

Town endorses outlet mall's bid to open on statutory holidays

Halton Hills Council has endorsed a bid by Toronto Premium Outlets of Halton Hills (TPO) to be open on statutory holidays.

The outlet mall located on Steeles Ave. at Trafalgar Rd. in Halton Hills is seeking a tourism exemption from the Retail Business Holidays Act. The final decision will be made by Halton Regional Council — voted on yesterday after press time— but TPO sought the Town of Halton Hills's endorsement at its final council meeting in June.

TPO is seeking an Area Basis Tourist exemption of the Retail Business Holidays Act to remain open for most statutory holidays: New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Labour Day and Thanksgiving.

Mayor Rick Bonnette said this is an opportunity for the Town to receive more money and for local residents to pick up more jobs.

"This is a good thing," he said. "Times have changed (referring to regulated shopping days)."

Speaking on behalf of TPO, Sandra Kaiser, vice-president of Corporate Affairs for SmartREIT, said they are committed to working with the Town and Region on promoting local tourism within its marketing plan.

As well, TPO has hired the BA Group to "quite aggressively" work on a traffic mitigation plan to ease congestion in the Trafalgar Rd., Steeles Ave. and Hwy 401 area.

"We have implemented some changes ... It's not perfect, we still have a lot more work to do, but you have our commitment we will continue to mitigate traffic," said Kaiser. Some of those changes include right only entrances and controlled traffic and pedestrian patterns. They are also looking at get-



ting the traffic light timing changed.

TPO opened on Aug. 1, 2013 with 358,000 square feet and 85 outlet stores of luxury brand retailers. Forty-three per cent of its customers come from central Ontario, 35 per cent from Toronto and 12 per cent from western Ontario.

Last year, 258 bus tours brought in shoppers from the U.S., China, Brazil and Ireland— already in 2015 to date that number has doubled, said Kaiser. There are daily buses from Union Station to the TPO bringing Toronto hotel guests and residents.

The expectation, Kaiser said, as TPO's reputation grows, it will attract the development of a hotel in the area, leading to longer trips and a potential spinoff to nearby local tourist and shopping areas.

Kaiser pointed out that nearby shopping centres such as Bramalea City Centre and Square One Shopping Centre already have exemptions.

Toronto Premium Outlets is a 50/50 partnership between Simon Property Group and SmartREIT Inc. Simon Property Group owns, develops and manages retail properties across North America, Europe and Asia. SmartREIT Inc. owns and manages 151 retail centres in Canada.

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