

THE BARRIE EXAMINER

PUBLISHER/GENERAL MANAGER: David Zilstra
EDITOR: Brian Rodnick
A division of Sun Media
705-726-6537

comment

Ontario's plan for improved infrastructure

Thriving communities, a better quality of life, more jobs for families, new opportunities for businesses and an innovative, prosperous province that can compete in the global market — this is the Liberal government's vision for Ontario in 2021 and beyond — laid out in Building Together, Ontario's Long-Term Infrastructure Plan.

Aileen Carroll
QUEEN'S PARK

This new plan will guide investment decisions and planning so the right public infrastructure is in place to meet the challenges and opportunities of the next decade.

The Ontario of 2021 will be very different from the Ontario of today. Our population will grow in our region and decline in others. Our economy will become more global and service-oriented. And, our climate will continue to change. That is why Ontarians need to plan for our future.

Dealing effectively with these changes, while remaining responsible to Ontario's taxpayers, calls for creative ways of developing, using and maintaining our public infrastructure.

When first elected, the Liberal-led government immediately took action by recognizing Ontario's infrastructure deficit. Since 2003, we have invested \$62 billion in infrastructure. This 10-year plan builds on the Liberals' unprecedented investments which have helped to repair, replace and modernize hospitals, schools, community centres and public transit; all while creating hundreds of thousands of jobs for families across the province.

Recent infrastructure investments right here in Barrie have created and supported local jobs. And we have a new Fire and Emergency Service Headquarters; an upgraded Lake Simcoe Regional Airport; an upgraded Eastview Area; the upgrading of 13 city wells; over \$10 million in road and bridge upgrades to show for it.

But our work is not done. We need to continue to build Ontario for our ever-changing future. Building Together is a framework to ensure that the government and its infrastructure partners are on the same page. The plan needs to be predictable, yet fiscally responsible.

That is why the plan includes a \$35-billion commitment to public infrastructure in the first three years of the Long-Term Infrastructure Plan. It also includes an expanded role for Infrastructure Ontario, which has a record of bringing projects in on-time and on-budget.

The Liberal government will focus on economic infrastructure such as the highways and bridges that help transport people and goods; the public transit that relieves congestion and gets families to work and school on time; the digital and broadband networks that connect us and our businesses to the world; and the colleges and universities that train and educate people for jobs that keep our economy moving at the pace of global change.

The plan also ensures the right infrastructure supports other important public services like schools, hospitals and courthouses, as our population grows, ages and diversifies.

