



Novæ Res Urbis

GREATER TORONTO AREA EDITION

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2004 • VOL 7 • No 51

GARBAGE IN, USEFUL STUFF OUT

Recycling, reuse centres for York Region

York Region is planning to open the first of five community environmental centres sometime late next year.

Although site selection and building design have not yet been completed. Council has approved \$4-million for an as-yet unnamed 5-acre site in the southern area of the region. Five centres are planned to open over the next three to five years.

“We’re hoping it will be for recyclable materials, a place to drop off garbage, yard waste and recyclable materials that could be put to good use by someone else,” said **Jeff Flewelling**, York manager of operations for solid waste management.

The centres are intended to make it easier and more accessible for residents to recycle waste, and often also include a reuse centre where residents can drop off or pick up reusable materials, including old paint, and give it a second life. **Peel Region** already has four similar centres, including the **Bolton** community centre, which accepts appliances, electronics, wood, yard waste, scrap metal, drywall, shingles and tires.

“Residents need to be able to get rid of items that are not practical to put out for curbside collection,” Flewelling told *NRU*. “The nearest site, in Georgina, is quite a drive.”

York’s director of solid waste management **Andy Campbell** made a presentation on the need for the facilities at a recent meeting of regional council.

Flewelling says that it remains to be seen whether York’s centres will accept hazardous waste and electronic items, such as old computers, fax machines and calculators.

continued page 3

TOP TEN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT LAW FIRMS IN THE GTA (2003-2004)

Sixth annual ranking of the region’s most prolific performers

As part of our annual end-of-year ritual and a tribute to all those lawyers who have worked hard in the planning and development field, particularly in front of the Ontario Municipal Board, we have compiled our sixth annual ranking of the most prolific of these law firms in the Greater Toronto Area. The review comprises planning and development legal activities in the GTA from **August 2003 to July 2004**, as reported by *Novæ Res Urbis—GTA Edition*. Most were board decisions with some court appeals rounding out the analysis. For those tracking City of Toronto activity, be sure to see a copy of this Friday’s edition of *Novæ Res Urbis—Toronto Edition*.

continued page 4

**Your easiest decision is
where to find the solution.**

For information about how our legal team can help you,
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COMING UP

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 22

Durham Region Council, 9:30 a.m.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 31

New Year's Eve Celebration, Gage Park in Brampton, fireworks scheduled at 9:00 p.m. and midnight.

SATURDAY JANUARY 1

Mississauga Mayor's Levee, City Centre Square, 300 City Centre Dr., 2:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.

SUNDAY JANUARY 2

Mayor's Levee, Ajax Community Centre, 75 Centennial Road, Ajax, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Mayor's Levee, The Brantford Armoury, 18 Brant Avenue, Brantford, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 12

Hamilton Council, 7:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 19

Peel Environmental Network, networking meeting, Region of Peel headquarters, 10 Peel Drive in Brampton, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., 905-279-1855.

Halton Region Council, 9:30 a.m.

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 26

A Master Plan for Union Station, GTA Forum with Jennifer Keesmaat (Office for Urbanism) and Bob Millward (R.E. Millward Associates), City of Toronto Records and Archives, 4:00 p.m.

THURSDAY JANUARY 20

York Region Council, 9:30 a.m.

THURSDAY JANUARY 27

Peel Region Council, 9:30 a.m.

Jane-Ruth wins Vaughan appeal

After a seven-week hearing, **Jane-Ruth Development Inc.** has won its appeals for rezoning and official plan amendment to permit residential towers at **2920 Rutherford Road** and **9291 Jane Street in Vaughan.**

In a recent decision, board member **Susan Rogers** allowed the appeal to permit 967 units on the vacant 9.57-ha. site across the road from the new **Vaughan Mills** shopping centre. The proposal before the board included five high-rise apartment buildings, ranging from 12- to 18-storeys and as well as commercial uses, including a banquet hall, between the proposed apartment buildings and nearby railway tracks.

There were myriad issues before the board, but one of the main objections to the proposal concerned a nearby railway line owned by **CN Rail.** The rail company owns a right-of-way and two east-west tracks which are used as a pull-back tracks for the MacMillan rail yard, located about 950-m. from the Jane-Ruth site. All of the development proposed by Jane-Ruth was to be located at least 150-m. from the tracks but **CN Rail** objected to the proposal, telling the board that no development should be located

within 300-m. of the track because of possible noise and light complaints.

