

Police support idea of regional campus

Central courthouse could also be part of plan for new facility

While preliminary study finds that the Halton Regional Police Service (HRPS) will likely break even financially from most of the proposed Halton Regional Campus, substantial efficiencies could be realized from a centralized Provincial Court component.

That was the consensus during last week's Police Services Board meeting after Director of Community Policing Administration Jim Watson ran the campus business case past senior officers and board members—all of whom endorsed the innovative concept.

"It has such terrific merit to it," said Halton Hills regional councillor and board member Clark Somerville.

Local taxpayers could see millions of dollars in savings if the Region, police and both school boards decide to bring their offices

together into a proposed joint campus.

The potential facility would be approximately 540,000 square feet located at the Region's current site on Bronte Road in Oakville.

The campus would include four distinct areas of office space for the Region, Halton Regional Police, Halton Catholic District School Board and the Halton District School Board, housing about 1,900 staff.

It's estimated that the campus would cost approximately \$127 million but would result in an overall savings of more than \$20 million for taxpayers—as opposed to how much it would cost if each of the four partners pursued individual buildings.

"This is one of the most exciting initiatives that has come along in a long time," said board member Joan Lougheed.

The site would also include an outdoor community square and a multi-services facility linked to the office space that would house amenities to be shared by the four partners, such as a joint board/council chambers, cafeteria,

daycare service, support services or perhaps even a Tim Hortons.

"It has been determined that the Halton Regional Campus proposal best meets the objectives related to increased public accessibility to government services, improved service integration and delivery and financial cost efficiencies," said Watson.

Halton Region CAO Brent Marshall briefly addressed the board and explained how none of the partners have found a major flaw in the plan.

"We haven't run into an insurmountable issue, no roadblocks," he said.

One driving force behind the plan is that all four partners involved in the project will require additional space within the next few years.

"We're bursting at the seams," said Watson.

The study also identified opportunities to partner with the provincial and federal governments on various initiatives, such as creating a centralized Halton courthouse on the campus. This, said Chief Ean

See POLICE, pg. 4

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