

SMC, CART work on quarry haul route concerns
PIC to feature study results
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In response to a City of Hamilton letter that questioned data, interpretation and findings in a draft haul route study by St. Marys Cement, the aggregate company has pledged to “work with the city to address their questions and concerns.”

“We don’t see any insurmountable barriers or issues,” SMC spokesperson Melanie Horton told the Review Wednesday when asked about the requests for more information about the proposed haul route coming not only from the city but also from three separate companies – IBI Group, Valcoustics and Dougan & Associates – that provided peer reviews on the study.

The reviews were prepared for the Hamilton-Halton Combined Aggregate Review Team (CART), a group that is overseeing the company’s application for a quarry on 11th Concession Road East and Milborough Line.

Horton said St. Marys will be working with CART over the summer to answer Hamilton’s concerns and comments, as well as issues raised in the peer reviews. She added that the company expects to hold its final Public Information Centre (PIC) about the haul route this fall, but the exact timing of the meeting is subject to its discussions with CART. The Hamilton-Halton committee is composed of representatives of Conservation Halton, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of the Environment, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board and the Hamilton-Wentworth Federation of Agriculture.

Flamborough councillor Margaret McCarthy, a staunch opponent of the quarry proposal, said she’s not surprised the draft haul route report has drawn “sharp criticism” from city staff, resulting in a 15-page letter to the aggregate company outlining the city’s concerns with the report’s content. She said the letter from Hamilton manager of development planning Steve Robichaud states that “staff have identified several major areas of concern regarding the Haul Route Evaluation Report, the Transportation Report and the supporting technical documents...” Among these are the need for additional work to ensure that all of the requirements of the Haul Route Study terms of reference are met and that the city’s concerns over “a lack of field work and data” collected for the study are addressed.

“The myriad of deficiencies” in the haul route study, identified in the city’s letter and by CART through the peer reviews, are significant enough to prevent city staff from endorsing the study, McCarthy speculated, noting that the deficiencies might have rendered the study’s findings as “useless.”

But transportation engineer, Chris Philp, of iTRANS Consulting in Richmond Hill, the company that authored the study, said Wednesday, “We haven’t completed the study yet. There is still opportunity for people (the general public) to influence the study.”

The report sent to the city is a draft report that can be altered. Like Horton, Philp said the aggregate company and its consultants will work with CART and city staff to address any issues that have been raised. He echoed Horton’s comments that none of the concerns are insurmountable.

The upcoming PIC will give quarry proponents an opportunity to communicate the results of the study to date, as well as to receive the required public input, the transportation consultant explained.

Analysis of the data and information obtained and reviewed to date points to Alternate Haul Route 3 as “the preliminary preferred route,” Philp said, while not discounting the possibility that future public input could change that finding.

If the preliminary preferred route is adopted, it will see quarry trucks travel north from the proposed site along Milborough Line, the boundary between Flamborough and Milton. From there, the route would proceed east on Campbellville Road, north on Twiss Road and east on Reid Side Road to Hwy. 401, just west of the Guelph Line.

Trucks could then proceed east or west along Hwy. 401 to their destinations, which could include Hamilton and the Niagara area and the use of Hwy. 6.

Both the IBI Group and the City of Hamilton letter mention that the Hwy. 6 link between Hwy. 401 and Hwy. 403 should be more clearly indicated in the description of Haul Route 3 in the study. Philp said that if any ambiguity exists, it will be corrected. "Traffic on Hwy. 6 was considered in our evaluation," he noted.