

GTA / 905 DEVELOPMENT NEWS

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York and Peel introduce “shock absorbers” on tax policy

Politicians in York and Peel Regional Municipalities have abandoned their “non-interventionist” tax policies and have adopted tax rebate programs for commercial and industrial taxpayers hardest hit by the province’s current value assessment system.

These about-face decisions are the result of fierce business lobbying efforts across Peel and York regions that have left politicians reeling.

On June 25 both regional councils rejected the tools that had been offered by the province to cushion the impact of CVA, including capping tax rates, phase-in periods, and the creation of separate tax classes for offices, shopping centres and large industrial properties. These options were rejected because they would have mitigated the effects of CVA at the expense of businesses looking for decreases. At that time politicians chose to implement CVA “cold turkey” so that the winners under CVA would get their money right away (see *GTA/905 Development News*, July 8/98)

Last week, both councils opted to introduce a business tax rebate program which will be primarily funded out of reserves and will not lessen the tax decreases anticipated by many under CVA. The York and Peel programs are similar in nature, although the specifics are different.

In York, the program rebates commercial and industrial properties where the *assessment related* tax increase is 25% or more of 1997 taxes and more than \$1,500. The program only applies to the first \$1-million of current value assessment and is expected to benefit 1,833 companies. The maximum rebate is \$25,000. The program is in place only for 1998 and will be revisited next year.

In Peel, the program has a lower “deductible” and rebates tax increases over 20% and \$500. It applies to the first

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—OSHAWA—

City vies for harbour

*City and harbour commission
compete for control of local port*

Oshawa city council has resolved to assume control and ownership of the harbour. At the October 5 meeting, council adopted recommendations of the **Harbour Negotiating Team** (HNT) and planning staff to inform port users of the mandate and retain professional consulting services to prepare a business/operating strategy for the harbour. At the same time, the **Oshawa Harbour Commission** (OHC) is seeking *Canadian Port Authority* (CPA) status from the federal **Ministry of Transportation** to maintain control of the Oshawa harbour.

Competition for ownership and control of the Oshawa harbour between the city and the OHC stems from the federal government’s decision to divest the port under the *Canada Marine Act*. Passed in June, 1998, the *Act* does not list Oshawa as one of the 18 federally incorporated ports having CPA status. Instead, Oshawa is identified as a federally divested, *Regional/Local Port*. The OHC was the only harbour commission not to receive CPA status under the *Act*.

Now a local port, the Oshawa harbour may still attain CPA status if the OHC can prove to the federal government that the port: 1) will be financially self sufficient; 2) is of strategic significance to Canada’s trade; 3) is linked to major transportation infrastructure; and 4) has diversified shipping traffic. The city is requesting permission from the minister to review and participate in the OHC’s application to the Ministry of Transportation. Until the ministry makes a decision on the application, the OHC will continue to operate the harbour.

City control of the local port would lead to the implementation of a mixed-use concept for the western portion of the Oshawa harbour lands while maintaining industrial uses in

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YORK AND PEEL TAX POLICY (CONT'D)

(Continued from page 1)

\$5-million of CVA – a higher level than York – and also only cover *assessment related* increases. There is no rebate maximum in Peel. Like York, the program is only approved for 1998 and will be revisited next year. About 3,000 companies are expected to benefit from the program.

Funding for these rebate programs will come out of several pots, as the regional, municipal and provincial governments are all being asked to fund their relative portions. In Peel, the program is estimated at \$25.35-million. Peel Region will fund \$10.29-million, primarily from reserves; Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga are being asked to contribute \$340,000, \$130,000 and \$1.12-million respectively.

Peel is asking the province

to rebate \$15.06-million in education taxes as part of the program – a decision which the Minister of Finance has 30 days to make. In the event the Minister does not participate in the rebate program, the regional and local municipalities will continue to partially fund the program, according to finance staff at the regional offices.

