

COULD THE PROPOSED HIGHWAY #1 BYPASS IN REGINA CITY LIMITS BE THE
NEXT DISASTER WAITING TO HAPPEN?

Have you ever survived a car accident – recalling every detail, knowing there was nothing you could do to avoid it? I have the terrible feeling that someone will be in that position with a fair degree of regularity on this stretch of road, and I just can't sit by and watch it happen when I think it can be prevented. Can you?

If left unchallenged, I believe we will soon construct one of the most dangerous high level overpasses drivers have ever seen. Our portion of the Trans-Canada Highway may very well become a proverbial 'Highway Through Hell', with the Provincial Capital City at the end of the line. The provincial Government will spend 1.2 BILLION DOLLARS on this short sighted plan, and Saskatchewan will once again be viewed as unable to keep up with the big boy provinces.

As you may be aware, there is a plan to build a well needed Trans Canada by-pass development around the City of Regina. On the east end, the province has chosen the location to be Tower Road, or actually, after some persuasion from local developers, 400 meters off Tower Road, nearer the railway tracks. There are plans for some of the lanes to be as much as 30 feet up off the bald prairie surrounding it, but close enough that the curving overpasses will cross the rail lines and high voltage power lines. The complexity of the overpass creates high speed curves over the tracks which can be fatal if bad drivers, poor road conditions, and a railway line carrying long unit trains filled with highly combustible oil from the Bakken play, (the same oil that exploded at Lac Megantic) meet accidentally. Truck drivers now already are hesitant to navigate the Belle Plain Bridge on windy days, and it is a one level, 20 foot high, bridge: imagine the wind at 30 feet taking a truck over the edge onto the railroad tracks – or onto the drivers beside them? With the closest access for emergency vehicles 4 Km back at Arcola Avenue or 5 Km up at Pilot Butte access, precious life saving equipment is far away.

We have attended Open Houses and meetings with officials, however feel that no input has been allowed: the meetings were informational in nature, not allowing for input as much as advising of decisions already made. Dissenting opinions, while many and well articulated, have been dismissed out-of-hand. The Government has said that 'concerns were addressed' and that highway development 'takes concerns into account', however complete answers to the concerns raised have not been forthcoming, and it is not clear that sufficient weight has indeed been given to safety and growth of the City. It appears that a checklist of 'things to do' has been completed, but no real input has been allowed.

We believe the location of the Trans Canada Highway By-pass at Tower Road is seriously flawed from many perspectives, and our concerns are for safety, to not hinder short and long-term growth of the City, environmental concerns, air, light and noise pollution. An informal CTV News Poll showed 85% of respondents were opposed to the location, and felt one further east would be better. Geoff Leo of CBC also did a story showing that the present highway engineers are inexperienced, and their application of 'book examples' do not hold up well in the real world.

We are frustrated by continued attempts to get clear answers to the many safety

concerns and valid questions raised by many individuals, including those losing their homes, businesses losing land and access, truckers and commuters and other users of the East Regina By-pass, to the potential for a similar rail catastrophe to occur here in Regina. If the government is so sure of their decision, why would they not release the functional study to the public, in its entirety, **THAT WAS PAID FOR BY TAXPAYERS?** We have been reassured by The Mayor, the Department of Highways Minister, and the Premier of Saskatchewan, that, although vaguely referenced at best, 'all concerns have been addressed'. Perhaps we should take their condescending answers at face value, and simply hope for the best.... But then, it is difficult for those of us who care about safety and accountability to turn a blind eye to all those families in Lac Megantic who buried their children, wives, husbands and friends, who still stand hoping that those responsible will in fact be held accountable.

I hope I am not the one killed by a blast at the overpass over the overpass over the tracks and high voltage power lines; I hope my family is not in the vehicle that hits the ice on the high level curved overpass and slides off onto an oil train below; I hope I am proved wrong that this is the wrong location and design for the east terminal of the by-pass, and I hope that if I am correct, the appropriate authorities will welcome my documentation attempting to **prevent accidents**, and you absolving yourself of the requirement to disclose information publicly and explain your decisions.

I hope that putting the profits of the land developers ahead of safety, economy, and long-term city growth is worth it for you. I hope the Aurora Shopping District will include emergency vehicle stations so that ambulances and fire trucks can mobilize quickly to accidents on the high level overpasses.

I hope that you might see the sense of simply looking again at the interchange that will make the East Regina area safer and more economical to build. I hope that the cost of a second sober look at locating the interchanges at Gravel Pit Road and the Great Plains Access is considered to be money well spent when compared to the money that will have to be spent to recover from a catastrophe. I hope that while some may say the odds of such a catastrophe occurring are rare, you realize that every week someone wins the lottery, and every month there is a train derailment and every day drivers make stupid mistakes. I hope you will put safety and sense ahead of whatever it is now motivating you, because I can't imagine why you would not want the best for our city, our province, the Canadian taxpayers, and the 23,000 vehicles per day who utilize the route. I am saddened that those who can, and should, prevent it, are not.

We must remember the lessons taught in Lac Megantic and the Swift Current Broncos' tragedy. There must be room for input and debate in how the east bypass develops so that the dangerous curves and high level overpasses do not cause another tragedy here. We have an opportunity to ensure that the 23,000 drivers a day who approach the Queen City via the Trans Canada Highway are able to do so safely and efficiently.

I hope.....

You can **DO SOMETHING BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!!!** Please, take a second look.