

# Jerry J. Ouellette, MPP Oshawa

## Summer means Road Construction



Well it is summer and many people are on the highways connecting this great province we have.

While driving, look closely at the road number signs, such as Highway 401. If you see a crown above the numbering this means the road is owned, maintained and is the responsibility of the Province of Ontario. The non-crowned roads are the responsibility of the region or municipality they reside in.

One of the biggest concerns around is “why is there so much road construction during the summer time? Well the answer is fairly simple. The government budgeting process is such that budgets are issued beginning April 1st and allocations for construction processes begin usually after that time. By the time the tenders are reviewed and contracts issued, construction begins about summertime. Another factor in this process is also quite significant. The commuting traffic drops an average of 20% during July and August as people take vacation. With the 20% reduction you end up reducing impacts on traffic flows and industry when doing construction during periods when July and August roll around.

Another factor that is seldom realized is that the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) operates on a five-year plan. This means that over the course of five years, the provincial road network plan is laid out and MTO prioritizes new road construction and redevelopment of existing road infrastructure. This lays out a basic direction on how the MTO is going to spend and upgrade or maintain roads.

Sometimes you will see roads or infrastructure take a perceived questionable amount of time to complete. This “occasionally” allows the expenditure to be stretched out over more than a single year’s budgeting process. That is not to say the complexity of the development doesn’t warrant extended construction time but when unforeseen delays arise you have to accommodate that aspect as well. Previous articles have laid out time lines necessary to review which many times fall well outside a 5 year period. Many people don’t realize that Provincial roads are built on a twenty-year standard. This essentially means that the life expectancy is twenty years from the time a car first drives on the new road to the time when the entire reconstruction is expected to take place. Hence all the methods of trying to extend the roads life like washing them.

Gridlock adds millions of dollars to the cost of delivering goods let alone the amount of emissions to the atmosphere. Public transit like G.O. certainly aids in many ways. Highway expansion will also greatly assist in reducing gridlock problems, and that’s another story yet to come.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry J. Ouellette". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops for the letters.

**Jerry J. Ouellette  
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