It argued that the MacMillan rail yard was of national significance to the rail operations and that municipal and provincial law did not apply to the operation. It warned that if future residents were bothered by noise, odour or other nuisances created by the operation, they would have no recourse against CN Rail. The operator of the rail yard told the board that “he felt no responsibility to modify his operations in any way to mitigate any nuisance impacts or safety risks” that the

The board found that there was no generally applicable planning principles inherent in rail yard operations that would render all adjacent uses subordinate in terms of land use planning.

operation could pose to surrounding properties. He said that if the proposed high-rise residential units were located within 150-m. of the track, “drastic measures” would be required to protect the track, including high-powered tower lights. He also told the board that he was unaware of existing uses, including an hockey arena, retirement residence and low-density residential uses within 300-m. of the track, for which no increase in security had been implemented.

continued page 3

NOVÆ RES URBIS
GREATER TORONTO AREA

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SALES/SUBSCRIPTIONS
(circulation@nrupublishing.com)
Annual subscription rate is \$299.
Complimentary trial subscriptions are available.
Advertising rates available upon request.

NRU - Greater Toronto Area Edition is not to be redistributed without the written consent of the publisher.

NRU - Greater Toronto Area Edition is published 50 times a year by fax or e-mail by NRU Publishing Inc.

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Good year for new home sales: GTHBA

There were 3,438 new homes and condominiums sold in the GTA in November with high-rise condominiums capturing 40 per cent of the market, according to the **Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association**. Year-to-date high-rise condominium sales are up 16 per cent over 2003," added GTHBA president **Mark Parsons**. The top five municipalities in the GTA in new homes and condominium sales for November are **Toronto** (1,356), **Markham** (301), **Brampton** (274), **Vaughan** (237) and **Mississauga** (184).

Two budget bills pass legislature

The Ontario legislature yesterday passed two budget bills, *106* and *149*. This legislation:

- Creates the apprenticeship training tax credit;
- Provides up to \$36 million over four years to leverage up to \$120 million in new seed capital for spin-off technology companies through the Ontario Commercialization Investment Funds program;
- Introduces a plan to gradually eliminate the capital tax by 2012;
- Eliminates or replaces nine tax credits for a savings to the province of up to \$85 million over four years;
- Enacts the Ontario Health Premium, generating \$1.6 billion in 2004 and \$2.4 billion in 2005, which is to be reinvested in health care.

Garbage continued from page 1

The region is in the middle of a pilot program to recycle electronic items, and the province is drafting legislation to restrict items like electronics from household garbage. Currently, York has three regional facilities that take hazardous household waste, located in **Markham**, **Georgina** and **East Gwillimbury**. A

fourth is under construction in Vaughan.

York is reaching for 60 per cent diversion of waste from landfills and Flewelling says that the centres should help the region achieve that goal. "We have to capture as much recyclable and reusable material as we can," he said. •

Jane-Ruth continued from page 2

CN Rail's planner told the board that the absence of provincial and municipal controls meant that the rail line could operate without regard to the impact on surrounding properties. He said that the national economic significance of the rail operation overshadowed other land use planning considerations.

"The evidence boiled down to a simple proposition," the board said. "Public policy, planning and landowner interests are either secondary, or irrelevant." In other words, if CN Rail doesn't support the development, it shouldn't happen.

The board didn't accept this argument, saying that the same principles could be applied to any number of industries and that economic importance alone should not dictate what land uses should or should not be located nearby.

"The bottom line appeared to be that the achievement of efficiencies and cost savings for CN Rail operations should, and does, take complete precedence over the experience and enjoyment of the owners of adjacent lands," the board said. It also

rejected an argument that the *Provincial Policy Statement* gives pre-eminence in land use planning for rail yards through protection of infrastructure.

The board found that there was no generally applicable planning principles inherent in rail yard operations that would render all adjacent uses subordinate in terms of land use planning.

The board allowed the appeals for rezoning and official plan amendments and approved the Jane-Ruth proposal. For the land closest to the rail line, the board limited use to commercial only, and eliminated the proposed banquet hall. Building height and density were approved at 16-storeys and a maximum of 200 units per hectare.

