

REPORT FROM CITY HALL CITY RECREATION MASTER PLAN AND COLONEL TALBOT ROAD AND 401

By Ed Corrigan
Councillor, Ward 7

After many years of neglect and inaction, Ward 7 has recently been the beneficiary of a number of City of London capital projects. Investments have been made in a Byron fire hall, a Westmount library, replacement of the Springbank footbridge, upgrading Storybook Gardens and making Springbank Park a year-round facility. Additional projects include a splash pad in Lambeth and a new roof for the Lambeth Arena.

Further major investments in Ward 7 include the Oxford Street bridge and the extension which will help alleviate Byron traffic congestion. Upgrades to Commissioners Road and to Springbank Drive are two of the other major road works benefitting Ward 7.

Over the past few years London has invested heavily in major capital projects such as the John Labatt Centre, the Downtown Library, Covent Garden Market, Western Fair Sports Centre and the London Convention Centre. In total about \$105 million has been invested in these “civic pride” projects.

The new focus, however, is on the local neighbourhoods. The good news for Ward 7 and south-west London is that, the new Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan for 2003-2017, sets as its first priority the construction of a two-pad arena, a community centre with a pool, a gymnasium and space for youth and seniors, in south-west London. Masonville is also set to get a new community centre. Both areas are under serviced for recreation facilities.

In the 2003 budget adopted by City Council, \$6,550,000 was allocated to implement the Master Plan. In terms of long range capital planning \$10,000,000 has been tentatively earmarked for the next four years to bring the Plan into reality. The projected cost for the Recreation Master Plan in the short term, is \$66.5 million. For 2008-2012, \$35.1 million is being added and \$19.1 million for the period 2013-2017. These investments will greatly improve London’s recreation facilities and programs.

COLONEL TALBOT/401 INTERCHANGE

According to the London City Police, the most dangerous road in the City of London is the Colonel Talbot/401 Interchange. Three fatalities occurred in November 2002. The City is examining the problem and is asking the province for help in improving the safety of the interchange. The proposal to set up an Advance Border Clearing Centre near the intersection has raised additional concerns. The Canadian Transit Company is offering the service on Littlewood Drive which will allow truckers bound for the border at Sarnia and Windsor to have paperwork cleared in advance.

To access the service trucks exiting the 401 must drive diagonally from the ramp to a side road across Colonel Talbot Road. The problem area is just south of Highway 401 at the intersection of Littlewood Drive and Colonel Talbot Road. Trucks coming off the westbound lanes of the 401 only have a short distance to get into the left-turn lane at Littlewood Drive.

City Staff, including City Engineer Peter Steblin, Councillor Susan Eagle, myself and a representative of the Ministry of Transportation met with stakeholders on March 14, 2003 to discuss the interchange. With the Advance Border Clearing Centre, it now may be possible to access the \$300 million in Federal Government Border infrastructure money to help alleviate traffic congestion at the Windsor and Sarnia border crossings and to fix the 401/Colonel Talbot interchange. The problem is complex, but the City is committed to making immediate short term improvements and finding long term solutions.

I would like to hear your views on these issues and other City related matters. I thank the hundreds of people who have contacted me on City related issues over the last few weeks. You can reach me by email at ecorriga@city.london.on.ca, by phone at City Hall 661-1558 or at home 652-0973.