

## Lauren Goettler

**Do you think it possible to finalize a new Official Plan within the first year of the new Council's term? What in your view should be the key elements of a new Official Plan that differ from the existing Official Plan?**

**Answer:** Yes, I believe it will not only be possible, but necessary. It is my understanding that the planning department is on track to prepare a revised draft of the Official Plan for the end of the year. Working closely together, the new Town Council will be able to finalize the Town's new Official Plan.

We need to protect our employment lands for prestige employment uses, not big box retail. Our prime location just off of the QEW and close to the US border puts us in an excellent position to attract prestige employment.

We need to recognize that we are a growing region, but this growth should not undermine the unique local character that we all love. A careful examination is needed as to where growth is occurring, and what type of growth is appropriate to each area of NOTL.

Carefully constructed urban design guidelines are required that reflect the heritage character of the region, and are tied to stronger protection of heritage resources, both natural, physical and cultural. Therefore, the design of our buildings, the types of business and the use of land needs to reflect our heritage character.

We must recognize the importance of the natural landscape within which we are situated. We need to ensure we promote native species in tree planting and other plantings to support birds, butterflies, bees and other local wildlife. To this end, we must protect and enhance the natural ecosystems to the fullest extent possible

**What is your ten-year vision for the communities that comprise NOTL (Glendale, Old Town, Queenston, St. David's and Virgil) with respect to residential and commercial development?**

**Answer:** For communities, as in business, the lack of well planned growth typically spells decline. This holds true on both the residential and commercial fronts. NOTL is projected to continue to experience steady growth. The communities must come together and determine how to accommodate this growth, including more intense growth in residential, commercial and agricultural sectors, concentrated where it is most appropriate.

Glendale is a community well poised for growth in both respects. It has immediate access to excellent infrastructure and can accommodate more infrastructure development. Between the college and the retail character of the community, it also has a light commercial base and is well diversified. It has also become a tourist attraction for shopping, rivaling some of the best malls anywhere. The growth in Glendale can be accomplished with excellent public transit, schools and roads. The community's development should reflect the wishes of its people and not simply be big box or high rise because it is convenient. Growth can accommodate green space and architectural beauty that meets with community approval.

Old town is a different situation, as unlike Glendale, it has already grown to its reasonable limits. There is not room for greater infrastructure, other than some increased public transit. Similarly, there is little room for architecturally complementary development for either commercial or residential expansion or in-fill and the absence of heritage appropriate development significantly detracts from what has arguably become one of North America's premier tourist areas. And, expanding into the greenbelt is simply not a

viable option, as the surrounding vineyards and their wineries are part of the community's charm. The vision for this area is to protect and preserve what has become its raison d'être.

Queenston is also a very old community, similar in some significant respects to Old Town, with its historic buildings and its green space. It is a major part of the tourist flow through the township, but again is limited in its ability to expand commercial or residential infrastructure in a manner that complements its existing character. Like Old Town, expanding into the greenbelt is simply not an option, as the surrounding vineyards and their wineries are part of the attraction.

St. David's has a strong sense of community and nothing communicates that more strongly than the commitment to the community pool, which must be maintained. This community is also a significant part of the tourist draw to the general area, but still has the room for well planned development that supports its character, which is a mixture of both heritage and new, agricultural and light commercial. Infrastructure development has greater potential in St. David's to support intelligent expansion. This expansion, while perhaps higher in density, can be architecturally compelling as can be seen in many areas of Toronto or New York. Higher density residential development does not have to be jammed in such that it lacks beauty, or at heights that destroy the character of the community. Again, expansion into greenspace is not an option, so the opportunity will be to expand in a manner that the community approves.

Virgil is the most diversified of the communities with its agricultural, light commercial and residential development. It is the 'go to' community of the group of communities, with its variety of food, hardware, automotive, personal grooming, pet food and floral stores. It also has a reasonable infrastructure which can be expanded and improved. As such, Virgil represents a solid opportunity for well planned growth that meets the needs and approval of the community. Virgil's charm is in its pleasant residential developments that are spacious, treed and low density. New development can follow this pattern, while again acknowledging that this development cannot be at the expense of agricultural lands. Similarly, commercial development can follow this same concept.

