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Dufferin County council considers future Shelburne bypass

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Plans for a bypass around the Town of Shelburne were an area of focus during Dufferin County Council's most recent meeting.

During their meeting on May 9, Dufferin County Council received a report seeking approval for a specific route for the Shelburne bypass in order to advance the project.

According to the report, the preferred routing option for the Shelburne bypass connects to Highway 10 North of the Town using 4th Line Amaranth/Melancthon to the west and connects to Highway 10/89 east and west of the Town using County Rd. 11 and 30 Side Road, Amaranth.

Dufferin County Council adopted its Master Transportation Plan, which included the recommendation for a Shelburne bypass, in October of 2023 and submitted the document to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH).

The need for a bypass in Shelburne has been a much-discussed topic in the community for a number of years. In 2019, representatives from the Town of Shelburne presented truck bypass options to the Minister of Transportation at the annual Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference in Toronto.

According to the report, the County of Dufferin has received comments from the Ministry of Transportation indicating that the bypass around Shelburne is not considered a priority for the province and is not part of any future enhancement plans.

Several councillors also noted that the MTO has indicated that a bypass in Shelburne will not be considered until a specified route has been given.

The Shelburne bypass includes the involvement of three municipalities ? Shelburne, Melancthon, and Amaranth. Concerns were raised by the neighbouring community regarding the route decision.

?This council supported not designating one route as part of our transportation master plan and since we made that decision there has been no further information coming forward,? said Amaranth Coun. Gail Little. ?I felt that to designate one route at this time is not appropriate.?

?We have some concerns as well, but we're also trying to bring forth some suggestions on how to address our concerns,? said Melancthon Mayor Darren White. ?Shelburne needs a bypass, that's a fact ? like it or not.?

Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills explained the town's need for a bypass.

?This is by far one of, if not, the top priorities in our municipality. When we hear concerns from members of our community, truck traffic congestion in our downtown ranks at or near the top of any list,? said Mills.

Mills also expressed concerns about delaying the process for long-term discussion as well as making changes to the route based on preference rather than facts.

?I'm not prepared to defer this indefinitely, but I am prepared to defer it on a short-term basis to allow some discussion to take place,? he added. ?I don't think we can stray entirely from something that has already been demonstrated as having technical merit. I prefer that we can find a route that all three municipalities that are subject to this, are happy with and can live with in the long term.

This is something we're going to have to live with for a while so let's do it right, but let's make sure that we're basing this on technical facts and not just on personal preferences.?

Amaranth Mayor Chris Gerrits noted that the suggested route does not take into account future transportation plans for the Township of Amaranth. According to Gerrits, a Transportation Plan has been budgeted to be included in the municipality's 2025 budget.

?I don't think that we have the time to wait until Amaranth does a transportation master plan in 2025. I don't think that's a reasonable expectation,? commented Orangeville Mayor, Lisa Post. ?The data has been done that tells us what the best route would be and I understand that to Amaranth that's not what your preferred route is, so I'm happy to do additional consultation. I think that makes sense, but I think we have to have a firm timeline on it.?

A motion was passed to defer the matter until Dufferin County Council's next meeting in June.