

The Burlington Post
InsideHalton.comm.

Sep 29, 2010

Hudak forgot to mention price tag of MPH

Re: Hudak promises mid-pen highway if elected, (the Post, Sept. 23)

To read of Mr. Hudak's preference for the mid-peninsula highway is not a surprise. What is a surprise is the exclusion of the cost of the highway. Based on Citizen's Opposed to Paving the Escarpment's (COPE) review of the latest study it would be approximately \$8 billion-plus.

This information is readily available to anyone who has talked to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) representatives at the Public Information Centres. What was also clear from the study is that widening existing corridors is cheaper than building new highways.

With the Niagara to GTA process, the amount of effort expended by the MTO has dwarfed that expended on the MPH. The underlying problem with the MPH process, announced by the Harris government in 2002, was that it started on the assumption that a highway would be built then a study — partly paid for by Niagara Region — was completed that said a highway was needed.

Two of COPE's concerns with the MPH was that the data did not support the need for a highway and that other options had not been considered. For the Niagara to Hamilton portion of the highway, the MTO has now come to the same conclusion: a new highway is not needed.

Our second concern remains. What is also apparent from COPE's review of the NGTA 2010 draft study is that a highway between Ancaster and north Burlington is not needed.

Rail was not given serious consideration; collaboration between the federal and provincial governments did not happen.

Also, other forgotten life-sustaining issues that were given little thought include: the impact of a highway to the agricultural industry, air quality, the effect of noise pollution and the Niagara Escarpment ecosystems.

Given that there is no need for a highway, the province is cash-strapped after a major global economic meltdown and global warming is real, Mr. Hudak's stance firmly planted in the past is most disturbing.

Susan McMaster, Co-chair COPE