

Landowners irked by review

A group of Halton Hills Steeles Ave. landowners have banded together to ensure the current preferred growth plans outlined in Halton's Urban Structure Review (HUSR) do not materialize.

Those plans favor development in Oakville and Milton, and don't include industrial growth for Halton Hills along the 401 corridor.

Norm Pike, director of the recently formed Halton Hills 401-Steeles Corridor Development Association, says that landowners along Steeles Ave. were not given enough time to comment on HUSR, and the group has asked the region for an extension beyond the May deadline so they can voice concerns.

Pike, and he says more than 90 per cent of the other landowners on Steeles Ave. who are members of the association, feel Halton Hills has been left out in the cold in the review, and that many of them weren't informed of the current preferred option outlined in the HUSR.

"Over 90 per cent of the landowners don't live on their properties, and are living outside the region," said Pike. "The region made no attempt to contact this large group

of people."

Pike speaking on his own behalf, and not for the association, believes the region deliberately covered up the favored option.

The association is up in arms because they feel some of the most viable commercial lands in the region are along the 401 corridor in Halton Hills.

"Ninety-five per cent of the 401 corridor is already developed. This would be a natural extension to Milton and beyond. With the proximity to the 401, 403, the 407 the airport and rail lines it is logical that companies will want to locate here," said Pike. He adds that the industrial lands would mean valuable tax dollars for Halton Hills.

Pike says that after he found out which option the HUSR was favoring it took him only about a week, at a cost of about \$150, to contact all the landowners.

David McCleary, manager of policy planning for Halton Region, says that Halton Region has spent about \$50,000 over the past couple of years informing the public about meetings and the progress of the region's proposed official plan

amendments and HUSR.

A large chunk of that money went to advertising in local papers.

McCleary estimates eight public meetings dealt with the second stage of HUSR.

He adds that absentee Steeles Ave. property owners may not have seen the advertisements or received the notices which were sent to households in the region.

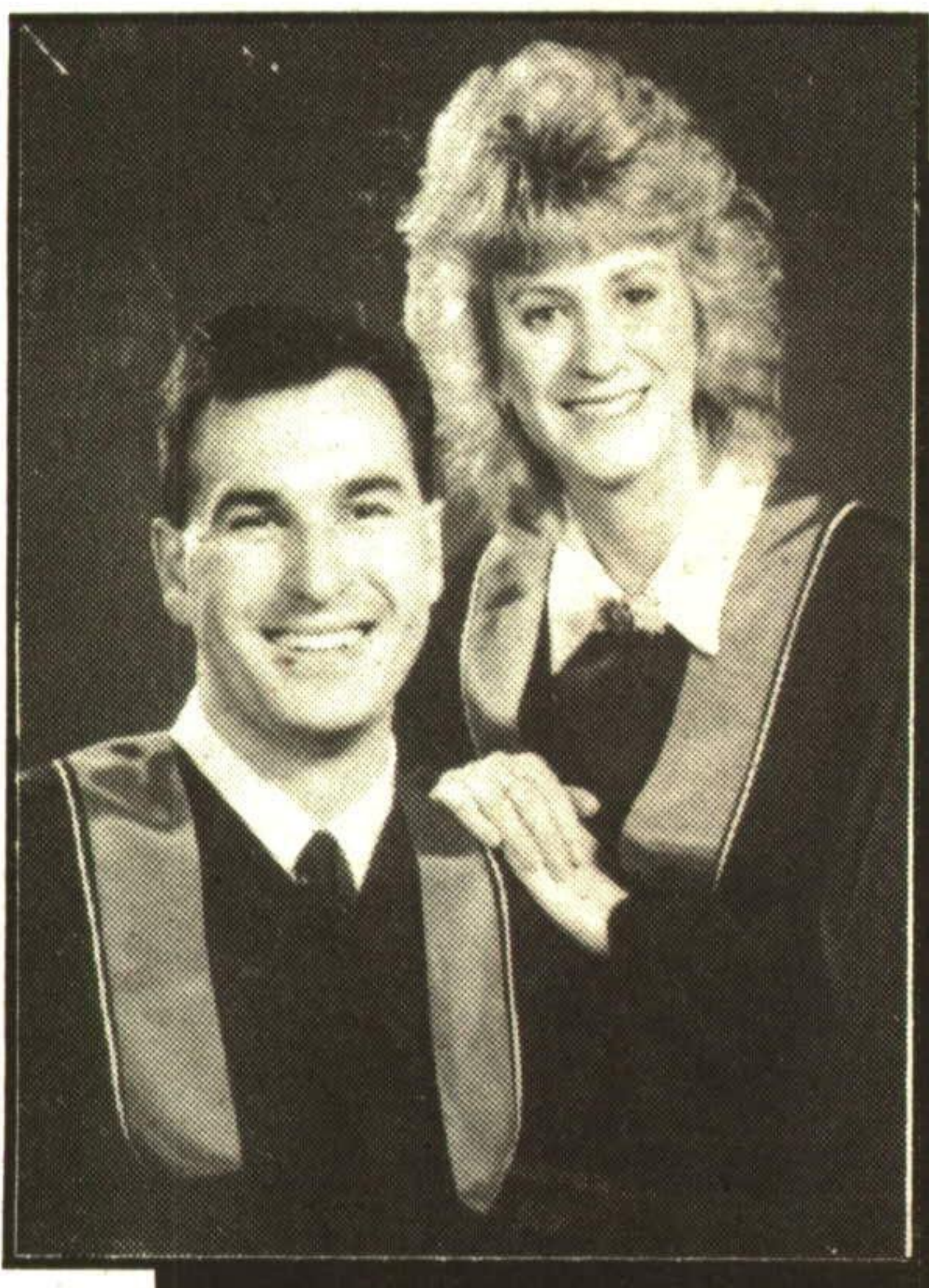
"But the question is how much of the taxpayers' dollars do we spend," said McCleary.

