

# Working group being established

• from PROPOSED on page A5 features like the Niagara Escarpment.

A full environmental assessment means carefully examining social, economic and natural land effects of the highway. It also means seriously studying alternatives, such as widening existing highways or creating superior rail and public transit systems.

A key factor in the transportation planning process is the forecast that the Greater Golden Horseshoe area will grow by four million people within 30 years.

"All reasonable options to add transportation capacity to the corridor will be examined

during the course of the study," said MTO spokesperson Bob Nichols.

Hudak noted some specific suggestions were presented to Cansfield "for expediting the Mid-Pen process." One of them centered on using a previous 2001 needs assessment study to accelerate Phase One of the EA process.

Phase One as currently written will re-evaluate whether a new highway is needed in the first place, whether the QEW should be expanded or if traffic can be relieved through transit-only options, Hudak stated. The 2001 needs assessment already studied these issues and determined a highway was required,

in addition to GO Transit expansion to Niagara.

"Significant time and money would be saved by using the original study rather than re-studying the same issues," he stated. "(Cansfield) was well aware of Niagara's and Hamilton's concerns about time-frames and growing traffic congestion."

Kelly said a working group is in the process of being established to monitor and participate in the EA process, and is expected to start some time this year. He said all affected municipalities will be invited to take part.

# Pay hikes will cost extra \$54,861

• from REGIONAL on page A1 salaries were 7.2 per cent below the GTA average, while the regional chairman's was 1.5 per cent short.

"We acknowledge the importance of compensating fairly and on par with other municipalities," said citizen committee member Harry Wogden.

It's estimated the salary increases will cost the Region an extra \$54,861 annually.

The citizen group also recommended that it reconvene in two years to determine if a

salary market review is required.

The councillors on the committee applauded the group's efforts in dealing with the compensation issue, which can often be a touchy subject for those on council to handle.

Oakville Councillor Keith Bird said he thinks using the citizen group is a "civilized way of dealing with a difficult situation."

Regional Chairman Joyce Savoline also extended her appreciation to the advisory committee.

"This isn't something council can accomplish without a lot of controversy," she noted.

Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale added, "We're trying to take the politics out of this."

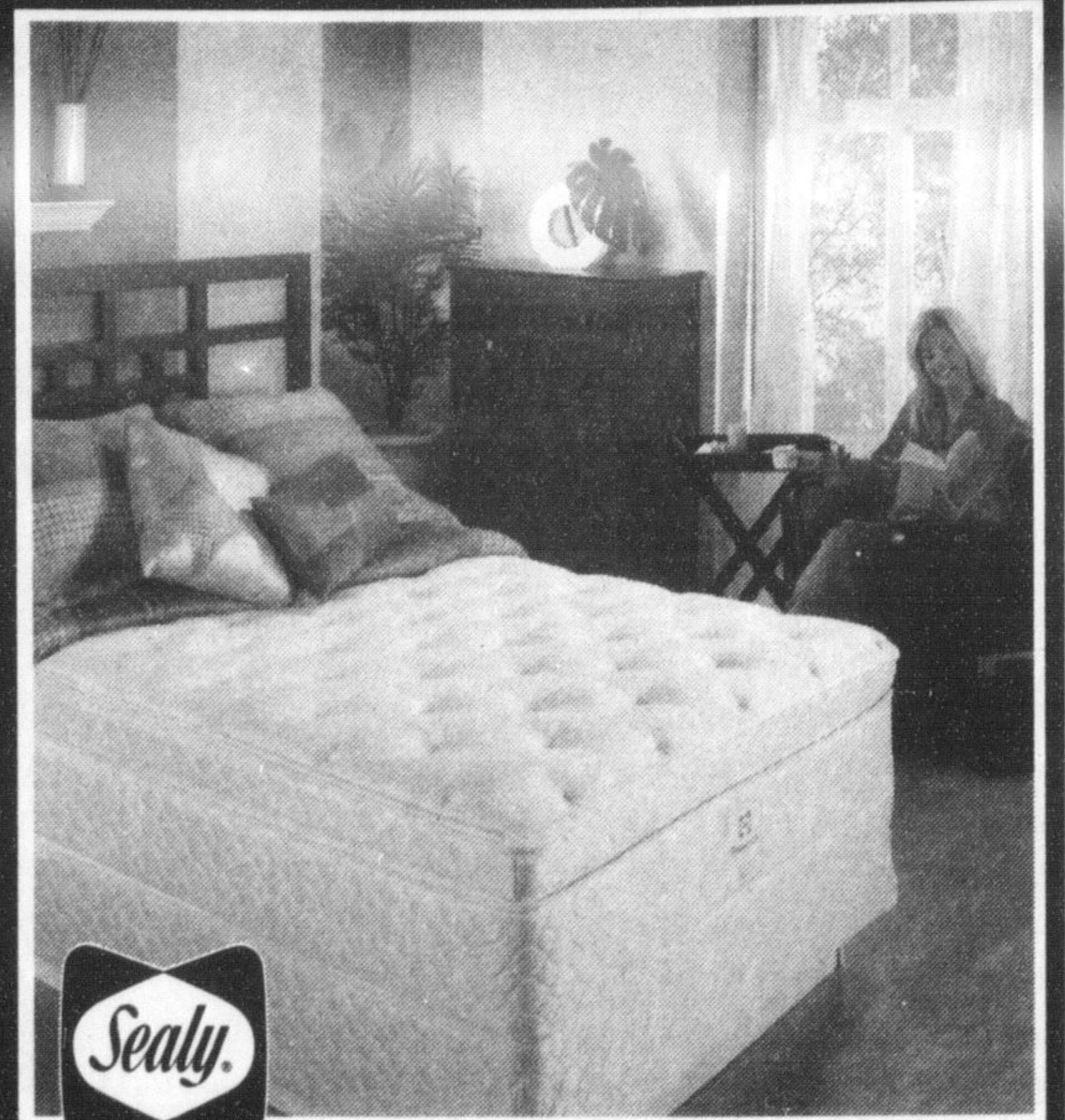
The citizen advisory committee is composed of two residents from each of Halton's four municipalities.

