



Haul route for proposed quarry needs early settlement

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There aren't many areas of agreement between proponents and opponents of prospective quarry sites, but where the Lowndes Quarry is concerned, opposing sides agree that the haul route is one of the most important aspects of the operation. And, they also agree that it should be identified early in the planning process. During a meeting last week at the Carriage House information centre on 11th Concession Road East, quarry proponents told the Review that they are pushing for, and appear to have, municipal government approval for running a Class Environmental Assessment (EA) on their haul route parallel to their rezoning and Official Plan Amendment application for the 380-acre parcel of land where they want to establish a quarry. Asked why he wouldn't want to be assured of rezoning and OPA approvals before tackling the determination of prospective haul routes, Bob Long, environmental engineer for the quarry project, suggested the two processes are intertwined. "The haul route location influences the design of the site and that's part of the planning process." Graham Flint, chair of FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment), a residents' group opposed to the quarry, doesn't dispute the need for an early resolution on the haul route. "It's one of the top three issues," he said this week. "I agree it needs to be dealt with at the outset."

Where Long and Flint part company is on how effectively truckers can be made to use the haul routes rather than branch out on other

roads to deliver their loads of aggregate. Flint also isn't convinced that it's realistic to believe that all of the aggregate will head north to Highway 401 via Milborough Line when there are so many demands southward in the Burlington area.

Long and quarry applicant David Lowndes say their preferred haul route will run from the east side of the site north on Milborough Line then east on Campbellville Road, north on Twiss Road, and east on Reid Sideroad to Highway 401. They expect 80 per cent of the quarry stone to head to the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) markets via that route. Customers in Hamilton and Niagara will get their aggregate delivered by trucks which will turn westward off Milborough Line on Campbellville Road, following the road through to Highway 6.

"Our intent is that no (quarry truck) traffic will travel south through Carlisle," Long said. Hal Miettinen, president of Inter Public Communications which is doing public relations work for Lowndes, said trucks will use designated routes. "They won't use Centre Road or the 11th Concession (if the proponent's plans are approved)," he said.

Flint, however, isn't convinced there are measures in place to ensure that independent haulers stick to designated truck routes. "How do you police that?" he asked, painting a scenario of a trucker wanting to avoid a weigh scale by taking an detour route around it.

Flint also said "it's naïve" for the proponents to believe that most of the aggregate will be going up to Highway 401. There's a lot of ongoing construction in Milton and Burlington and the quickest route to these centres is southward on Milborough Line to Derry Road, he suggested.

Lowndes noted that the lifespan of the proposed quarry is 30 years and progressive rehabilitation throughout the years of its operation is required under the Aggregate Resources Act. While the presence of two environmentally significant wetlands on the site has evoked opposition to the plan by neighbouring residents, Long offered assurances that the wetlands will be protected. "We won't be

removing any (wetlands),” he said. “We’ll be recreating additional wetlands through rehabilitation.”

Eventually, a large lake will form on the site, which could be used as a recreation area after the quarry has been fully rehabilitated, Long said.

“There are over 70 rehabilitated pits and quarries in the Toronto area,” Miettinen added. Some of the better-known previous quarry sites are Christie Pits in Toronto and Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington.

While not disputing the need for rehabilitation, Flint said such measures for the proposed Lowndes quarry will be “way beyond the lifespan of people in the area.” Rehabilitation projects are measured in decades, he added. “They have no relevance to people who have to live here now.”

The industry’s track record hasn’t been very encouraging, the FORCE chair observed. He noted one local case where assurances on a site’s closure and rehabilitation have yet to be met. The Nelson quarry on No. 2 Sideroad in Burlington was to have been closed in the 1970s. It was later predicted it would close in the 1990s. It’s now 2005 and “they’re in the middle of an expansion right now,” Flint said.

Recent greenbelt protection legislation passed by the Ontario government hasn’t swayed Lowndes from his plans to pursue a quarry application. “There are lots of ways to interpret some of the policies in the plan,” Long said, before noting that quarries are permitted in the greenbelt. The need to abide by the plan won’t delay the application, he said.

Flint disagrees. While the plan doesn’t “out-and-out ban quarries,” its rules and regulations mean that the criteria for approving new quarries is much more stringent. “There’ll be extra work required because the details (of the plan) are very significant and onerous,” Flint said.

He also predicts that no matter which way the application goes, neither the proponent or the opponent is going to back down. That means the issue is heading to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB)

and could well be one of the first hearings involving a new quarry application since the introduction of greenbelt protection in Ontario. “It’s going to be a protracted hearing,” Flint predicted.