Solicitor **Karen O'Neill** and **Thomas Lederer** (**Davis & Company**) represented Jane-Ruth Developments Inc. Solicitor **Steve Zakem** (**Aird & Berlis**) represented the City of Vaughan. Solicitor **A. Milliken Heisey** (**Papazian, Heisey**) represented Canadian National Properties. (*See OMB Case No. PL030635*). •

Sixth annual ranking of the region's most prolific performers

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1. Aird & Berlis

[RANK LAST YEAR: 1]

(Patrizia Bruzio, Eileen Costello, Robert Doumani, Patricia Foran, Tom Halinski, Natasha Kalogiannis, Kim Kovar, Leo Longo, John Mascarin, Josephine Matera, Jane Pepino, Chris Williams, Steven Zakem)

Reasons for Ranking: Aird & Berlis kept its firm grip on first place, for the fifth of six years. An impressive volume and variety of cases were factors, as was the firm's good success rate.

OMB Court Matters or Hearings: representing the City of Vaughan regarding appeals for minor variance and consent to convey land to create four residential lots in Vaughan (Zakem); representing the City of Vaughan regarding appeals for site plan and rezoning to permit a drive-through at Rutherford Road in Vaughan (Pepino); representing Altone Investments Ltd. and Greccap Holdings Ltd. regarding an appeal by developers and landowners against a city-initiated Brampton OPA for Credit Valley (Longo and Halinski); representing the Town of Caledon regarding an appeal against a town decision to refuse a fill permit (Halinski); representing the Town of Orangeville regarding an appeal against town-approved OPA and rezoning applications to permit an 18-storey building in an historic area (Foran); representing Loblaws Properties Limited and Harmony Shopping Centres Limited regarding a motion to dismiss appeals against OPA and rezoning granted by the City of Oshawa (Zakem)(✓); representing Community Nursing Home regarding an appeal against

a Scugog-approved zoning by-law and site plan to permit seniors' housing, site plan (Foran); representing the Township of King regarding a rezoning appeal to permit a bed and breakfast establishment (Matera); representing the City of Mississauga regarding an appeal by Jannock Properties to permit a residential subdivision at the former Mississauga shale quarry (Pepino); representing Orlando Corporation regarding its appeal for official plan and zoning to permit a Brampton office development (Longo)(✓); representing the Township of King regarding an appeal to rezone and sever a Schomberg lot (Matera); representing the Town of East Gwillimbury regarding an appeal by Fetlar Holdings for OPA and rezoning to permit a commercial development (Matera)(✓); representing Steven Nikolaou regarding Nikolaou's appeal for a variance to permit a residential addition in Richmond Hill (Williams)(✓).

2. Davies Howe Partners

[RANK LAST YEAR: 2]

(John Alati, Kim Beckman, Jeff Davies, Mark Flowers, Maria Khazanov, Michael Melling, Susan Rosenthal)

Reasons for Ranking: After a brief slide to sixth place in 2002, Davies Howe Partners has climbed back up the ranks. Thanks to successes with the Markham Box Grove urban boundary expansion appeal and an Uxbridge industrial subdivision, the firm has nabbed second place for the second year running.

OMB Court Matters or Hearings: representing Promenade Park Limited regarding Promenade's appeal for OPA and rezoning to permit two residential towers in Oakville (Davies); representing Credit Valley Secondary plan Developers Group regarding an appeal by developers and landowners against city OPA for Brampton's Credit Valley (Davies, Beckman); representing John and Serafina Faienza regarding an appeal for a fill permit in Caledon (Melling)(✗); representing Olde Parke Construction Co. Ltd. regarding an appeal for minor variances, refused by the Town of Ajax, to permit residential development on Angier Crescent (Flowers); representing Box Grove

continued page 5

Top Ten Planning Law Firms continued from page 4

developers regarding an appeal by Save the Rouge Valley System Inc. and others against OPA and rezoning to permit urban boundary expansion for a proposed 2,600-unit subdivision in Markham (Davies)(✓); representing Umberto and Sylvia Basso regarding Basso rezoning appeal to permit a bed and breakfast establishment in King Township (Melling)(✗); representing Michelle Giammattolo, Christine Inama and Clara Moretto regarding their appeal to rezone and sever a Schomberg lot (Alati)(✓); representing Woodbridge Lumber Inc. regarding an appeal against consent and variances granted to Woodbridge Lumber Inc. to permit existing industrial uses (Davies); representing Uxbridge Industrial Limited regarding its appeal for draft plan of subdivision to permit a 37-ha. industrial subdivision (Flowers)(✓).

