

No welcome wagon needed yet for expected flood of new residents

By NORMAN NELSON

Milton residents don't have to worry yet about welcome packages for 40,000 neighbours expected to flood into town over the next two decades.

The influx is not expected to materialize until Halton Region completes a 36-month study on the proposed expansion.

This disappoints Milton councillor Brad Clements who said he'd like to see some development, such as non-profit housing on the Halton Centennial Manor lands and other private ventures, allowed to proceed in the meantime.

The \$4.3 million study, the second phase of a larger regional undertaking called the Halton Urban Structure Review, will not commence until the region is satisfied the province will kick in its share — which the region hopes to be about 50 per cent.

Although the region will put up the other 50 per cent, regional planning and development commissioner Rash Mohammed assured councillors Wednesday that developers would ultimately pick up the tab.

Mr. Mohammed calls the Halton Urban Structure Review, designed to handle projected growth in Halton, "one of the most complex and comprehensive planning exercises ever undertaken within Halton."

The first phase, completed last year, looked at where expansion should occur in Halton. "The conclusion was that we would focus growth in Milton," he said.

More specifically, in his report to the planning and public works committee on Wednesday, he said, "To recapitulate, council has adopted a development scenario of an additional 40,000 people for Milton accompanied by 2,000 acres of industrial land. This scenario is for Year 2011 and would occupy approximately 5,000 acres of land."

The upcoming second phase of the undertaking will key in on three aspects of Milton expansion.

First is a thorough examination of the plan to service the water-starved municipality by piping water from Lake Ontario. The second will look at increasing Milton's current well-based supply prior to the pipeline being completed. And the third will develop detailed land use concepts to determine where residential, institutional, commercial and industrial facilities should be located.

Regional staff are currently drawing up formal terms of reference for these phase two studies prior to the hiring of consultants in "late April or May."

The only missing piece of the puzzle is provincial funding which the region hopes to find out about in the "near future."

The staff report elaborates further on the three study areas:

• **Piping water from Lake Ontario:** includes the pre-engineering and environmental assessment studies associated with the pipeline. "These studies would include the investigation of the location of the treatment and water supply plants and routing of trunk services to Mil-

ton," stated the report.

Also to be looked at, added Mr. Mohammed, is whether a dual water supply system is feasible. This would allow town residents presently on the well-system to remain on it while new industrial and residential areas would be serviced by the lake pipeline.

• **Expansion of the well-based system:** a three-phase improvement program eventually resulting in a 66 per cent increase in capacity.

• **Planning studies:** the study will narrow the development area to 5,000 acres from the broad 13,000-acre development area outlined in the first phase, and then delve into specific residential, recreational, commercial and industrial land use.

Landfill planning gets underway ...

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However, Regional chief administrative officer John Fleming said the three parties which contested the decision — the town of Milton, a Milton ratepayers' group and a Burlington company which wants the dump located on its own property — have until April 10 to file an appeal with the Ontario Court of Appeal.

An appeal, however, must be made on a point of law. And Burlington councillor Rob Forbes told planning and public works committee members that he felt an appeal would be unsuccessful for two reasons — that the opponents' case to the Ontario Supreme Court was in fact an appeal, and that the decision made by the three Ontario Supreme Court judges was unanimous.

Given this, the Region has decided it's a sure bet to proceed with the initial dump design study, even though staff have conceded that Halton could be liable for financial damages if it has to back out of the \$1.6 million contract in the event of a successful appeal.

The Region is in a hurry because of government red tape.

If it awards the contract before the end of the provincial government's fiscal year (March 31) it can collect 60 per cent of the cost (\$980,000). If not, then the grant request would have to be resubmitted and would be unlikely to receive the full amount.

Initially, staff had inserted a rider that the contract be conditional upon the outcome of any further appeals, but decided just prior to yesterday's special council meeting that such a clause might jeopardize provincial funding.

The day after the April 10 deadline, if an appeal is not filed by landfill opponents, regional staff said they intend "to bring a report dealing with the property acquisition matters for the site" to the committee.

That report will address expropriation of the homes near the site.

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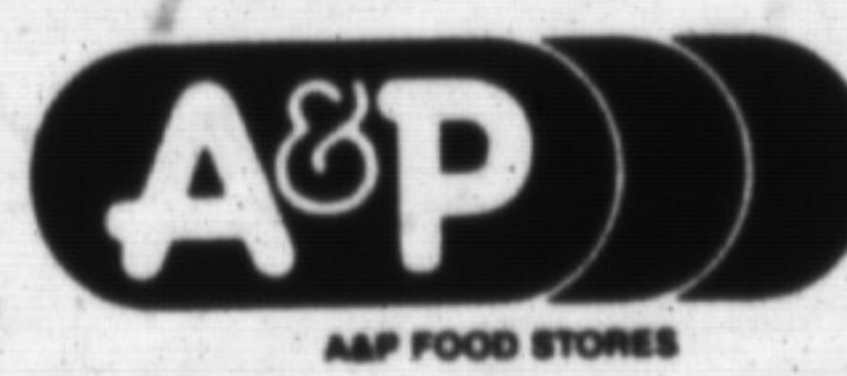
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