

Government Administration has recognised that traffic congestion in Chaguanas is very serious, as indirectly evidenced by the Prime Minister's platform pronouncement recently "A major complaint of the people of Felicity, Charlieville and surrounding areas is the problem of health care ... The lone health centre is located in Montrose, this means that a resident falling sick in Felicity can take one hour in traffic to get to a health centre. Given the availability of the lands in this area I propose to ask our Ministry of Health to construct a health centre in the Felicity area to service the western side of the Greater Chaguanas area."

Cacandee Junction in Felicity to the health facility in Montrose is a distance of four and a half kilometres. This means that it has been appreciated that the average travel can be of the order of 4.5 kmph on the main route. Additional health facilities are no doubt needed, but isn't there a critical need to address the deficiency in connectivity between East and West Chaguanas, which are divided by the Uriah Butler and Solomon Hochoy Highways?

It is interesting that the recent election campaigning did not give any attention to traffic congestion issues. Is it that constituents are not much concerned about this? Or, that constituents accept that nothing better can be done? Or, that they believe that that matter is outside the scope of responsibility of a Member of Parliament?

When will priority be given to meaningful, sustainable, long-term traffic solutions for Chaguanas?

The Budget Statement 2011 by the Minister of Finance on September 8, 2010 said, "...we will develop five poles for [economic] expansion in the medium term using a cluster development approach. The first pole includes the 4 C(s), covering Couva, Charlieville,

Carapichaima and Chaguanas. This project will be primarily private-sector driven with Government acting as a catalyst. This partnering will bring communities together to fill the void created by the demise of the sugar industry. It will encourage new investment in these areas. The project will involve, among other things, the establishment of a port at Felicity, a science park and business incubators."

I heard nothing about the Felicity port in the recent campaigning. Is it that serious issues are not required in engaging the voters? What is the impact of a port at Felicity on the traffic in Chaguanas?

The Uriah Butler and Solomon Hochoy Highways form major constraints and separators to the people of the highly built-up Chaguanas, as more than 60 percent of all traffic in Chaguanas desire to connect between the east and west sides of the highway.

I have been lobbying for two interchanges along the north-south highway system (Uriah Butler and Solomon Hochoy Highways) in Chaguanas – one in Edinburgh and the other in Jerningham Junction. I have since relocated the latter to a slightly more southern site in the Endeavour Industrial Estate area (and again submitted this idea). This proposal is to create a secondary arterial ring road system to more easily connect the eastern and western sides of Chaguanas with each other and the north-south highway system.

It is always attractive to locate major traffic generators near to highways. Developers often do not see the traffic impact of their proposed activities, and even when they do, they believe that that is the responsibility of Government bodies with authority for public infrastructure. But, these Government infrastructure bodies often do not know what other

agencies are planning, as there is usually no integrated land use policy and planning being undertaken. The result is that the required thought and planning for the supportive infrastructure is usually ignored.

Chaguanas is the most rapidly developing and expanding urban centre, with recent pronouncements of several Ministry headquarters and tertiary institutions being planned for implementation in the near future. These are apart from the several intensely arranged State and private housing and associated projects over the last 25 years, which are continuing to be undertaken, and which amount to a few thousand houses. Yet the supporting primary road infrastructure has not been accordingly improved. Exactly what major road improvement has been done in Chaguanas, excluding the highways?

In fact, more and more of the private and State developments seeking out the few remaining publicly-owned parcels of land near to (or as close as possible to) the Uriah Butler Highway and Solomon Hochoy Highway in order to create direct access and so maximise traffic operations of their facilities, with no or very little consideration of their impact on the highway traffic system.

Chaguanas needs a major injection of the order of 200 million dollars for road infrastructure expansion, including interchanges. This is exclusive of the other infrastructure requirements, such as drainage management and sewage management. Short-term, piecemeal traffic management strategies, which are the current interests of the decision-makers will not give meaningful solutions, and will only give temporary appearance of improvement, while tempting road-users with a false sense of

satisfaction that something is being done.

When will we demand something substantial and comprehensive?

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