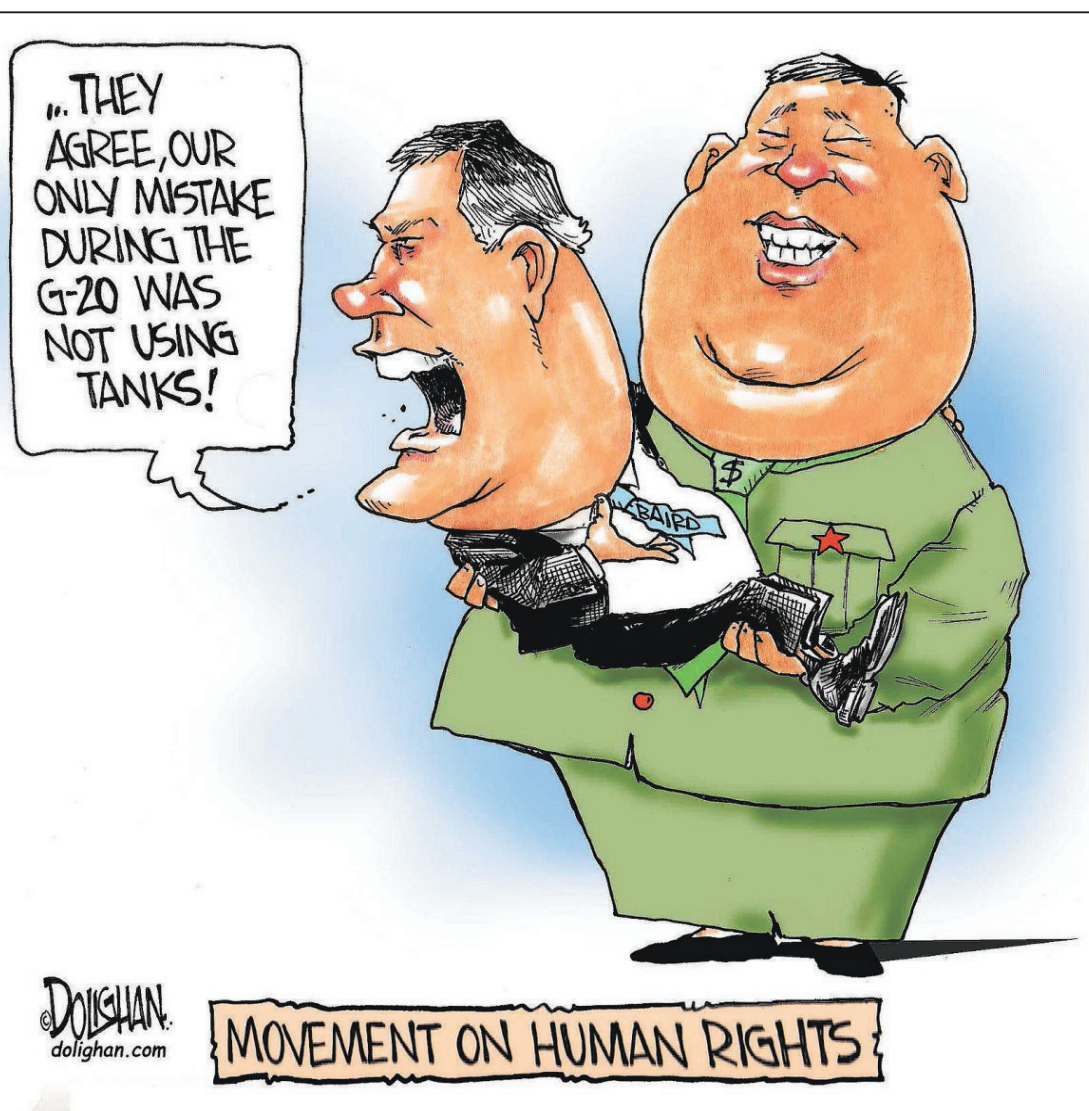
We are all aware of the benefits of investing in public infrastructure. We need look no further than the impact of the Royal Victoria Hospital expansion and building a cancer care centre; two new buildings at Georgian College; and millions of dollars in road improvements and public transit projects have had on our community.

Keeping our infrastructure in good repair is just as important as building new. That's why the plan also includes tools that help communities maintain existing infrastructure such as water and wastewater systems.

Public infrastructure is the backbone of a modern society. With this new plan, we have a sustainable, responsible roadmap for Ontario's future. We look forward to reaping its benefits for years to come.

To learn more about Building Together, you can visit www.ontario.ca/buildingtogether.

Aileen Carroll is Barrie's MPP.



canoe.ca | BLOGS

View from the Hill
at blog.canoe.ca

our opinion

Tennis proposal hit the net one too many times

Somebody, maybe everybody, messed up the planning and funding of a proposed tennis dome in Barrie.

And not just because \$400,000 in federal/provincial funding now seems to be lost for good — although it's never a good thing when a municipality misses an opportunity to get back money taxed, in part, from its own citizens.

It's also not just a matter of supply and demand for a recreation service, because that is bound to change in a growing city like Barrie, or that public money shouldn't be used to compete against a private business, in this case Barrie North Winter Tennis, located just north of the city.

Or that a government agency, Recreation Infrastructure Canada (RiNC), first approved \$400,000 for this project — which had building costs of \$600,000, plus — then took the money away.

Or that Barrie Community Tennis Club (BCTC), the recipient of the RiNC grant, changed locations where it wanted the dome like new balls at Wimbledon.