My vision will continue to evolve from community input such that the unique characteristics and desires of each of the communities is respected.

**Is the current proposal for Randwood (the most recent revised plan submitted by the Marotta group) appropriate for this site and neighborhood given its significant cultural heritage value and its location in an established residential neighborhood? Why or why not?**

**Answer:** The simple answer is absolutely not. However, answers to difficult questions are typically not simple. The problem predates the Marotta group and is a serious one for the community. The Randwood Estate represents one of the most historically significant lands and buildings in all of NOTL, not only for its story and the role that the Rand family played in the community, but also for the heritage gardens and the prominence of the entire estate in Old Town. It is an iconic site in the community. The siting of a 6-story hotel that looks more like an airport Holiday Inn than an integrated part of an historical building and lands is inappropriate. I respect the position of the Marotta group to run and expand their various businesses. What I do not respect is the apparent unwillingness of this group to listen to the voice of the community, which clearly does not want this proposed development as it has been conceived.

There is a solution, and realistically, it does not involve driving the Marotta group out of the community. They have seen an opportunity and have decided to exploit it to their own ends. They are not likely to pack up their bags and leave, so where is the answer? My sense is that the answer lies in trying to shape the outcome so that the estate and the grounds are preserved while hopefully minimizing the invasive nature of an 'out-of-place' hotel.

A town that was deeply entrenched in its heritage, might have sought long-term funding to develop this site as a viable inn, worthy of becoming a part of the Vintage Inns one day. Who knows, that might even turn a profit for the project!

**What consideration should be given in your view to the various matters specified in OPA51 (the Official Plan amendment in 2011 that permitted Randwood to be changed from residential to commercial for the Romance Inn- see attached) when deciding whether the Marotta group proposal should be approved?**

**Answer:** The problem is the unintentional outcome that resulted in the Romance Inn proposal becoming a commercial hotel proposal. Everyone trusted Trish, but she was unable to execute. The Marotta group seized the opportunity that was left open by good intentions, but poor forethought as to all of the possible eventualities.

**What would you do to ensure the preservation and sensitive use of other heritage buildings and lands within each of the communities that comprise NOTL?**

**Answer:** All historic buildings and lands must have reasonably enforced, but significant penalties, for violations to the spirit of their heritage. I am not of the opinion that any change is bad, it just has to be tasteful and in keeping with what existed in either lands or buildings.

**How will you ensure appropriate public input into planning decisions affecting high-profile sites such as Randwood (e.g. encouraging staff to accommodate delegations, location of Council and committee meetings on matters of great public interest such as Randwood)?**

**Answer:** First, as this is somewhat of a 'snowbird' community, particularly in Old Town, all meetings must be advertised in advance and held when people who are impacted by the outcome of the meeting are there to participate in it. Beyond that, in my recollection, staff are paid by the taxpayers and must be accountable to them to hear delegations as necessary. Otherwise we do not have a truly representative process that is open and transparent to all. This is reminiscent to me of, 'no taxation without representation.'

Finally, if the matter is so important that a greater meeting hall is required to facilitate the democratic process, then isn't that a nice problem to have in our town? Perhaps we can poll the populace to find out how many are planning to attend and then plan accordingly. It is shameful to have members of the community unable to attend matters of significance because of the lack of space.

**Under what circumstances if any would you support the expansion of the current NOTL urban boundaries into agricultural land or the Greenbelt?**

**Answer:** Location south of Lake Ontario and protected by the Niagara Escarpment, creates an ideal climate for agricultural lands that support crops and plant varieties that cannot be grown elsewhere in Ontario. We must protect this valuable land. There are no circumstances where I would support expansion of the urban boundaries into agricultural land or the Greenbelt.