3. Loopstra Nixon

[RANK LAST YEAR: 13]

(Quinto Annibale, Charles Loopstra, Kevin Ryan)

Reasons for Ranking: Supplanting last year's third place firm, in a swift rise from number 13, Loopstra Nixon had a big year. An impressive number and variety of cases, ranging from aggregate removal to minor variances to land expropriation compensation, moved the firm into the top ten ranks.

OMB Court Matters or Hearings: representing Cindy Mott regarding an appeal for land division in Milton (Annibale)(✓); representing the Township of Brock regarding an appeal to permit aggregate removal from the Brock Quarry (Annibale); representing the Township of Scugog regarding an appeal against town-approved site plan and zoning by-law to permit seniors' housing (Annibale); representing the Township of Uxbridge regarding a minor variance to permit a residential dwelling in Pickering (Annibale); representing the Town of Richmond Hill regarding an appeal by Steven Nikolaou for a variance to permit a residential addition in Richmond Hill (Annibale); representing the Township of Uxbridge and Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition regarding an appeal by Uxbridge International Limited for draft plan of subdivision to permit a 37-ha. industrial subdivision (Annibale); representing Richard and Yvette Brasz and Alida Leistra regarding their appeal for compensation for land expropriated for the QEW in the Town of Lincoln, Niagara (Loopstra)(✓); representing Helmut and Irmgard Rowsinowski regarding a rezoning appeal to

permit a bed and breakfast establishment in King Township (Loopstra).

4. Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt

[RANK LAST YEAR: 16]

(Michael Bowman, Stan Stein, Michael Millar [now with the Ontario Energy Board])

Reasons for Ranking: Hot on the heels of Loopstra Nixon, Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt achieved solid wins at the board. An Aurora site plan appeal helped to boost the group up 12 spots from last year's slot at number 16.

OMB Court Matters or Hearings: representing Magna International Inc., The Alpen House Limited, 690346 Ontario Inc. and 1207309 Ontario Inc. regarding appeals against conditions for a Bayview South plan of subdivision in Aurora (Stein)(✓); representing the Greater Toronto Airports Authority regarding its appeal against rezoning for residential use in a Mississauga commercial district (Stein, Bowman)(✓); representing Christopher and Carrie Loukras regarding their appeal for OPA to redesignate 14425 Bayview Avenue in Aurora for suburban residential use (Stein)(✓); representing Weston Rutherford Centre Inc. regarding its appeal for site plan and rezoning to permit a drive-through at 3883 Rutherford Road in Vaughan (Stein, Millar)(✗).

5. Goodmans

[RANK LAST YEAR: 7]

(David Bronskill, Darlene Gilliland, Roslyn Houser, Robert Howe, Allan Leibel, Catherine Lyons, Mark Noskiewicz, Julia Ryan, Michael Stewart, Christine Viinberg [now at the City of Burlington])

Reasons for Ranking: A win for Oak Ridges Moraine rezoning and site plan appeals, along with big OPA cases helped Goodman hold firm at lucky number 7, the same slot it occupied last year.

OMB Court Matters or Hearings: representing Mattamy (Creditview) Ltd. and Nicolau Properties Ltd. regarding an appeal by developers and landowners against a city-initiated OPA for Brampton's Credit Valley (Noskiewicz); representing Jannock Properties Limited regarding its appeal to permit a residential subdivision at the former Mississauga shale quarry

continued page 6

Top Ten Planning Law Firms continued from page 5

(Noskiewicz, Lyons and Viinberg)(X); representing Fetlar Holdings Ltd. regarding its appeals for OPA and rezoning to permit a commercial development in East Gwillimbury (Howe); representing Crossmar Investments Limited regarding its appeal for rezoning and site plan to permit 25 townhouses on the Oak Ridges Moraine in Richmond Hill (Bronskill)(✓).

6. Turkstra, Mazza Associates

[RANK LAST YEAR: 5]

(Derek Collins, Shelley Kaufman, Paul Mazza, Scott Snider, Herman Turkstra, Manfred Rudolph [now at Rudolph Law Office])

Reasons for Ranking: Turkstra, Mazza Associates dropped one slot to number 5, but consistent success in the Hamilton and Burlington area solidified the firm's place in the top 10.

