand and Gravel, which is located on Conc. 3 north of Wagg Road.

"A roundabout is only going to complicate matters," she said.

Ms Andrews also noted, however, "we promote anything that will assist in traffic safety and traffic flow".

"In assuring a low travel speed on the circulatory roadway through deflection, commercial vehicle oper-



SUN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Roundabouts, including this one on Millard Street, aren't new to Stouffville. Mayor Wayne Emmerson is a big fan of them.

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Lorie Andrews,
Central Sand and Gravel

ators have had difficulty maneuvering through the roundabout without damaging their vehicle or adjacent fixed objects associated with their design," according to the discussion paper.

Central Sand and Gravel has about 15 trucks a day on the road in the winter. That bumps up to around 30 in the summer.

But they aren't the only sand

and gravel company operating in what Ms Andrews called "the heart of gravel country". There are at least 14 local operators, plus those from Durham and areas north and south of here, along with commercial vehicles carrying goods for retailers such as NoFrills and Walmart.

Ms Andrews said she hopes the MTO traffic studies were conducted in the summer, not winter so the study reflects an accurate picture of the intersection's volume.

The design study for the Hwy. 48 and Bloomington Road intersection is expected to be wrapped up in May. That is when the MTO will know if a roundabout is feasible or not, according to Ms Poei.

"I keep beating the drum. I think it's the way to go," Mr. Emmerson said.

Whitchurch-Stouffville News Digest

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Lieutenant Governor's wife at Women's Day luncheon

Ruth Ann Onley will be the guest of honour at this year's International Women's Day luncheon hosted by the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce.

The luncheon takes place tomorrow at the Meadowbrook Golf and Country Club.

Mrs. Onley, who is the wife of Lt. Gov. David Onley, is a Christian singer who grew up on an apple farm near Simcoe.

In 1982, she earned the Vista Rising Star award from the Canadian Country Music Association.

Mrs. Onley has also been awarded the Officer of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal and the Viceregal Spouse's Badge.

International Women's Day, which is March 8, is a global day of recognition of women's past, present and future contributions to economic, political and social achievements.

It is a national holiday in Bulgaria, China, Russia and Vietnam.

The luncheon runs from noon to 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$40 for chamber members, \$50 for non-members and can be purchased by calling 905-642-4227.

CORRECTION

Police hours misstated

The story Police, firefighters continue to bank sick days, which appeared in the March 2 edition, should have stated York Regional Police Association president John Miskiw will only benefit from 1,040 hours when he retires, even though he has banked more than 4,000 hours.

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