The raises will be considered by regional council during its meeting Wednesday.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at [mhennessey@milton-canadianchampion.com](mailto:mhennessey@milton-canadianchampion.com).

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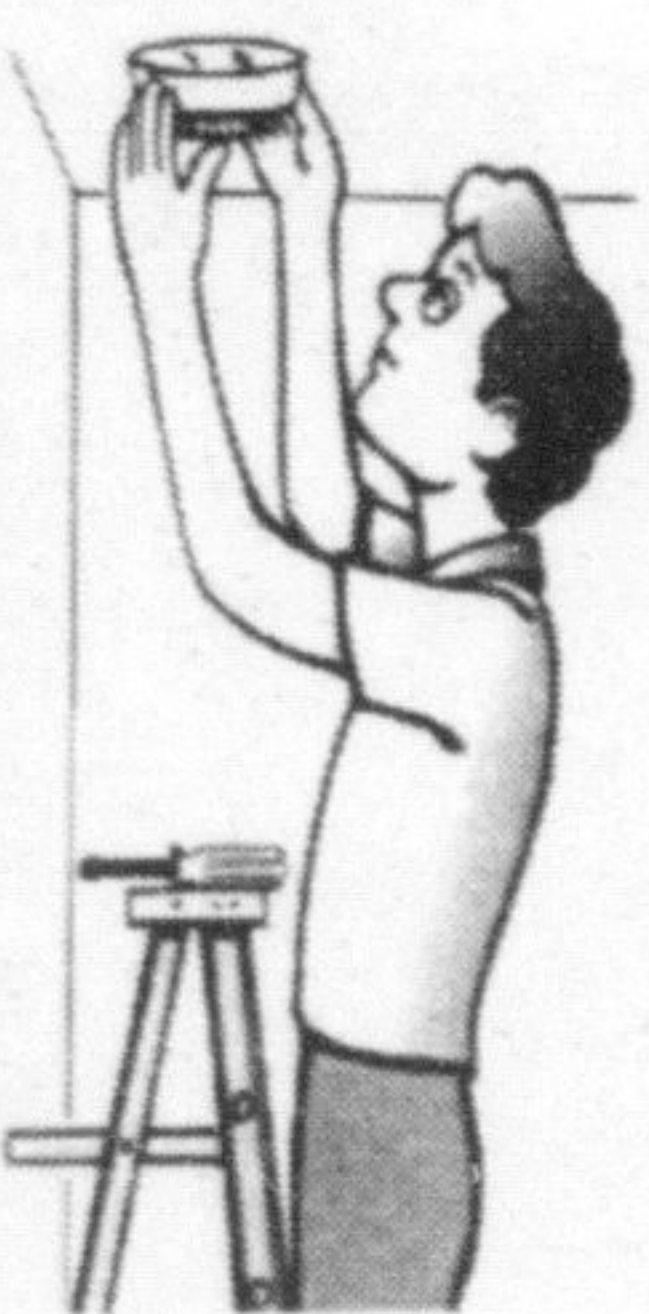
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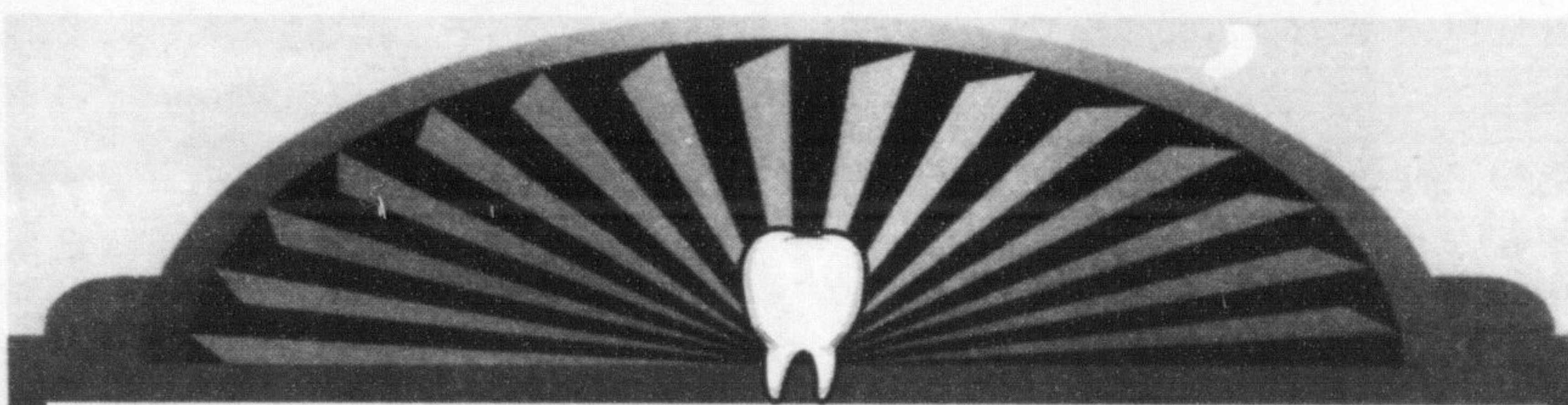
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