

# 'Big pipe' finally on its way after Region approves plan

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most people in Milton did not want the magnitude of growth which will come with the Halton Urban Structure Plan (HUSP).

"Very, very few people have said to me that they don't want development in Milton. Of course, I like Milton the way it is," the mayor said.

"People are frightened of change. However, if I had taken that position when I first became mayor then most people in Milton wouldn't be there today."

Privately some members of Halton council said once Milton residents see the magnitude of growth that has been approved they will make wholesale changes to Milton council at election time.

Halton council did approve a detailed financial analysis of the cost for growth to Halton Region beyond the water, sewage and transportation expenses identified in HUSP.

The analysis will include such services as police and health care.

Tom Muir of the Halton Planning Oversight Group challenged Halton council, saying it is "objectionable the way the Region does things and does not do things, as it suits their political agenda."

He called the financial report "a lie" because it does not, in his opinion, provide the information asked for by council.

"The forecasts of the future you get this way are as much of a sham, and are as spurious as the crystal ball, tarot cards and the reading of bones and entrails," he told council.

"You can choose to be willing dupes to this subterfuge, but I'm calling it fiscally irresponsible, a failure of due diligence and an exploitation of the public

trust."

Several councillors took these comments as a personal attack and expressed some anger, especially when Mr. Muir said his intelligence has been insulted through the process and his motives questioned unfairly.

Halton Chair Joyce Savoline told Mr. Muir that arguments were not personal and that councillors simply disagreed with him.

Oakville Mayor Anne Mulvale expressed some sympathy with Mr. Muir but asked him if the 'do nothing' option exists.

"That isn't really an option," he said. "We advocate something slower, something smaller."

Other councillors tried to mollify Mr. Muir by saying his continuing quest had led the HUSP process to be much more detailed and considered than any previous growth plan, to the Region's benefit.

In the ensuing debate most councillors expressed support for the plan, saying the intense exercise

could be a model for other growth initiatives across Ontario.

"At the beginning of the term I would have voted an absolute no," said rookie Burlington Councillor Joan Lougheed.

"However, there is a comfort level now and I'm excited by what we are doing and where we are going."

Burlington Mayor Rob MacIsaac threw his support behind the plan, saying that the benefits of managed growth and a reduction in growth pressures on Burlington justified it.

Mr. Krantz asked council for a unanimous vote in favour of it and council agreed.



Rob MacIsaac



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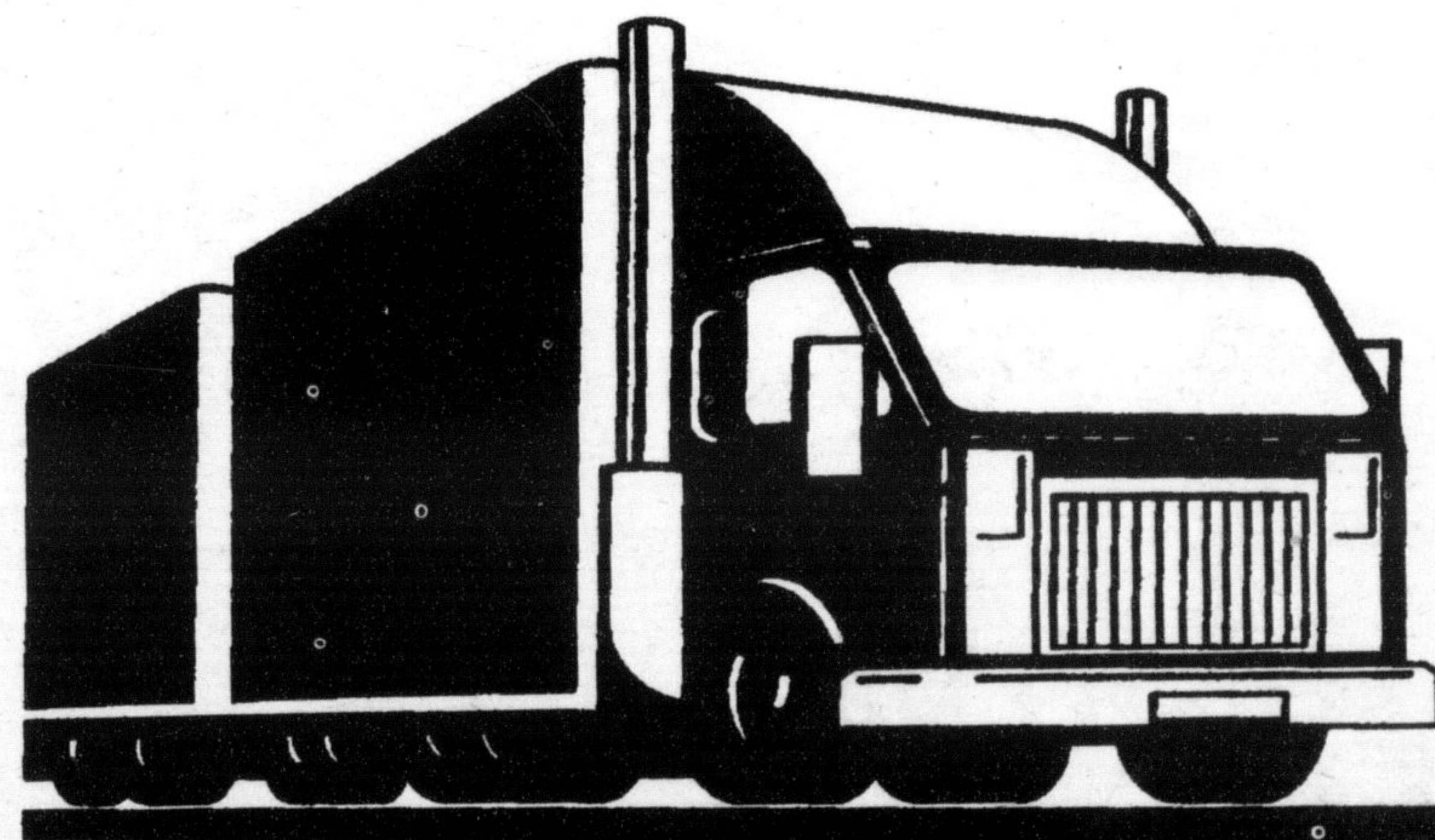
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