And that no one at City Hall believed the tennis club could raise its \$200,000-plus share of the project.

Or that city officials believed it

would be not only a costly venture to build, but to maintain and operate as well.

The tennis dome project certainly looked like a long shot right from the very beginning. Even after the RiNC funding was announced in June of 2009, there was no certainty.

The first proposed location, Queen's Park, where the BCTC plays and has a clubhouse, was essentially rejected by the neighbourhood. Residents there didn't want a big, white dome in their backyard — even in winter, when the snow makes everything white anyway.

Lennox Park, Lampman Lane Park, Painswick Park and even a city-owned building at 79 Bell Farm Rd. were proposed, but there were problems at these locations as well.

Ray Demiray, tennis club president, seemed unfazed by city council rejections, changing locations, altering plans, etc. He had \$400,000 in his back pocket and knew that no local politician wants to lose that much in federal/provincial money.

But not enough city councillors bought into his plans, or the fiscal arrangements.

And when Demiray had clearly had enough of what he considered the runaround at city hall, he partnered with Mapleview Community Church Campus to build the tennis

dome there.

That plan ended when RiNC officials withdrew the grant, although they have not said why.

Demiray says RiNC questioned the tennis club's ability to finance the dome at Mapleview, and/or wasn't prepared to support a project not on city owned land.

Clearly, there's no single person, or group, on which the blame should be laid. Everyone shares some of it. If there was to be a partnership for this project, it never materialized.

Perhaps the city dodged a bullet on this one. Past partnerships with recreation groups haven't worked out, at least financially (see Barrie Sports Complex). Maybe the dome would have become a financial white elephant.

And the inevitable competition this dome would have created with Barrie North Winter Tennis would not have been a fair fight.

But that \$400,000 was just sitting there. Now it will go to some other community.

The next time this type of money is available for this type of project, there needs to be a partnership between politicians, city staff and recreation groups at the very beginning.

Waiting and hoping won't get it done.

Lasting efforts in Afghanistan

First deployed to the region shortly after the tragic events of 9-11, our combat troops are finally coming home from Afghanistan.

There were many challenges we faced in this decade-long United Nations operation, and Canadians should take pride in the outstanding job done by our brave men and women in uniform.

Patrick Brown
PARLIAMENT HILL

Especially heartfelt is the ultimate sacrifice made by those 157 fallen soldiers and the many more seriously injured.

Words cannot express how indebted our nation is to those who put themselves in harm's way and how grateful our country is to the families left behind by those who gave their lives.

This mission has accomplished many things and those families should know that their loved one was an integral part of making our world a better place.

In 2001, only 700,000 Afghan children, almost none of whom were female, attended school. Today, over six million young people are enrolled in school and one third of them are girls.

In 2000, less than 9% of the population had access to health care. Today, nearly 70% of Afghans have primary health-care services within two hours' walking distance of their homes.

Along with our international partners, we have vaccinated more than seven million Afghan children against polio.

In 2009 alone, Canadian funding helped the World Food Programme (WFP) provide more than 275,000 tonnes of food to nine million Afghans in need. Canada is currently the second-largest donor to the WFP in Afghanistan.

More than 500 square kilometres of land has been released back to Afghans, free of mines and the remnants of war. Since 2007, more than half a million vulnerable Afghans living in mine-affected areas have received mine-risk education.

From 2005 to 2009, less than 3,000 Canadian troops were given lead-country responsibility for holding the ground in Kandahar Province (roughly the size of New Brunswick) and preventing the Taliban from re-taking what had been its strategic heartland.

Following the overthrow of the Taliban, the Afghan National Army (ANA) was officially instituted in 2002. Over the next eight years, the ANA grew from roughly 17,000 troops to 134,000 and is on track to meeting its expansion goal of 171,600 troops by October 2011. Canada, along with our international partners, has helped to train and mentor about 50,000 Afghan troops.

With the end of the combat mission behind us, Canada's new role in Afghanistan will build on the accomplishments of our campaign over the past 10 years. Our objective in Afghanistan remains the same: to help build a more secure, stable and self-sufficient Afghanistan that is no longer a safe haven for terrorists.