In the case of York Region, the total rebate program will cost \$7.8-million, with \$1.6-million funded by the region and about \$900,000 funded by local municipalities. The provincial share of the program is estimated at \$5.4-million.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Finance says that no decision has been made on the province's participation in the Peel and York programs, but that these cases are different from the decision on Halton, Hamilton and Ottawa, and will be reviewed separately. •

Example: How rebate program works in York Region

1997 taxes	\$6,086
1998 taxes due to CVA	<u>\$10,161</u>
Projected tax increase	\$4,075
25% deductible	\$1,521
Rebate amount	\$2,554

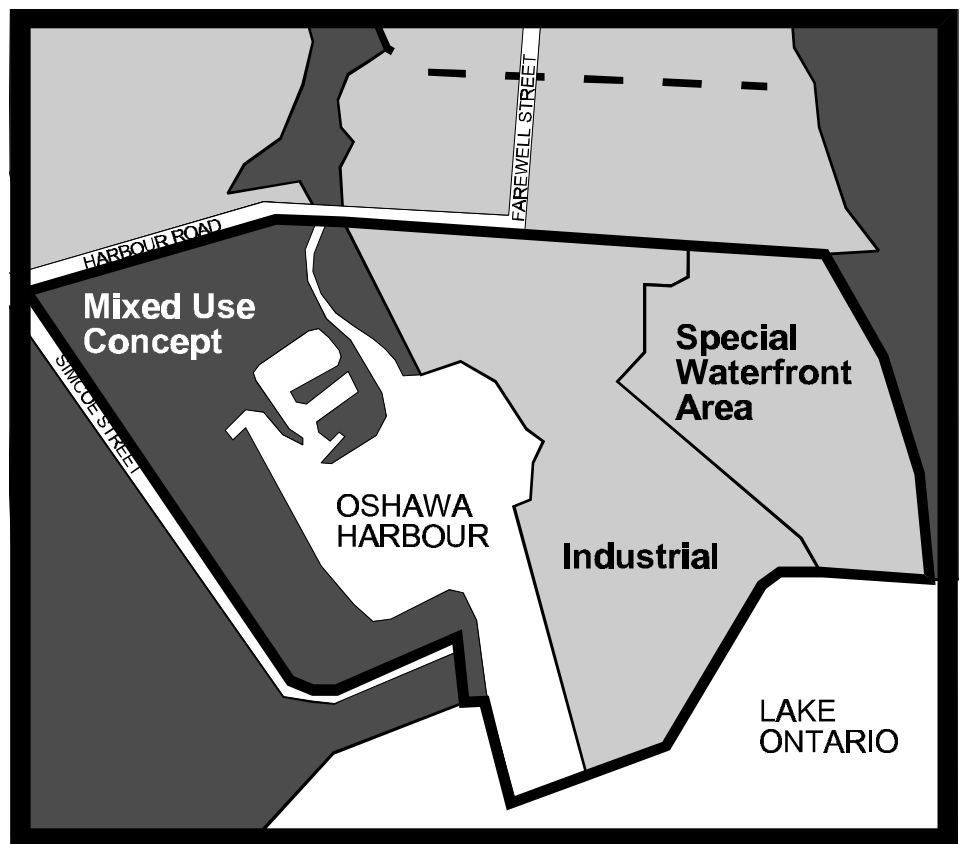
OSHAWA HARBOUR (CONT'D)

(Continued from page 1)

the eastern portion. Adjacent to Lakeview Park, most of the western harbour is under private ownership and contains an overflow dock operated by the OHC in peak shipping periods. Adopted by city council in 1992, the city's land use concept was developed by planners **Malone Given Parsons Ltd.** and **Hotson Bakker Architects** in co-operation with planning staff. This concept was later refined in 1995 with the completion of the *Oshawa Harbour Urban Design Study*.