OMB Court Matters or Hearings: representing Kenneth Sherman and Caroline Bayard regarding an appeal against an Hamilton minor variance granted to permit a third-floor addition (Snider)(✓); representing Paletta International Corporation regarding its appeal, with Zellers Inc. and Embee Properties Limited, for rezoning and OPA to permit retail and commercial development in Burlington (Snider)(✓); representing Christ Unity Church regarding its appeal for rezoning to permit a lodging house at an Hamilton church (Snider)(✓); representing Wentworth Condominium Corp., Dorchar Properties Ltd. and Gardenview Properties Ltd. regarding their appeals against a Hamilton zoning by-law to permit a 12-storey apartment building by Enfield Group (Rudolph)(✓).

7. McMillan Binch

[RANK LAST YEAR: NO RANK]

(Mary Flynn-Guglietti)

Reasons for Ranking: A new entry to the list, McMillan Binch's win with the Cawthra Woods appeal vaulted the firm into the top 10 ranks, where it gets the prize for biggest change.

OMB Court Matters or Hearings: representing Peter Parkinson, Robert Stinson and Lutilium Inc. regarding an appeal against OPA and rezoning applications approved by the Town of Orangeville to permit an 18-storey building in an historic area (Flynn-Guglietti); representing Moldenhauer Developments Inc. regarding

its appeal for site plan, OPA and rezoning to permit a Mississauga residential development near the Cawthra Woods (Flynn-Guglietti)(✓); representing Meritor Suspensions Systems Company regarding its appeal for consent to sever its Milton property (Flynn-Guglietti)(✓).

8. Kagan, Shastri

[RANK LAST YEAR: 9]

(Paul DeMelo, Ira Kagan)

Reasons for Ranking: Up one place from last year, Kagan, Shastri has been working hard in Peel and Durham, especially on appeals of development charges.

OMB Court Matters or Hearings: representing the Region of Peel regarding an appeal for OPA in Caledon (DeMelo); representing the Region of Peel regarding an appeal against Peel Region development charges (Kagan); representing the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority regarding a minor variance to permit a residential dwelling in Pickering (Kagan)(✓); representing the Region of Peel regarding an appeal against development charges for a Brampton industrial building (Kagan).

9. WeirFoulds

[RANK LAST YEAR: 15]

(Jane Burton, Jeff Cowan, Jill Dougherty, Bruce Engell, Sean Foran, Blake Hurley, Chris Jonston, Ian Lord, Barnet Kussner, Michael McQuaid, Sue Metcalfe, Kim Mullin, Greg Richards, Wayne Rosenman, George Rust-D'Eye, Bay Ryley, Lynda Tanaka, Chris Tzekas)

Reasons for Ranking: WeirFoulds also climbed up the ranks this year. Success with appeals for a Whitby draft plan of subdivision and against an Old Port Credit Village zoning by-law propelled the firm from its previous spot at number 15.

OMB Court Matters or Hearings: representing the Town of Aurora regarding an appeal against conditions for a Bayview South plan of subdivision in Aurora (Lord); representing Brenda McGarrell regarding her appeal against a zoning by-law restricting development of her Old Port Credit Village property (Kussner)(✓); representing Whitby Lanes Inc. regarding its appeal for draft plan of subdivision for a Whitby site. (Lord)(✓).

continued page 7

Top Ten Planning Law Firms continued from page 6

10. Davis & Company

[RANK LAST YEAR: 3]

(Chris Barnett, David Crocker, Lana Finney, Tom Lederer, Karen O'Neill)

Reasons for Ranking: Davis & Company slipped a few places from last year's third-place notch, but the firm continues to show well. It had a busy and varied year with developer appeals against a Credit Valley OPA in Brampton, and for rezoning to permit a Richmond Hill subdivision.

OMB Court Matters or Hearings: representing Sungold Group Ltd. Creeview Development Inc., Lotelight Conthree Investments, Creditview Conthree Investments and Helpport Development Inc. regarding an appeal by developers and landowners against city OPA for Brampton's Credit Valley (Barnett); representing Virgilio Group regarding its appeal for draft plan of subdivision and rezoning to permit a Richmond Hill subdivision (Barnett)(X).

