

# Region makes changes to DC bylaw to appease developers

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Special to The IFP

While the Region's financial gurus have crunched the numbers and managed to reduce the majority of the proposed development charge (DC) hikes, local builders say there's still room for improvement.

This is what the Region's administration and finance committee heard at its meeting April 9, when staff presented the revisions made to the DCs in response to public input.

DCs are levied by municipalities to recover growth-related costs associated with things like roads, water and sewer infrastructure needed to service new development.

At a meeting held last month, the municipality was told by local developers and chambers of commerce that the proposed substantial DC increases will be a big turn-off to businesses looking to locate in Halton.

Although the new proposed DC for warehousing/distribution businesses has been brought down from \$18.59 per square foot to \$13.65 per square foot (region-wide DC), Lyn Townsend said the numbers still don't make sense.

The lawyer, who spoke on behalf of a group of non-residential developers, pointed out the new rate is exactly the same as what retail developments would have to pay.

"Distribution centres do not generate the same needs for service as retail," she said. "This is not what we had hoped to achieve."

She noted the policy would have a dramatic impact on Milton and Halton Hills and some effect on Burlington and Oakville.

She went on to deem the Region's new proposed 30 per cent discount for manufactur-

ing/office developments— which would see those companies pay a reduced rate of \$9.55 per square foot (region-wide)— an acceptable solution.

The committee also heard from Michael Bowman, who spoke on behalf of residential developers Tribute Communities and the Metrontario Group.

While he said Region staff has made some positive changes to some of the DCs, he took issue with the fact his clients could still be faced with a 101 per cent DC increase to build in Oakville's uptown core.

He explained the huge hike is not consistent with current planning policies that encourage the type of high-density development his clients are proposing.

Currently the Region charges Halton-wide DCs for roads and general services and area-specific DCs for water and wastewater, with the latter fees being higher in Halton Urban Structure Plan (HUSP) areas where rapid development is taking place, like Milton, north Oakville and the Milton/Halton Hills 401 corridor.

A background study prepared on the topic proposes region-wide DCs for all services. If these kinds of fees were to be implemented, the DC to develop a home in a non-HUSP area could go from \$13,677 to \$27,474.

Another public meeting will be held on the proposed DCs Wednesday, April 30 at 9:30 a.m. at the Halton Regional Centre in Council Chambers.

A final proposal will then be presented to the administration and finance committee at its meeting Wednesday, May 21 and then on to regional council Wednesday, May 28.

For more information visit [www.halton.ca](http://www.halton.ca).

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