In a memo presented to Durham regional council in September, the OHC stated that, without CPA status, "...there is no assurance that the appropriate policies will be in place to protect and develop the commercial port function...the uncertainty of the City's plan is unacceptable." According to the OHC, their long-term land use vision for the harbour has always been a mixed-use concept provided that the port function remains viable. •

Oshawa Harbour Area



= Oshawa Harbour Area

The education equation

Part II - York Region

School boards can finally dust off plans for new schools now that the province has promised to inject over \$60-million into schools of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Through a four-part series, we'll look at school capacity throughout the GTA regions and see how regional school boards are planning to spend new provincial grants to accommodate more students. This week: York Region.

The **York Region District School Board** is expecting a \$8.7-million grant from the province to create more brick and mortar pupil places for 17,000 students currently in portables. The largest capacity shortfall is at the elementary level where 10,000 of the 55,000 student enrollment are in portables. Of the 31,000 students enrolled at the secondary level, 7,000 are in portables.

To create additional capacity, the board's current strategic plan calls for the construction of five new schools. Three elementary schools are planned. Budgeted at \$6-million each, one school will be constructed in the Thornhill community of Markham while two schools are slated for construction in Richmond Hill. To date, the board has retained **Moffet & Duncan Architects** (design lead) and

Grey-Noble & Grey-Noble Architects (site plan/design) for the design of all three schools (see GTA/905 Sep.9/98). Open to all contractors, the tendering process for sub-trades is currently being conducted by project manager **Wayne Green** of **J.S. Watson & Associates Limited**. The board expects the schools to be open for the next school year.

Two secondary schools are currently under construction in the towns of Richmond Hill and Georgina. The recent provincial grant has enabled construction of the two schools to resume after budget constraints halted the projects last year. After detailed spending plans are submitted to the province next year, the board will explore options to build two or three additional schools.

The **York Catholic District School Board** is eligible for \$2.1-million in provincial grants and plans to build three new elementary schools. The prospective sites are: 1) Leslie Street and Mulock Drive in Newmarket; 2) Major Mackenzie Drive and Jane Street in Vaughan's Maple community and; 3) Elgin Mills Road and Yonge Street in Richmond Hill's Elgin East subdivision.

To prioritize school construction projects, school board planning staff consider total enrollment, the number of students in portables, new residential development projects, and the availability of transportation. According to this criteria, there is a need for elementary schools in Maple, the Oak Ridges area of Richmond Hill, Newmarket and northern Markham. With only one highschool in the northern reaches of York Region, Georgina and Newmarket are priority areas for secondary school construction. Approximately 9,000 of the board's estimated total student population of 44,500 are in portables. •

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—BRAMPTON—

Residential subdivisions for Northwest Sandalwood

► Under preliminary review are subdivision and rezoning applications by **Ciro Excavating and Grading Ltd.** to create 19 semi-detached lots on a 1.3 ha. site. Located between McLaughlin Road and Van Kirk Drive, north of Sandalwood Parkway West, the subject property is designated *Residential-High Density* in the *Northwest Sandalwood Secondary Plan* and zoned *M4B-Section 208*. The proposal also includes an internal road with a 20.0 m. right-of-way to connect with a proposed street within a plan of subdivision to the north of the site. On the consulting team is planner **Pam Kraft** of **Kentridge Johnston Ltd.**

► On lands directly north of the **Ciro** proposal, **Westbrand Developments Ltd.** has submitted subdivision and rezon-

ing applications to construct 191 residential dwellings on lands located southeast of Wanless Drive and McLaughlin Road. Proposed for the 10 ha. site are 98 semi-detached and 93 single-detached dwellings. Most of the semis will have 9.15 m. (30 ft.) frontages while most singles will have 16.76 m. (55 ft.) frontages. The plan also includes a 1 ha. school block, a 4.5 m. buffer strip along Wanless Drive, a 23.0 m. wide collector road and the extension of Van Scott Drive. The subject property is designated for low and medium density residential development in the *Northwest Sandalwood Parkway Secondary Plan* and is zoned industrial. On the consulting team is **Diarmuid Horgan** of **Candevcon**. •

• ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD NEWS •

—OSHAWA—

Beechnut Development Corporation has appealed their rezoning and subdivision applications after the **Region of Durham** failed to make a decision within the prescribed time period under the *Planning Act*. Beechnut is proposing commercial, institutional and residential uses for 48 ha. of land currently zoned *Hazard Lands Open Space* and *Urban Reserve* located in eastern Oshawa. In a decision issued September 29, board member **Susan Rogers** set a further prehearing conference for December 8. To date, the major unresolved issue is the extension of Rossland Road and the related environmental impact study.

