Quarry opposition shown in mass exodus from meeting

Departure viewed as lost opportunity' for public input

By Dianne Cornish
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

A St. Marys Cement official called it "a lost opportunity" for public input, while a Flamborough councillor described it as a "total disregard of democratic process."

A planned workshop on potential haul routes for the proposed St. Marys Flamborough quarry didn't get off the ground last week, as close to 200 area residents took part in a mass exodus from the meeting hall in the Carlisle Arena.

Councillor Margaret McCarthy, who represents Flamborough Ward 15 in Hamilton, urged residents to show their "unified opposition" to the quarry by leaving the meeting without participating in the two-and-a-half-hour program planned by the aggregate company.

St. Marys Cement wants to establish a large quarry on 11th Concession Road East in northeast Flamborough and the Milburough Line, the boundary that separates Milton and Flamborough.

Last week's workshop was the third in a series of four meetings hosted by St. Marys as part of its haul route study.

McCarthy, who had publicly urged area residents to turn out for the Carlisle meeting, turned the tables on organizers, commandeering the microphone at the outset of the session to warn residents of the danger of participating in the exercise. The councillor was openly critical of the meeting's format, which restricted participation to about 90 residents who were asked to pre-register. All participants were given workbooks listing evaluation criteria, including aquatic environment and land uses as they relate to the proposed haul routes, and were asked to provide their feedback.

Process not inclusive: councillor

McCarthy argued that the process wasn't inclusive enough and said, "...it is my advice, my warning that these workbooks, and the programmed responses that they are designed to elicit, will never serve any beneficial purpose to us. They will, most certainly, be used to our disadvantage."

Environmental consultant Don Richardson urged area residents to stay and provide feedback on the evaluation criteria for the haul routes, but to no avail. The majority of residents, including most of the 90 who had pre-registered, left the hall. Less than a dozen remained to study and fill out the workbooks.

St. Marys vice-president John Moroz expressed disappointment in the turn of events. "The process has kind of been shortchanged. We didn't get a chance to talk to people and introduce the workbooks."

Had they been given that opportunity, Moroz said everything in the workbook would have been put into perspective.

"Every single question in this booklet is in the Terms of Reference for the haul route study developed by CART (Combined Aggregate Review Team)," he said. "They all specifically relate to the haul route."

CART was formed by the City of Hamilton to ensure that various stakeholders and agencies get an opportunity to have input into the quarry proposal. One of the functions of the group was to establish a Terms of Reference for the haul route study process.

Among the handful of residents who remained to study the workshop and provide comments was a Moffat resident who owns and rents commercial properties in Campbellville. Requesting anonymity, he said, "I'm interested in getting more information on this. I don't want to see a haul route on the main street of Campbellville."

He suggested that St. Marys look at "greener" ways of

transporting its aggregate, such as by rail, and noted that an excellent opportunity exists at the Guelph Junction to transport product from the quarry by rail to Toronto and beyond, including American destinations such as Baltimore.

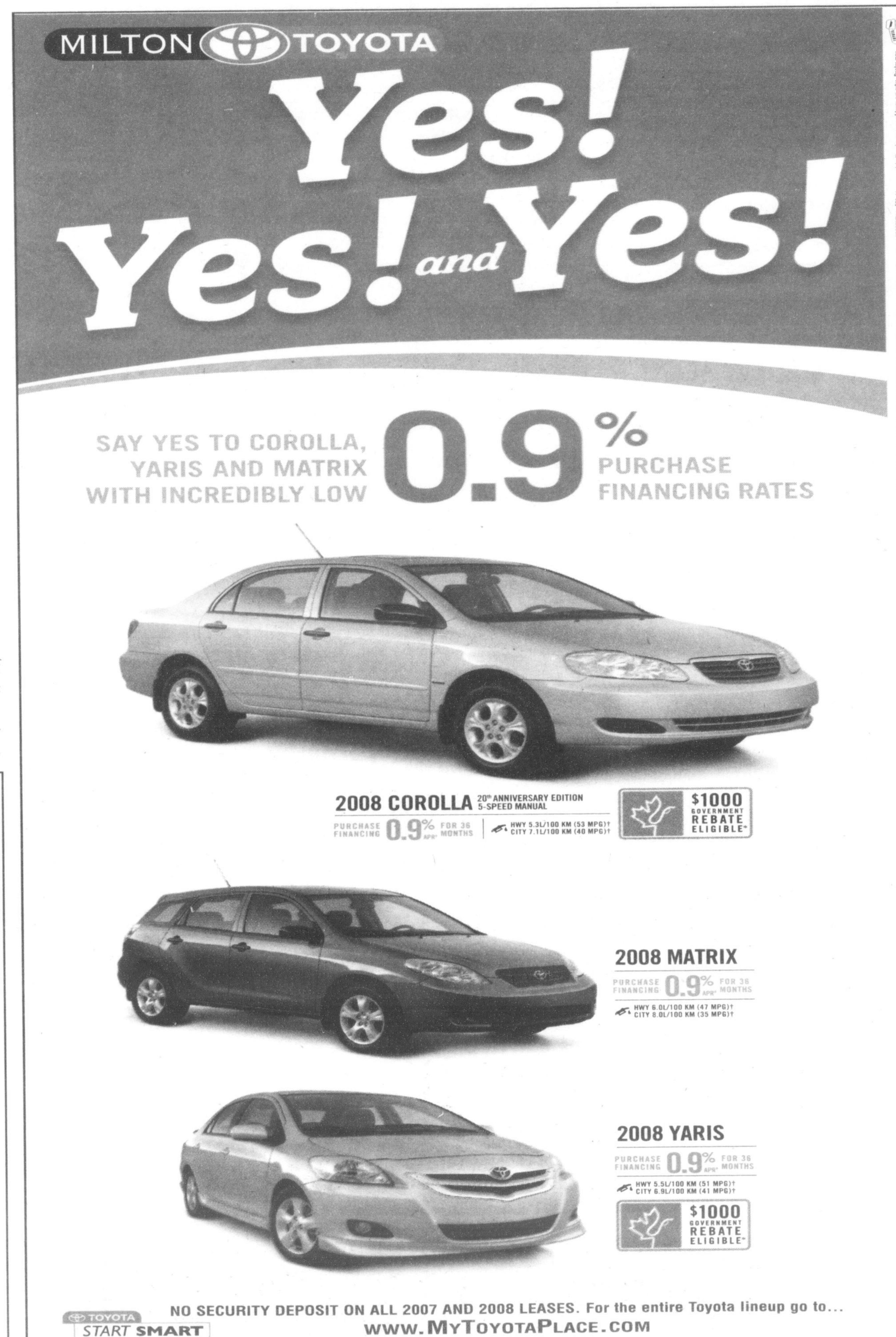
A Burlington cyclist, who enjoys the scenery and wooded landscape of Milburough Line, said she's opposed to the quarry but, if it does get approval, she would want the haul route to be as short as possible. According to maps provided by St. Marys for the study, that route would see trucks travel from the site, up Milburough Line to Campbellville Road and then onto Reid Sideroad before connecting with Highway 401.

While admitting that the workshop didn't get the community input it was designed to get, Moroz said the aggregate company's next step will be to meet with CART members and "lay out our path forward."

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