

Different views of Hamilton proposal

## ESCARPMENT IMPACT

By Edward LaRusic

The **Niagara Escarpment Commission** says that a new development in Hamilton will have too big a visual impact on the Niagara Escarpment, raising questions about what visual impact is acceptable on one of Ontario's most significant landforms.

**Fothergill Planning & Development Inc.** president **Ed Fothergill** said the proposal by **Vetco Development Corporation**—who he represents—is on a “perfect infill site.” Located at 467 Charlton Avenue East, Fothergill notes that the as-of-right zoning by-law allows for a four-storey industrial building. He added that a single, long four-storey building would have a greater visual impact on views than his client's proposal. Therefore, the proposal for three mid-rise buildings—each separated by a minimum of 35 metres—is a good compromise between intensification and limiting the impact on views to the escarpment.

“The six storeys represent minor intensification. It's on the low-end of high density, about 138 units per hectare. High density (in Hamilton) goes up to 200 units per hectare. It's not an overly intensive development. And six storeys in three buildings allow views through to the escarpment.”

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Caledon mayoral race

## MANAGING GROWTH

By Leah Wong

With Caledon mayor **Marilyn Morrison** not seeking re-election this year, the town is getting ready for a change in leadership.

To date two candidates have registered to run in the race for mayor, former Ward 1 regional councillor **Ian Sinclair** and Ward 2 regional councillor **Allan Thompson**. Both candidates have served as local and regional councillors, though never at the same time. Thompson has been in office since 2003 and Sinclair served from 1994-2003.

The incoming council will continue to deal with Caledon's expected growth. **Statistics Canada's** 2011 census said Caledon's population was 59,460. Population forecasts have the town growing to 87,000 by 2021 and 108,000 by 2031.

A related challenge is the split between urban and rural lands with 80 per cent of the town located in the Greenbelt. This will continue to help define the shape and character of the town, as its townships and villages accommodate future growth. Very different from neighbouring municipalities, many residents fear the loss of their unique qualities.

“A lot of people are fearful that we're going to be another Brampton or Mississauga,” Thompson

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The rezoning changes the existing industrial land use to residential, allowing three mid-rise buildings: one five and two six storey buildings.

Fothergill said that because the proposed development is in the Niagara Escarpment, his client retained **EDA Collaborative Inc.** to do a detailed study of what would constitute an acceptable visual impact on the Niagara Escarpment.

“The [*Niagara Escarpment Plan*] says [development] has to be compatible...It anticipates there will or could be an impact.”

Fothergill said EDA Collaborative—which looked at three six-storey buildings rather than two six and one five-storey buildings—assessed the development from over two dozen viewpoints. It rated the impact based on how much of the escarpment is visible, what is visible and how much would be taken up by the proposal.

“[EDA Collaborative] did a very detailed visual assessment and concluded that the worst case in the worst possible location was maybe a moderate impact. All the others are low. We took it to the [*Niagara Escarpment Commission*] and it said no, we don’t like it, it’s unacceptable, without telling us which part of the analysis was flawed.”

Fothergill said the Niagara Escarpment Commission wanted the development changed such that no part of the building was visible in the summer. However, city staff agreed with EDA Collaborative’s assessment. It asked for a modification, which his client agreed to.

“As [staff] was writing the report, a few weeks before the public meeting, it decided we should take one floor off one building. Which was a total surprise to us. There was no analysis; they just said ‘we think one building is too high.’ And that’s the way it was approved by council.”

Hamilton planning director **Steve Robichaud** said that staff asked for one of the building to be reduced to five-storeys for two reasons.

“First, based on staff’s assessment of the visual impact of that third building at six storeys, the reduction of the building height from six storeys to five storeys addressed staff’s concerns about the visual impact of that building. [Second,] reducing the height of the building and reducing the number of [residential] units, it also responded to staff’s concerns about the amount of parking on site, and how it would be laid out.”

Robichaud said the original proposal had parking partially



Location of proposed Vetco Development proposal

SOURCE: CITY OF HAMILTON

located on the road allowance. This was redressed by making one of the buildings five storeys. He added that the revised proposal represents the best balance of the city’s policy objectives.

“Staff was satisfied that those two six-storeys and a five-storey building would maintain important views of the escarpment, allow for the redevelopment of a brownfield site within the urban area and provide for intensification opportunities within the city.”

Niagara Escarpment Commission planner **Martin Kilian** told *NRU* that while staff does not question the veracity of the visual assessment study that was prepared in support of the Vetco application, it came to a different conclusion.

“The policies of the *Niagara Escarpment Plan* speak to about minimizing visual impact, even in urban environments. [Commission staff] came to a conclusion that there was too much building to be able to protect the views of the escarpment on the landscape.”

Kilian said staff attempted to negotiate, unsuccessfully, with Vetco for a revised proposal with two four-storey buildings and the possibility of a five-storey with a stepped-back upper storey.

“The difference [between the Vetco and the escarpment commission staff proposals] is that in a lot of these viewing areas, bringing these buildings to a lower level

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Election 2014

# Barrie candidates

**Mayor**

Ram Faerber  
Zachary Gillespie-Rogers  
**Jeff Lehman**

**Councillors**

Ward 1  
**Bonnie Ainsworth**  
*Clare Riepma*

Ward 2  
Austin Tyler Genge  
Steve Jones  
*James McVeigh*

*Rose Romita*  
**Lynn Strachan** *withdrawn*

Ward 3  
**Doug Shipley**  
*Ross Wuerth*

Ward 4  
Adrian Bowles  
Caroline Smith  
Justin Heran  
**Barry Ward**

Ward 5  
Harry Ahmed  
Yvonne Heath  
Mike Montague  
**Peter Silveira**  
Ward 6  
James Charboneau  
**Michael Prowse**

Ward 7  
**John Brassard**

Ward 8  
Michael Hardie  
**Arif Khan**

Ward 9  
**Brian Jackson**  
Jason MacLellan  
Sergio Morales

Ward 10  
Chris Forde  
Doug Jure  
Mike McCann

(Note: incumbent names are bolded; italics indicate candidates who have registered since *NRU* last ran the table)

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as we were recommending would allow the view of the brow of the escarpment—the upper slope—to be maintained. Above the roofs of the buildings you would still see the escarpment and make out its continuous form. You couldn't really do that in most of those views by keeping the height that [Vetco] recommended."

While the land is within the Niagara Escarpment, it does not require the consent of the Niagara Escarpment Commission as it lies within the Hamilton urban area. Kilian said that while staff has heard that Hamilton council approved the Vetco Development at its August 15 meeting, the commission hasn't received formal notice.

"Once we get formal notice, we will, with our commission, review the decision that council made, the reports that were presented to council, and then bring before our commission

the question of whether it wishes to appeal that city decision to the Ontario Municipal Board or not." **nr**

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