

# Recycling firm eyes Todd Road for transformer recycling site

**CYNTHIA GAMBLE**  
Staff Writer

A Brampton firm that recycles oil-filled electrical transformers is hoping to set up shop on Todd Road in Georgetown.

Green-Port Environmental Managers Ltd. (GPE) has applied for a Ministry of Environment provisional certificate of approval for a waste disposal site to be located at 64 Todd Rd.

GPE wants to build a 8,400 sq. ft. building to allow for the dismantling and recycling of parts from transformers with less than (<) 50 parts per million (ppm) of PCBs (poly-chlorinated biphenyls) at a maximum rate of 100 tonnes per day and the maximum amount of material to be stored on site will not exceed 200 tonnes on any given day.

Peter Wallace, GPE's vice-president of marketing and development, said it's a misnomer to call it a "waste disposal site", calling it more of a reverse manufacturing process— taking a transformer and breaking it down to its precious commodity parts— oil, cables, wires, metals, etc, and recycling those parts back into the market. The oil, for example, is highly valuable and is salvaged and reused as industrial lubricant. He said the actual waste generated is minimal (only three to five per cent), and that it is tested before it's sent to a secure landfill.

This proposal is for non-hazardous materials only— Environment Canada considers <50 ppm PCBs to be non-hazardous— and Wallace said there is no intention in the future to handle hazardous materials.

In a presentation to Town council, GPE's vice-president of operations Marc Mittleman said 75 to 80 per cent of all oil-filled transformers are <2 ppm.

The Ministry of the Environment is reviewing the proposal, and recently sent a letter to the Town of Halton Hills setting today (Friday) as the deadline today for comments. Municipalities or affected members of the public have the right to request a public hearing, but must have valid reasons and supporting technical justification, according to the MOE letter.

In a split vote, Halton Hills council voted to defer its objection to the plan, and instead will ask the ministry for

more time to review the merits of the proposal.

Originally, Acton Councillor Mike O'Leary had tabled a notice of motion to state the Town's objection to the proposal, and to request a public hearing after Town staff and the Town Environmental Advisory Committee (TEAC) had a chance to look over a site plan.

"These are transformers that have around 50 parts/million (ppm) of PCBs and I think before even before a site plan application comes in, we should start making arrangements for a public hearing on this matter," he said at a previous meeting. "I don't think this is something that's going to be accepted quickly by the Town of Halton Hills."



**MIKE O'LEARY**

"We understand the community's concerns about the health risks," said Mittleman. "But there will be no risk or adverse effects to the community. We will not be bringing to this facility PCB-contaminated equipment. The application to the ministry is explicit in that regard. Our business will be a complement to the industrial park. We aim to make our neighbours our clients."

"Will there be any danger to the people living in this community or workers working in the vicinity," asked Ward 3 Councillor Moya Johnson again.

"No, none whatsoever," said Mittleman.

He said if there was a spill within the building, the newly constructed plant will be built on a spill container (a large cement recessed block with six-inch curbs around the sides, with no drainage holes), and inside the plant, the dismantling process would also be done within spill containers. If there is a spill, it'll be about 20-30 gallons. "So you're not looking at a large spill," said Wallace.

"If there is a spill, there will be no place for it to go. There's spill containment with the spill containment in that building," said Wallace.

The company's goal is to recycle as much as they can from the transformers— about 2,000 to 3,000 transformers a year.

Wallace said the company hopes to submit a site plan to the Town by the end of March and to have the building ready for occupancy by September. The building will be secured with fencing and lighting, and there will be very little outside storage.

Mittleman said the company does not expect to generate a lot of truck traffic and transportation of the transformers will be done with spill containment vehicles.

GPE chose Halton Hills for its new location due to its low industrial land cost, and its proximity to its clientele— mainly utilities companies.

But O'Leary continued to press for his motion citing the lack of information and the compressed timeline to comment.

"My intent is not to discourage any business from moving into town... I think we owe it to our citizens to slow the process down," he said.

All council members were agreed they wanted comments from Town staff including the fire department, engineering, TEAC and Halton Hills Hydro, but differed whether to send the MOE a resolution objecting to the proposal now and requesting a public hearing or to simply ask for a delay.

Johnson called O'Leary's resolution "a bit reactionary".

In a 6-5 vote, council voted to have Mayor Rick Bonnette send a letter to the MOE requesting more time to review the proposal— and in particular the site plan— and to send comments later after a staff report is prepared.

According to Green-Port's website, www.green-port.com, the company began operations in 1995 based in Brampton as a full-service PCB site management group and has recycled, transported and disposed of more than 8 million kg of PCB waste for permanent destruction with incidents or spills.

The company in that time has also expanded to offer a variety of other recycling initiatives including: above and below ground tank removals; propane cannister disposal; asbestos and mold abatement; tire recycling and disposal and disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste liquids or solids.


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