THE NEXT TEN

Based on mentions in *Novae Res Urbis—GTA Edition*, the following make up the next ten firms based on municipal board activity: (11) **Cattanach Hindson Sutton Van Veldhuizen**; (12) **Willms & Shier Environmental Lawyers**; (13) **Fasken, Martineau & DuMoulin**; (14) **Fogler, Rubinoff**; (15) **McCarthy Tetrault**; (16) **Reble, Ritchie, Green & Ketcheson**; (17) **Polak, McKay & Hawkshaw**; (18) **Sherman Brown Dryer Karol Gold Lebow**; (19) **Arnold, Foster**; (20) **Wier, Nakon**.

To ensure *Novae Res Urbis—GTA Edition* covers your interesting cases, be they board decisions, development applications or court decisions, please drop us a line by email or fax. The count for the seventh annual ranking has already begun. •

How the information was collected

Using manual research, we tracked each of the law firms mentioned in *Novae Res Urbis—GTA Edition* (OMB News predominately) over this one-year period. From there we determined the firms that were the most frequently mentioned and sorted through the projects and hearings with which they were involved. It became apparent that some firms (given their size) were involved in a variety of developments across the city, while others had particular associations to major clients. The original data was collected from OMB files plus our research for news stories.

Determining the top 10

The most difficult task was in balancing the number of clients, the range of projects, the difficulty of cases, as well as some unique features about the projects/cases. Remember, this list was based only on items covered in *Novae Res Urbis—GTA Edition* and does not account for the vast number of cases and firms involved with

such matters as minor variance applications, assessment appeals or for those that participated as part of a development team without our knowledge. Hence, there is a certain degree of subjectivity in our ranking.

The listings

Each grouping in the list notes the firm and the lawyers that are part of the planning and development law team for each of the top ten ranked firms. Items grouped as OMB matter/court hearing are those involved with hearings, pre-hearings, and mediation sessions. In cases which involved a board decision and a clear winner/loser or settlement was determined, we note the appropriate symbol (✓) or (X) following the case description. If there was no clear win/lose or the matter involved a pre-hearing, or is still pending before the OMB, no symbol is applied. A brief reason is given at the beginning of each listed firm explaining why we ranked them as we did.

Pay hikes for federal parks staff in new collective agreement

Parks Canada and the **Public Service Alliance of Canada** yesterday signed a new collective agreement, ratified earlier this month by its more than 4,800 unionized employees. Under the agreement, unionized employees will receive salary increases of 2.5 per cent retroactive to August 5, 2003, and increases of 2.25 per cent in 2004/2005, 2.4 per cent in 2005/2006, and 2.5 per cent in 2006/2007. Operational service workers will receive additional salary adjustments ranging from 2.6 to 19 per cent.

Enhanced film and T.V. tax credits legislation introduced

The provincial government has introduced legislation to invest \$48 million in two tax credits effective January 1, 2005, if passed by the legislature. The investment would:

- Increase the *Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit* for domestic productions from 20 to 30 per cent for five years; and maintain the 10 per cent regional bonus credit, subject to a performance review before January 1, 2010.
- Increase the *Ontario Production Services Tax Credit* for foreign productions from 11 to 18 per cent, subject to an annual review.

Slow down in housing market: Dunning outlook

Statistics Canada has reported the third consecutive drop in Toronto CMA employment, with a 6,000 reduction in November, and a total drop of 25,500 since August, according to **Will Dunning's** December *Housing Market Digest*. Coupled with a slow down in the housing market, Dunning also

reports an anticipated weakening in the manufacturing sector during the first half of 2005, due to the climb in the dollar over the past two years and softening in the auto sector.

Rental vacancy rates continue to rise

The Canadian average rental apartment vacancy rate rose for the third consecutive year reaching 2.7 per cent in October 2004 up from 2.2 per cent a year ago, according to the **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Rental Market Survey**. In **Toronto** the vacancy rate increased by half a percentage to 4.3 per cent in 2004. As well, the highest average monthly rent for two-bedroom apartments at \$1,052 was in Toronto.

The 'availability rate,' was introduced as a new measure on a pilot basis this year in all 28 major centres across Canada. A rental unit is considered available if the unit is vacant (physically unoccupied and available for immediate rental, or if notice has been given or received to move and a new tenant has not signed a lease. The average rental apartment availability rate in Canada's major metropolitan areas was 3.9 per cent in October 2004.