Roughly 950 Canadian Forces non-combat trainers and support personnel will be deployed to Afghanistan to take part in Operation ATTENTION. Their focus will be further investments in the future of Afghan children and youth, advancing security, the rule of law and human rights, and helping deliver humanitarian assistance.

The Afghan experience is a true testimony to the spirit of what it means to be Canadian. Hard work, determination, leadership and compassion are fundamental threads in the fabric that makes our society what it is. There is still a long way to go for the people of Afghanistan, but at least now they have a chance.

It is so wonderful to see the local group, 'Operation Hero' continuing to give back to military families by raising scholarship funds to attend Georgian College. Also, please join members of Operation Hero and me on Friday, July 29 at South Shore Centre — Main Stage for the annual 'Salute to the Troops' ceremony beginning at 7:30 p.m.

I hope all citizens can take a moment out of their busy days to reflect on the sacrifices made by our military and their families, and when you have the chance to do so, please take the opportunity to thank them for all they do.

It will mean the world to them.

Patrick Brown is Barrie's MP

quote
of the day

The excitement of the recently launched BCL has been deeply dampened by this unfortunate incident."

Arjun Batra, the Barrie Cricket League president, on vandals ripping up the cricket pitch at Maitland Park in Barrie and tossing it in a corner ditch.

Being clean can harm: our dirty little secret

As a teen, I saw the 'Law of Conservation of Dirt' on a friend's fridge: 'To get anything clean, you must get something else dirty. But you can get everything dirty without getting anything clean.'

It's wry wit stuck with me for 25 years, but I have since realized an unintended, underlying truth: the harm we do to our Earth, and ourselves, in the name of 'cleaning' is a dirty little secret.

Harsh chemicals used to remove spots, stains or smudges get in our water supply; fragrances added to give off a 'clean' smell can do damage to our bodies; antibacterial additives in our bar and hand soaps contribute to the evolution of untreatable 'supergerms.'

Of course, the other dirty

Erich Jacoby-Hawkins
ROOT ISSUES

secret is the energy we spend creating and transporting chemicals, then disposing of them in our sewage treatment plants after use.

Wouldn't it be great if we could solve these problems all at once? Perhaps we can.

For years, our family has used home-made cleansers based on simple grocery-store items like vinegar and baking soda. We've found them just as good at scouring counters and floors as the latest 'new and improved' chemical/fragrance blend.

But if you're not a home mixer, a growing variety of environmentally friendly non-toxic cleaners are on store shelves, pre-mixed and customized for dishes, windows, toilets or whatever else needs cleaning.

But we spend much of our time outside the home, at school or work, in shopping centres, offices or hospitals. How they clean affects both our health and our planet, yet they must also meet strict standards of cleanliness and can't take chances with unproven products.

Well, the good news is there are green methods for industrial cleaning, too. One local distributor is Barrie's Superior Solutions, which is hosting its first annual Green Cleaning Solutions Open House on Monday, July 25.

Harsh chemicals used to remove spots, stains or smudges get in our water supply (and the) fragrances added to give off a 'clean' smell can do damage to our bodies.

From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Fendley Hall, at 565 Bryne Dr., you'll be able to meet experts on a number of affordable green options for cleaning your business or workplace, and try a hands-on experience with their products.

You will see such things as a stand-on floor polisher which uses your own weight instead of heavy machinery, and is better for your back, too. You can learn about systems using special microfibre cloths and water to clean effectively without any chemicals at all.

There are all manner of sustainable cleaning supplies and

specialized non-toxic cleansers, concentrated to reduce shipping emissions. You can even try floor mats made from recycled plastic, to keep water and dirt away in the first place!

There will also be free refreshments and door prizes, including lunch and a round of golf for two at Tangle Creek. Where else could you have such fun talking dirt?

Erich Jacoby-Hawkins is an educator, father, volunteer and politician. Comment on this and other Root Issues at www.ErichTheGreen.ca.