

# Firm commitment from Town would help hospital: Oliver

• from COUNCILLORS on page A1 stated at the time.

However, the hospital corporation is still responsible for the remaining 10 per cent of construction costs along with covering the full cost of building revenue-generating facilities such as cafeterias, retail areas and parking lots as well as the medical equipment inside the hospital.

In total, depending on the equipment a hospital needs, that means the Province will cover around 70 per cent of the total project costs, with the hospital corporation paying the remaining portion, dubbed the local share.

The hospital has three ways to pay that local share: its own revenues from, for example, parking lot fees or stores; fundraising done by the Milton District Hospital Foundation; and through financial assistance from municipalities.

The problem Milton council tried to wrap its head around Monday is that HHS won't provide the municipality with an estimate right now of how much money it would need.

"At the end of the day, if we put too much (money) away, that's fine," Scherer said to HHS President John Oliver during Monday's council session.

"But we need a starting point."

Oliver said he understood council's frustration but he doesn't want to float a dollar figure that would inevitably turn out to be wrong years later after more detailed planning has taken place. The hospital provided a preliminary cost estimate when it presented its business case for the expansion to the Ministry of Health in September, 2008 but Oliver said after the council meeting that number is already out of date and he doesn't wish to release it.

"It's not just inflation, the original size and scope has evolved from the original business case," he explained. He said he also doesn't want to jeopardize a competitive bidding process by leaking expected total costs.

However, Oliver did provide council with a benchmark for comparison when he said the redevelopment planned for Milton's hospital is at least as big as the one proposed for Burlington's Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital. The first phase of the redevelopment of Jo Brant is projected to cost \$312 million, with the local share pegged at \$120 million. In December, Burlington's city council committed to covering half of that cost, or \$60 million, and has already started a dedicated property tax levy this year. The City of

Vaughan last year committed \$80 million to a proposed new hospital for its community. Both projects are also unapproved and are in competition with the Milton hospital expansion to get on the Province's next 10-year list of infrastructure projects, to be released next year, likely as part of the 2011 budget.

However, the competition is not just among those three hospitals. The Ministry of Health is currently prioritizing at least 50 other proposed hospital projects before submitting its list of requests to the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, which will ultimately decide on the 10-year capital plan.

Other ministries are also prioritizing their own lists of proposed capital projects, one of which includes the proposed Wilfrid Laurier University campus in Milton. That prioritization is expected to take place over the next three months, said Jason Grier, a professional lobbyist from Hill and Knowlton working

on behalf of HHS.

One of the things the Ministry of Health will be looking for during this time when prioritizing projects is whether the hospital corporation has a firm plan to meet its local share commitments, Grier said after council Monday.

"They don't want to move forward on projects that aren't going to have that local share commitment because then the project isn't going to happen," explained Grier, who served as executive assistant to George Smitherman when he was health minister in the provincial government.

Oliver told council it would help the hospital if the Town made a firm commitment of financial support. "I don't know if you need to put a dollar figure behind it right now."

Tim Foran can be reached at tforan@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

## Noise barrier to be built on Steeles

A noise barrier will be built along Steeles Avenue to make life more bearable for homeowners whose Elliott Crescent properties abut the busy roadway.

Halton regional council has approved the construction of a wooden noise barrier running along the back property lines of the homes between 596 and 636 Elliot Cres.

The barrier will cost \$304,182 to build, with the Region paying for 75 per cent of the cost and homeowners picking up the remaining 25 per cent. Homeowners will be charged their share based on the length of

the noise barrier along their property lines.

Complaints from residents on Elliott and other nearby streets, including Willow Avenue and Wilson Street, were raised last fall during a public meeting to discuss a noise study for the area along Steeles between Ontario Street and Thompson Road.

Under the Region's noise attenuation policy, homeowners seeking noise barriers must collect a petition with signatures from two-thirds of the affected property owners in the area, and submit it to the Region. Out of four submissions, only one met the requirements.

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**Public information sessions**

**Guelph residents:**  
**Wednesday, May 26, 6 to 9 p.m.**  
Presentation starts at 7 p.m.  
West End Community Centre  
21 Imperial Rd. S (at Paisley Rd.), Guelph

**Milton, Puslinch and Township of Guelph Eramosa residents:**  
**Tuesday, June 1, 7 to 9 p.m.**  
Presentation starts at 7 p.m.  
Rockmosa Community Centre  
74 Christie St., Rockwood

**Industrial, commercial, institutional property owners/operators:**  
**Thursday, June 3, 4 to 9 p.m.**  
Presentation starts at 7 p.m.  
West End Community Centre  
21 Imperial Rd. South (at Paisley Rd.), Guelph

**About the Program**

As part of the Ontario Clean Water Act, the City of Guelph is developing a Drinking Water Source Protection Program to identify vulnerable areas and reduce risks to municipal water quality. The City is committed to identifying best practices and sharing resources with the community to keep Guelph's water clean.

For more information visit [guelph.ca/water](http://guelph.ca/water) or call 519-837-5627.

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