HAMILTON

Hamilton adopts water rate increases

The **City of Hamilton** council last week approved an 8.1 per cent increase in metered water and wastewater rates, and a 9.6 per cent increase in non-metered water and wastewater service charges, effective January 1, 2005. Based on average annual water consumption this reflects an increase of approximately 10-cents per day.

PEEL

Mississauga property taxes to rise 5.8%

Mississauga's budget committee has approved a 5.8 per cent increase for residential property taxes. The 2005 budget goes to council for approval January 19, 2005.

Peel increases property taxes 3.2% and utility rates 5%

Peel Region council approved the 2005 current and capital budgets at its meeting December 9. The current budget for 2005 totals \$1.1 billion and includes a property tax rate increase of 3.2 per cent, which means a \$44 annual property tax increase per average household. A utility rate increase of 5 per cent effective April 1, 2005, reflects a \$15 increase to average residential water and wastewater bills. The 2005 capital budget of \$331 million also was approved.

Brampton agrees to regional compromise

Brampton council has approved a provincially-produced report regarding governance for **Peel Region**. The report by **Judge Adams** requires significant concessions from all three Peel municipalities. Brampton was concerned that rapid population growth (by about 23,000 people annually) would leave it underrepresented at the regional level.

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GTA IN BRIEF

Brampton mapping in 2005 calendar

Recognized for its geographic imaging, the City of Brampton is to be included in the 2005 ESRI Map Gallery calendar, representing the month of May. A preview of the *Brampton Information Kiosk Map* will be posted online at www.esricanada.com.

YORK

York assesses economic success

York Region's planning and economic development committee has presented its draft economic development strategy to regional council. The document assesses the current state of the region's economy and proposes a partnership framework for economic competitiveness. Recommended strategic directions included improved information sharing, strengthened entrepreneurship and industry clusters, and encouraging efficient movement of goods and people. The draft strategy will be distributed to regional and local

municipalities and other stakeholders. It is to be considered for approval by council this spring.

York and CUPE ratify collective agreement

York Region and CUPE Local 905 have ratified a new collective agreement, resulting in a three-year deal effective April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2007, for the majority of the region's unionized employees. The new contract includes 3 per cent yearly salary increases for each year of the collective agreement and 2004-market adjustments of about 1 per cent of the region's payroll for positions paid below current market rate.

Fines to fund mobility projects

Richmond Hill council has approved a new by-law that will send 50 per cent of proceeds collected from disabled parking offences to a reserved account that will fund future mobility initiatives in the town. The remainder of the collected fees will go to the town's operating budget. The current fine

for illegal parking in a handicapped parking space is \$300.

Newmarket seeking solution to offensive odours

The Town of Newmarket and expert consultants CH2MHILL are reviewing material provided by Halton Recycling Ltd. to determine whether proposed interim and permanent solutions will eliminate offensive odours originating from the 395 Harry Walker Parkway composting facility.

**REMINDER:
NRU GTA Edition
will not be
published
on December 29**

**Happy Holidays
from NRU!**

GTA PEOPLE

Jeffrey Abrams has been appointed York Region deputy clerk. Previously, Abrams was a solicitor with the former Metropolitan Toronto and director in the City of Toronto clerk's office.

Bianca Bielski will start her new position as the manager of development services in Burlington in the new year. Previously, Bielski was Kingston's director of planning.

Lana Finney has joined Davis & Company as an environmental litigator. Finney was previously with Stikeman Elliott.

Denis Cutajar is Brampton's new commissioner of economic development and public relations. Cutajar was previously the department's executive director.

Monica Wallenfels has been appointed Halton Region clerk. Previously, Wallenfels was an assistant corporate counsel with the region, practicing primarily in land development and municipal finance.

Two long-serving Brampton employees have announced their retirement, effective at the end of December. Works and transportation commissioner **Alex MacMillan** has been with the city for 20 years. Community services commissioner **Bob Branch** has been with the city for more than 30 years. No word yet on who will replace them.

Scott Stewart has appointed Hamilton's general manager of public works. Stewart has served in the position, in an acting capacity, since July. Previously, Stewart was head of the waste management and the capital planning and implementation divisions. •