

Report on BIA optimistic

A Herald editorial

Reprinted from July 29, 1981

Survey chooses keys to BIA's future

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provement program which enhances the downtown area's character.

SHOWCASE

The survival of Georgetown's BIA may well depend on its character as a "neighborhood" centre and Mr. Walker said municipal planning decisions may have to look more favorably at apartment developments near the downtown core. It's the "showcase" image — the aesthetic appeal which encouraged Hollywood film-makers to shoot here — that is one of its most valuable assets, he added.

Ironically, it appears that Acton, the community many of its long-established residents claim has sincerely suffered under regional government and the Halton Hills marriage, which has the most important "commercially" viable downtown section. Here too, yellow caution flags have been thrown up warning against building shopping centres on its fringes. Merchants wishing to comment on the first part of the study have until the end of the month. The consultants have already tucked into the second phase of the study, a six week period in which they will prepare suggestions on specific changes needed in each of the BIAs to encourage a better trade environment.

The Toronto-based consulting firm of Walker, Wright, Young Associates Ltd. has done an admirable job on the initial phase of Halton Hills' first major downtown core study, both in gathering the information directly from merchants and shoppers and in analyzing what they've learned so far.

The only advice we'd debate in the \$60,000 study's preliminary report, released last week, is the suggestion that downtown Georgetown should have more municipal offices. The concept of, say, building the town's proposed, centralized headquarters on Georgetown's Main Street is no more appealing to us than is Rex Heslop's idea for a civic complex at the Guelph-view plaza.

We maintain that any centralized town office should be built closer to the town's geographical centre, and given Georgetown's denser population, the current site of the council chamber and clerk's department on Trafalgar Road seems ideal for expansion.

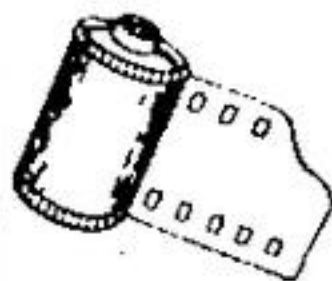
Our feelings are supported somewhat by the consultants' belief that Acton's thriving downtown core has more potential than does Georgetown's. While we hope Halton Hills planners and Acton merchants will be successful in heading off the substantial threat of a new plaza on the community's boundaries, we look forward to a time when downtown Acton will be developed to the extent that citizens from across Halton Hills flock there for shopping or, more importantly, the kinds of social activity which consultants have witnessed there.

Downtown Georgetown, it has become apparent, is another kettle of fish. Already weakened to the point of near collapse several years ago by the construction of major plazas outside the downtown core, Georgetown's BIA will need unique businesses and more professional services to attract shoppers, the consultants say. And more civic offices.

Overall, the report's assessment of downtown Georgetown seems to hit the nail on the head. Its merchants, we agree, should limit their investment in landscaping and visual improvement and concentrate on revamping their stores and services so they'll ultimately represent one big "neighborhood" shopping centre. What that means, we believe, is not a string of convenience stores to serve the older section of Georgetown, but a unique blend of specialty shops and "basics" featuring a healthy range of prices. Added to the professional services, such stores could emerge as popular places among people from across town

and around the area.

Ultimately, the consultants have provided a very positive working report which conveys the optimism they apparently gleaned from those they interviewed. From the horse's mouth, it seems we've learned more about stopping the downward, financial spiral that's been stagnating the downtown cores. Now, we trust, we can look for something refreshing and different where previously all had been too familiar.



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Minister talks energy

Ontario energy minister Robert Welch will discuss Canada's energy future in an address to the Peel-Halton chapter of the Society of Management Consultants Oct. 6 in Mississauga. Mr. Welch's address begins at 8 p.m. at the Ramada Inn. For more information, contact the Society at 637-4571 or 822-0406.

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1983.....	??
1984.....	??



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Round Trip Distance 90 miles
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1982.....	??
1983.....	??
1984.....	??

These figures based on a late model car using unleaded gasoline getting 20 m.p. gallon

• BRAMALEA

Round Trip Distance 37 miles
1981.....	\$3 ²⁵
1982.....	??
1983.....	??
1984.....	??

Third meeting Oct. 27 on consultants' reports

Continued from page 5

Commercial-Residential zone.

"Commercial warehousing and auto service outlets are considered incompatible with this area and should be encouraged to relocate," the report stated.

The other area set aside as a Commercial-Residential zone is between Church and James Streets adjacent to Main. The study agrees with the current development in the area and suggests that the conversion of

residential dwellings to commercial outlets be considered.

After the report had been explained by Mr. Houghten, Mayor Pete Pomeroy thanked consultants involved with the project for their thoroughness. However, the mayor expressed concern over the need for tremendous funding to support projects outlined in the Georgetown downtown development section of the study.

"Your ideas are super, but they're going to cost a lot of money," he said.

The second phase of the

study was presented to the planning board to obtain members' comments and direction regarding the recommendation of policies made by the consulting firm.

The third phase of the study will include the recommendations and comments from planning board members, the public and to a large extent, the suggestions from the Georgetown BIA representatives. The final policy document will be presented at a public meet of the planning board to be tentatively held Oct. 27.



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