

MTO rejects calls by MPP Jones, Mono to improve Hwy 10

By Tom Claridge

Efforts by Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones and the Town of Mono to have Ontario's Ministry of Transportation address the safety and traffic needs of Highway 10 north of Orangeville appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

On a holiday weekend that saw huge traffic backups at Primrose and Shelburne, the Citizen received copies of communications Ms. Jones had with the Ministry.

Her letter to Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca, dated March 24, reminded him that she and Mono representatives had met with MTO officials last December to discuss Highway 10 projects and improvements north of Orangeville to Highway 89.

At the meeting, Mono's presentation had focused on problem areas and intersections they wanted the MTO to address.

Since that meeting, the Town has received minor feedback regarding road signage upgrades only. MTO staff committed to reviewing traffic data and to date the Town has not received any feedback on that review.

Advising the minister that she was getting many letters and calls from constituents who share with me their experiences as witnesses to the driving conditions along this stretch of highway, she added: I appreciated the time your ministry staff spent on this issue in December but I would like to ensure that the Town of Mono's requests that were expressed during the meeting are responded to by the MTO.

Is the review undertaken by ministry staff complete? When will the Town of Mono receive the review findings? I look forward to your response.

The only response she received wasn't from the Minister or anyone in his Queen's Park office who had any first-hand knowledge of the situation faced by drivers daily, and particularly on long weekends, in dealing with a roadway that has seen no significant improvement since the highway was paved in the 1920s.

All the MPP's office received was a letter dated June 6 from the ministry's West Region office in London, advising that the contract for resurfacing the highway between Orangeville and Primrose had already been tendered. (Since then, the contract was let to Aecon, which has begun the work, which apparently includes provision of a left-turn lane at Mono's 20 Sideroad.)

Ministry staff have reviewed the concerns raised by the Town of Mono at the November 28, 2016 meeting, said the West Region director. For some of the concerns within the scope of the current project, measures have been added to the design. This includes paving the shoulder across from the Shell Gas Station north of Mono Road 20, as well as drainage improvements south of Mono Road 20.

As for concerns raised concerning the intersection at Camilla, where calls have been made for a lower speed limit and/or installation of traffic signals, the director said a review showed that although the available sight distances from the intersection were lower than design standards, the stopping sight distance available on Highway 10 is sufficient for a design speed of 90 km/h, which exceeds the minimum for an 80 km/h posted speed. There is no above-average collision history at this intersection.

As a result, improvements to enhance sightlines from Mono Road 8 are not included within the scope of the current construction contract.

As for the backups caused by having only one left-turn lane at Primrose, Ministry staff are planning to review traffic operations this summer when volumes typically increase at this intersection. This intersection is beyond the limits of the current Highway 10 project between Orangeville and Primrose. As a result, any improvements identified would be planned outside of this project.

Once this review has been completed, staff from West Region will contact the Town of Mono to provide an update on the concerns they have raised.

The letter provided no information on any traffic counts the London office may have conducted on the section of highway in support of its contention that there is no need in the foreseeable future for the highway to be widened or a bypass provided at Shelburne.

Lavinia Trask, assistant in the MPP's constituency office, said that in addition to the written communications, Ms. Jones asked me to pass along that she had met with the Minister and the Town of Mono, requesting further activity.

In a telephone interview Wednesday, Ms. Jones indicated she was most concerned about the situation in Shelburne, which she described as an anomaly not found anywhere else in the province a main intersection where northbound trucks had to be given extra room to navigate the sharp right turn.

Declaring that a north bypass of the town should have been built long ago, and that Shelburne is likely Canada's fastest-growing town, she said time is running out with northward growth potentially barring a short bypass between the Shelburne cemetery and the former Highway 24.

Ms. Jones also deplored the apparent refusal of MTO to provide her or Mono with appropriate traffic data.

?The last data they provided on Highway 89 in Shelburne was based on a survey on a Wednesday in January, not on a summer weekend.?

Asked whether she had raised with the Minister the possibility of transferring jurisdiction over Highway 10 to MTO's Central Region, which already has jurisdiction as far north as Highway 9, Ms. Jones said she hadn't but would consider doing so..

Promising to keep working for the needed improvements, she added: ?It never hurts to keep repeating the message.?