

RESIDENTS, DEVELOPERS HAVE DIFFERING VIEWS ON TOWNHOMES

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vicinity. At a town council meeting on Jan. 21, town planner Keith Hamilton presented a report outlining applications and approvals that must be sought in order to move forward with the project.

The plan, put forth by Astrid J. Clos Planning Consultants on behalf of the builder Charleston Homes, proposes the townhomes will be built at 284 Queen St. in Acton, a L-shaped lot situated between Longfield and Meadvale roads.

Jeff Markowiak, manager of development review with the Town of Halton Hills, says Charleston Homes has suggested the townhomes be geared toward seniors and empty nesters, with prices starting around the mid-500s, though that figure has yet to be final-

THE ISSUE: IS PROPOSED TOWNHOME DEVELOPMENT GOOD OR BAD FOR ACTON? **LOCAL IMPACT:** RESIDENTS PREDICT TRAFFIC NIGHTMARES, DEVELOPERS SAY UNITS NEEDED



ized. "This townhouse development, if approved by council, will provide a product that there really isn't much of in Acton and so it gives people within Acton looking to stay within their community (and) age within their community an option to buy a unit that allows them that," he said. "It is also a site that is

conveniently located for commercial uses so for mobility reasons that's a definite asset."

The houses are outlined to be 1.5 storeys and no higher than 8.5 metres, with two parking spaces per unit and five additional spots for visitor parking.

Ridsdill says the proposed number of visitor parking spots is low, and that any additional visitors will be forced to park on the road around her home.

"You can't even get out of my driveway because the liquor store is there," she told council on Jan. 21. "If all these houses are coming there, there's got to be a traffic light there or something."

And when out walking her dogs, Ridsdill says she already takes additional precautions due to the number of vehicles speeding down the street.

"This right here," she said, pointing out the front window of her home to the road ahead, "it's a speed ramp. I've had to yell at cars to slow down, but they can't hear me."

Linda Ockenden, who lives on Meadvale Road, has a similar issue when trying to walk her small dog.

She says current traffic on her street often makes her fear crossing the road.

"It was always a quiet street," she said. "Now there's people racing around the corner and they don't even stop at the stop sign."

She added that she now avoids leaving her street during busy times of day because it takes her up to 15 minutes to make a safe turn.

"They need another traffic light in town to break it up," she added.

At the meeting, Clos informed the public that a traffic analysis had been conducted in the area that found the additional vehicles that would be present as a result of the new development would not significantly impact the neighbouring residents.

"From this site, the estimated morning peak hour trip, so the number of cars leaving and coming into the site, would be eight and the weekday afternoon peak trips would be 12," she said. "That's not a large volume of cars, but I certainly understand the concern."

Longfield resident Natacha Verdiel says she hopes the town can conduct a second traffic analysis at a time that better depicts the large volumes of traffic she experiences.

"I really wish the analysis would have been done at like 6:30 p.m. on a Friday right up until like 10 minutes after the LCBO closes because I can't even get into my driveway. Legitimately, it is parked from the corner of the street, right up the road," Verdiel told council. "It's the only LCBO in town, so it's hell."

Aside from traffic and parking congestion, which is atop the list of residents' concerns, Hamilton outlined a number of others at the Jan. 21 meeting, which he says the town is looking into, including concerns that privacy fencing will not be high

enough and that dust from the construction will spread into nearby properties.

Verdiel says the dust is of significant concern to her, as she has a young son with severe allergies.

"I'm going to have to keep my windows closed constantly so he doesn't go into anaphylaxis," she told council at the meeting.

Markowiak says a strategy to manage dust will be reviewed by town staff as part of a construction management plan for the project.

"(The plan) looks at all of the types of things the community would be interested in that may have an impact to the functions of the community or raise concerns for abutting residents," he said. "Part of that is how you are going to try to undertake the construction development process."

STORY BEHIND THE STORY:

Can the list of complaints brought up by area residents be satisfactorily dealt with by builders, town.

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