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## DC discounts equal about \$10 tax hike

By **Melanie Hennessey**  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

After several hours of debate and many failed motions, regional council last week approved a new batch of development charges (DCs) for Halton and discounts for some of the fees.

At its meeting Wednesday, council endorsed charging area-specific DCs — staff had recommended region-wide — that bring about double-digit percentage increases for most of the rates.

It also supported giving DC discounts of about 30 per cent to manufacturing, office and warehouse developments.

The lost revenues from the new discount will add about \$10 onto the typical tax bill. Combine that with the mandatory DC exemptions the Region must grant under the Province's Development Charges Act and the discretionary exemptions already made for

things like agriculture uses and it equates to around \$70 for the average household based on a \$300,000 assessment.

This is up from the \$53.60 the typical homeowner has paid over the past several years to cover DC discounts.

Local residents turned out in full force at a Region meeting last week to voice their dissatisfaction with how the discounts will affect their taxes.

While only a small handful of citizens spoke at this week's meeting, both Kurt Koster of Burlingtongreen and Burlington resident Tom Muir urged council to defer the DCs by one month to hold further public meetings for residents on the issue.

"The whole process has been dominated by the development industry," contended Koster, who noted the request is also supported by Oakvillegreen.

Commissioner of Corporate Services and Treasurer Jane MacCaskill said it's important for the process to proceed, since the current DC bylaw will expire in August and it's preferable to have the new bylaw passed before then.

She also noted that a public workshop and public meetings have already been held on the issue, in addition to 14 stakeholder meetings.

"We conducted the process openly and transparently," she emphasized.

No councillors made a motion to delay the DCs.

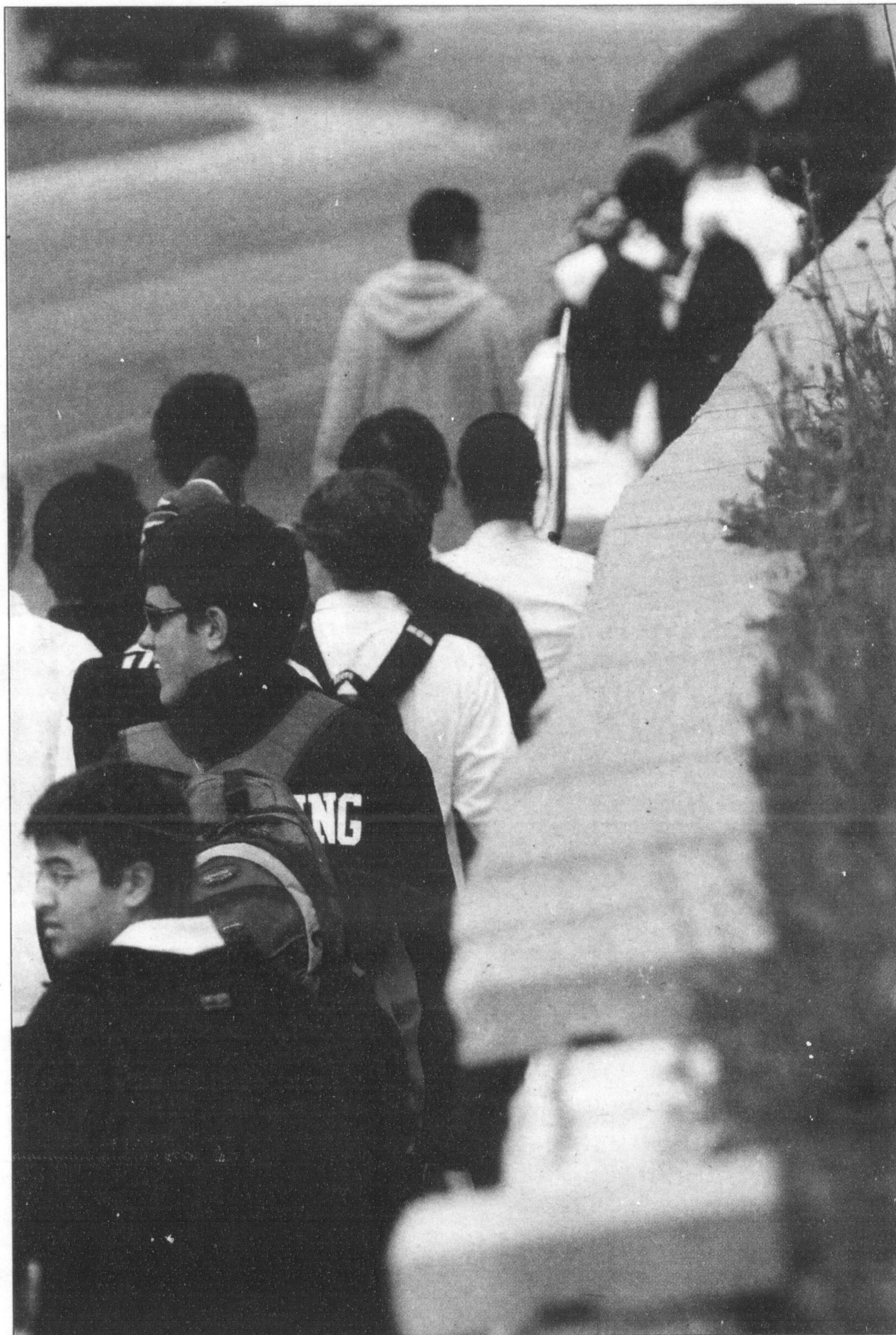
Oakville resident Brian Burton also spoke and claimed that Region staff was "beat up" and "overwhelmed" by developers' lobbying during the DC process.

Halton CAO Pat Moyle defended his staff, saying that the finance department "can not be overwhelmed."

"They are extremely professional, very competent and very diligent," he said.

Council heard once again from the development community and local

• see **BYLAW** on page A17



CHRIS KORNACK / SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

**SAYING GOODBYE:** Bishop Reding students walk from their Main Street secondary school to Holy Rosary Church on Martin Street Friday for the funeral of Mario Llanos, 17, killed in a single-vehicle crash on Tremaine Road May 25. Students were surely also thinking about fellow Reding student Iliia Nourkov, 17, also killed in the crash. His funeral was held Saturday in Brampton.

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