

Issues and future opportunities studied for Acton quarry

Does Halton Hills want to take ownership of the Acton Quarry, once all of the top quality dolomite limestone is mined? Could the site become a tourist attraction, like Hamilton's Royal Botanical Gardens or a recreational area with a marina, trails and sports facilities?

The after-use vision/rehabilitation plans for Dufferin Aggregate's quarry south of Acton were the focus of a Town Council workshop, hosted by Dufferin, last Monday at the Acton Town Hall Centre.

The exercise looked at a number of "what if" scenarios for the future of the existing quarry, and to get input – "without prejudice" – on rehabilitation plans, should a current quarry expansion application be approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Under the current license, all of the rock will be mined out in six or seven years – the expansion plan would extend quarry life by approximately 25 years.

"We're interested to know if you want (public ownership) because if you do, then we can start working together on what that might look like," said An-

drea Bourrie, the quarry's Director of Planning and Regulatory Affairs.

Calling the property "a real gem as a destination" Bourrie said if the Town is not interested in taking ownership, there are others who are when it becomes available for public ownership by 2020, or earlier.

When Mayor Rick Bonnette suggested that a conservation agency might want the land for passive recreation, Bourrie agreed, calling the land a "real gem" with destination possibilities.

Bourrie said the approved rehabilitation plan for the exiting quarry includes a lake and island north of 22 Side Road, with a large wetland and forested side slopes and exposed cliffs.

On the south side of 22 Side Road, the approved plan calls for hummocky topography with wetland conditions. The land would have to be pumped "forever" at a cost of approximately \$100,000 annually, paid by the owner."

Ward Two Councillor Bryan Lewis asked if Dufferin would be willing do more than just the approved lake and dry bowls – "Sudbury South"

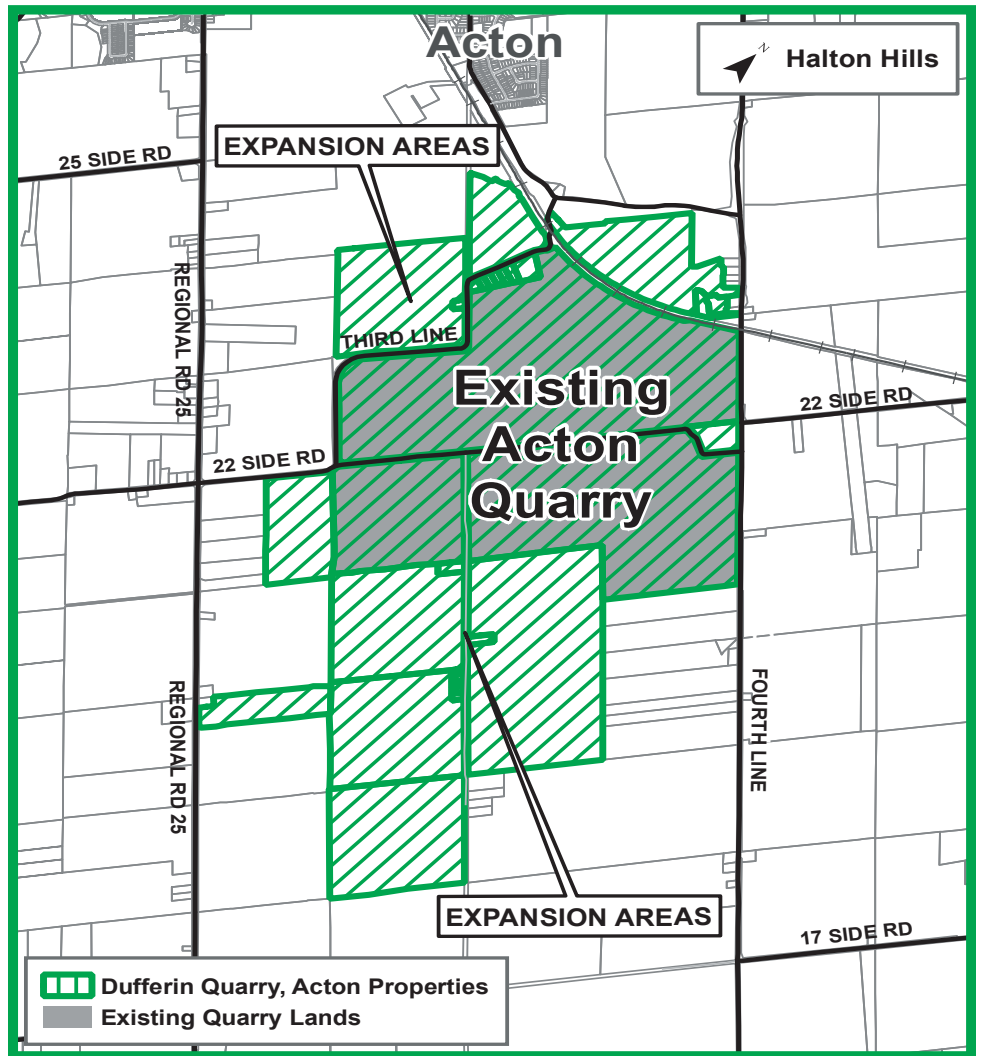
he called it. Bourrie said it would be up to the owner to apply for changes to the approved rehabilitation plan.

When Georgetown Councillor Ann Lawlor asked if there are land use restrictions that would prevent development of a marina or an area to stage rock concerts, Bourrie said that approvals for those uses might be possible.

Acton Councillor Mike O'Leary asked if the rehabilitated site could be developed into revenue generating tourist attraction, and Bourrie said like the Royal Botanical Gardens, that use would require provincial approval.

O'Leary also asked if Town ownership fit with the Town's long-term recreation and parks plans, and Warren Harris, the Town's Manager of Parks and Open Space, said the linkages to trails and open spaces, and cultural aspects of the lime kilns in the area "meet a lot of criteria in the Official Plan for lands of interest," and should be explored.

Fourth Line quarry neighbours, Steve and



Catherine Lister, both expressed concerns about what impact future quarry plans would have on their water quality and quantity. Bourrie said it would take 30 to 40 years to fill the lake in the rehabilitated area and the water issues will be dealt with by a joint committee of government staff.

Ward Two Regional/Town Councillor Jane Fogal requested that the staff report include the cost for the Town to take over the land, the

strategies to address liabilities, like the required pumping, and the cost of a more elaborate rehabilitation plan.

Bourrie said Dufferin would like an answer

from the Town on the ownership question in the next couple of month. Staff said it would take several months to prepare a report and recommendation for Council.

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