Since the group was formed, McCleary says it has been included on the region's mailing list.

McCleary also says that the group has until mid-June to submit their comments in writing regarding HUSR.

Ian Keith, Halton Hills' planning director, says the town will not likely be able to meet that deadline due to workload, but is expecting to have comments regarding the 401 corridor by the end of June.

The Halton Hills Steeles-401 Corridor Development Association has hired a lawyer and a planner. They have another meeting planned for June 10.



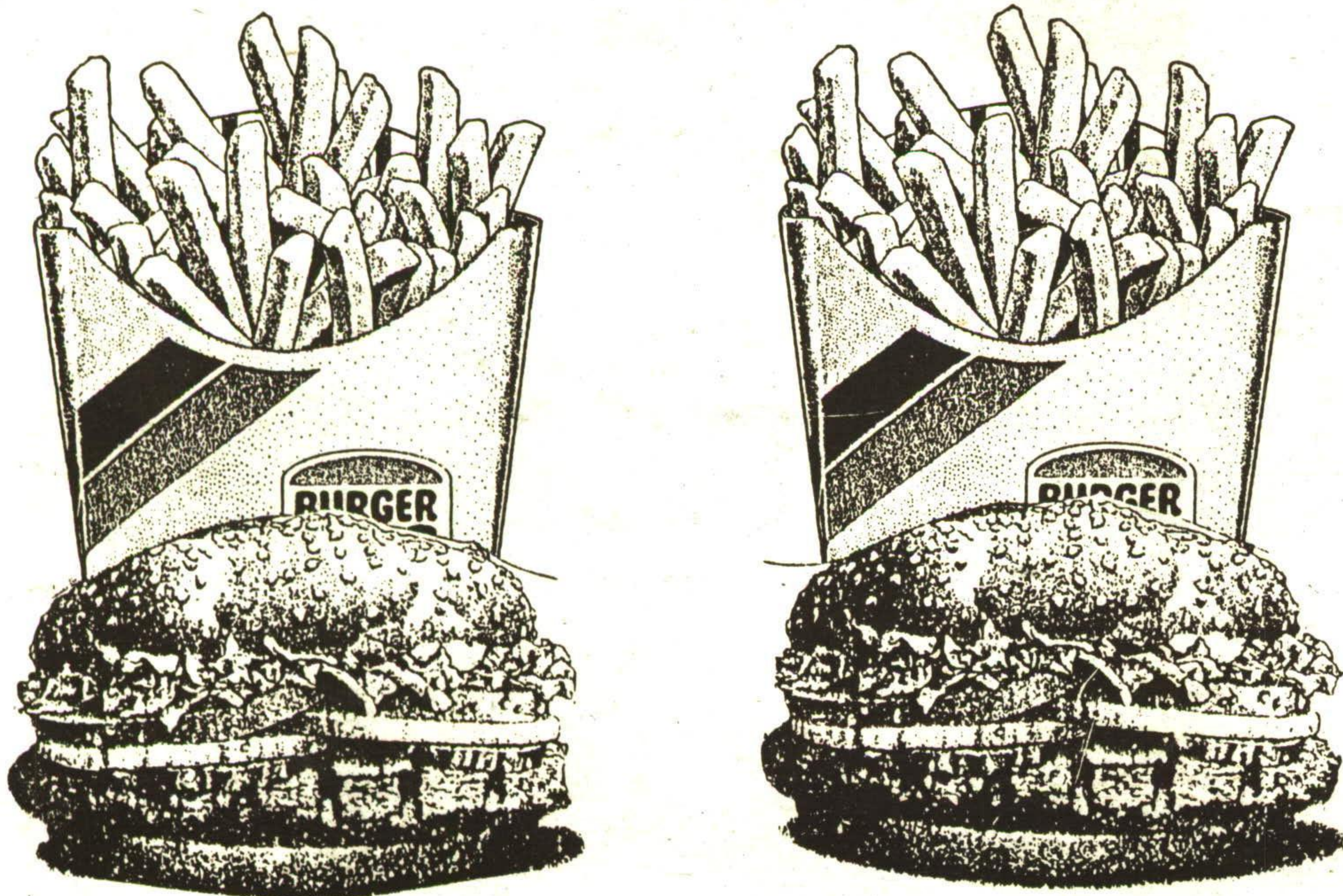
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