Solicitors involved are **Jeff Davies** and **John Alati** (**Davies Howe Partners**) for Beechnut Development Corporation; **Rosalie Evans** for the **City of Oshawa**; and **J. Burns** for the **Region of Durham** (see OMB Case No.PL980367).

—PICKERING—

Residents have say in site plan

In a decision issued October 1, board member **Susan Rogers** approved a site plan by **Valiant Property Management** to permit an expansion of the **Amberlea Plaza**, located southeast of Whites Road and Strouds Lane. To give neighbouring residents the opportunity to participate in the approval process, town council delegated approval of the subject site plan from the director of planning to the board. Without party status, residents made submissions to the board with consent of the parties involved.

Residents' issues were related to stormwater management, truck traffic and outdoor storage of garbage. From a neighbourhood directly north of the plaza, residents were most concerned about the reduced size of the site's stormwater detention pond. With water currently leaking into area basements, residents feared that a smaller pond would make the situation worse. Presenting evidence on behalf of the proponents, engineer **A. Kimble** countered that surface water in the area "*tends to pond*" because the soils were "*very tight and not conducive to percolating water*". Kimble stated that changes outlined in the site plan would actually improve the efficiency of the stormwater water management facility. The board agreed.

Solicitors involved were: **Lynda Townsend** for **Halloway Holdings Limited** and **Valiant Property Management**; and **J. Burton** for the **Town of Pickering**. Also presenting evidence for the proponents was planner **Bryce Jordan** of **G.M. Sernas Associates Ltd.** (see OMB Case No.PL980357).

—WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE—

Stouffville Stockyards Limited and others have appealed proposed **Region of York OPA No.6** and proposed **Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville OPA No.101** within the prescribed time period under the *Planning Act*. In a decision issued October 1, board member **Wilson Lee** stated that the appellants have withdrawn their appeals except with respect to 43 acres of land within OPA 101. A prehearing has been set for January 11, 1999. The member is not seized.

Solicitors involved in the case are: **Stan Makuch** (**Cassels Brock & Blackwell**) for the **Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville**; **Kelly Yerxa** for the **Region of York**, **John Alati** (**Davies Howe Partners**) for **Stouffville Stockyards Limited** and others; **Julia Ryan** (**Goodman Phillips & Vineberg**) for **West Hill Redevelopment Company Limited**, **Madori Limited**, **1010047 Ontario Limited**, **433405 Ontario Limited** and **Tony Mauro**; and **Thomas Lederer** and **Josephina Erzetic** (**Genest Murray DesBrisay Lamek**) for **1147796 Ontario Inc.** (see OMB Case No.PL980539). •

—VAUGHAN—

Block 10 public hearing

The development of Vaughan's **Block 10** lands, including the **Baker Sugar Bush**, will be considered at a committee of the whole public hearing to be held on October 19 at 7:00 p.m. Located at the northwest corner of Hwy 7 and Bathurst St., the sugar bush is a 31 ha. woodlot recognized by the **Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources** (MNR) as an *Area of Natural and Scientific Interest* (ANSI). The Block 10 and sugar bush lands are subject to plans of subdivision by **Sugarbush Developments Ltd.** (**Graywood Developments**), **Langstaff Woods Development Corporation**, **Armeria Investments**, **Dufferin Contow investments Limited**, **482697 Ontario Limited** and **Heatherwood Properties Inc.** (see GTA/905 Sep.9/98). •

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