

More work and taxes are Fischer's goals

Halton Business Director Matt Fischer has summed up in two phrases what his department is expected to do: broaden the tax base; and provide jobs.

Mr. Fischer was responding in a report asked for by regional councillors on "Industrial Development in Halton Region; Its costs and benefits."

In the report are some surprising statistics. Mr. Fischer notes that from his studies industrial-commercial properties generate 2.5 to 3.5 times more

assessment per acre than do residential properties.

The tax contribution from industrial-commercial lands is 4.6 to 6.7 times greater per acre than residential.

Mr. Fischer said, however, that he sees the second goal of creating jobs as possibly more important than creating a wider tax base.

"Job creation provides employment for those currently unemployed or underemployed, thereby raising living standards

and the ability of local citizens to make expenditures for goods and services; which in turn creates additional jobs in the supply and delivery of these services; which increases the standard of living for those employed in the service sector; which leads to increased expenditures for goods and services; which...

"This is called the multiplier effect and it literally has no bounds, but by the same token, is difficult to measure," he said.

While he is pleased

"this region presently enjoys a very low unemployment rate," he said it is noteworthy that "40 per cent of our labor force is employed outside this region."

The danger then, he notes, is to avoid a tendency for Halton to become only a place where people sleep.

"While we enjoy many of the benefits of the multiplier effect... we are in danger of falling forever into the bedroom community trap where residents have no sense of neighborhood or pride in their community."

"Their residence

within the region is merely a convenience. "Commuters split their experience and their sense of place between their city of work and their town of residence, never fully participating in either."

"Both places lose the benefit of full community commitment in such areas as the volunteer service, cultural improvement and social or recreational program participation at a staggering cost," he said.

Mr. Fischer said he therefore sees a primary concern of his department to "produce alternative employment prospects within the region for the region's citizens."

Firms flock to Halton produce 800 more jobs

More than 860 new jobs will open in Halton Region in the next few months as a result of firms moving into the area.

In a regular report to members of Halton's administration and finance committee, business development director Matt Fischer said there are currently

16 firms in the process of locating in Halton.

Two of these firms, Binks Manufacturing and Sen Gelda Scientific and Development Corporation will locate in Milton.

Binks, from Toronto, will require up to 50,000 square feet of space and is expected to provide up to 60 new jobs.

Sen Gelda, from Mississauga, will require up to 10,000 square feet of space and is expected to provide eight to 10 new jobs.

In total, Mr. Fischer added, residential development in the region is up from last year, especially in Oakville, while commercial industrial development

is down.

Mr. Fischer blamed the trend on interest rates and economic uncertainty and added "in this department's view, the above factors are producing a pent-up demand which will be released when either the interest rates decline and/or when they stabilize at one level for a period of time."

Halton is urged to double spending

By Steve Arnold Halton must more than double what it currently spends on industrial development if the local economy is to grow as fast as the population, according to Matt Fischer.

Mr. Fischer, director of the region's business development department, told members of the administration and finance committee last week another \$206,740 will be required to put Halton in a position where it can properly compete with other regions in this area for business expansion.

Halton, he said, is currently spending much less than its neighbours on the business of attracting business.

Mr. Fischer noted, for example, that while Hamilton-Wentworth spent \$1.66 per capita on business development, Halton spends only 68 cents.

"We need a strategy that will bring Halton into the mainstream of business development," Mrs. Fischer said.

"The people we talk to all seem to know where Burlington, Oakville and Milton are, but they do not relate them to Halton Region," he added.

Mr. Fischer said the strategy he is working on involves the creation of several periodicals that will be circulated to businesses in the area and to those seriously interested in moving to Halton.

"The aim is to educate people about Halton and to mould their perceptions of the region," he said.

Mr. Fischer added that the program cannot work, however, if it is not properly funded.

"Right now we just do not have the staff to do justice to the local industry contacts we are getting," he told committee members.

Extra staff, included in the figure for increased spending, would include a clerk-typist for the department, a second business development officer and a research analyst.

"This is an organization that we could live with for three to five years," he said.

The proposals that Mr. Fischer submitted to the committee, which were referred for further study, called for increasing the department's budget from \$181,365 a year to \$386,140.

"I recognize that this is expensive but it is

important if the region is going to show that it is interested in economic development," he told committee members.

"Naturally if we spend more we are going to get more responses but I think we will get a respectable number of re-

sponses from an expenditure like this," he said. "We've got to be prepared to spend some bucks," he added.

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