

Developers' gain would be taxpayers' loss

BY JEFF MITCHELL
Staff Writer

Giving developers a break on proposed levies would saddle taxpayers with a bill of \$200,000, according to York Region's treasurer.

Sandra Cartwright told regional councillors meeting in Newmarket last Thursday that reducing new development charges earmarked for GO Transit improvements will ultimately leave homeowners to pick up the tab.

The region's finance department is at odds with the Urban Development Institute and the Greater Toronto Homebuilders Association over the new levies. The developers want a 10 per cent break on the charges, which have been estimated at \$280 for a single family dwelling built in York Region. The region has offered a 5 per cent break.

The difference — \$14 per lot — may result in the municipality squaring off against the builders in front of the Ontario Municipal Board, councillors were told. They are to vote on the issue Nov. 8 after more negotiations with developers are held.

Cartwright said any concession made to developers will result in an increased burden for taxpayers, who already are contributing to the GO fund.

York's share of GO's 10-year, \$1-billion improvement plan is \$47.6 million. Legislation governing development charges allows the region to raise some \$19.2 million through levies on new construction, leaving \$28.4 million to be raised through taxation. The development charges would be in place for two years.

"Basically we would be looking at \$100,000 (more to be raised in taxes) if we reduced the

charge by 5 per cent and we would be looking at \$200,000 if we reduced it 10 per cent," Cartwright said.

That struck the wrong chord with Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson.

"I think growth has to start paying for growth," he said, arguing the full cost of the charges should be passed along to developers.

"If you're going to the (Ontario Municipal) Board for 10 per cent, you might as well be going to the board for the whole thing," he said.

That would appear to be an inevitability if the region passes on the full amount of the charge — or even a 5 per cent reduction — to developers, said Fraser Nelson, chairperson of the Urban Development Institute's York Region chapter.

He appealed for co-operation

from region councillors. The developers' groups have indicated if they're given the 10 per cent reduction they will not appeal the new levy and will back the region up in the event a builder does launch an OMB challenge.

"Let's go arm-in-arm down the aisle on this together," Nelson said.

Peel Region has already approved the 10 per cent reduction, he said.

Councillors instructed staff to conduct more talks with the developers in an attempt to end the impasse.

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NOTICE OF THE PASSING OF A GO TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT CHARGE BY-LAW BY THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Regional Municipality of York enacted By-law No. DC-0004-2001-097 on November 8, 2001, under the Development Charges Act, 1997 ("the Act").

By-law No. DC-0004-2001-097 comes into force on November 8, 2001 and applies to all lands in the Region of York.

TAKE NOTICE that any person or organization may appeal By-Law No. DC-0004-2001-097 to the Ontario Municipal Board under section 14 of the Development Charges Act, 1997 by filing with the Clerk of the Regional Municipality of York on or before the 18th day of December 2001, a notice of appeal setting out the objection to By-law No. DC-0004-2001-097 and the reasons supporting the objection.

A copy of By-law No. DC-0004-2001-097 is available for examination at the Office of the Regional Clerk, Regional Municipality of York, 17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket, Ontario.

OVERVIEW

Development charges are levied against new development, and are a primary source for funding growth-related capital expenditures. Regional capital services include water, wastewater, transportation (roads, transit) and general services (police, emergency medical services, long term care, health, public works).

The Regional Municipality of York is currently responsible for funding GO Transit capital costs. The Region must implement a Development Charge By-law for GO Transit services in order to recover the growth-related component of costs pertaining to GO Transit capital.

Effective, November 8, 2001, the residential development charge rate shall increase to include the capital costs for GO Transit. The new rates are outlined below:

Region of York Schedule of Residential Development Charges Effective November 8, 2001				
	Single & Semi-Detached	Multiple Unit Dwelling	Apts 2+ bdrms	Apts <2 bdrms
GO Transit	\$267	\$210	\$154	\$98

These rates will be applicable in all of York Region to all residential building permit applications received by any municipality in the Region of York after November 8, 2001. Residential building permit applications received by November 8, 2001 will have 60 days (January 7, 2002) to receive a building permit without being subject to the new GO Transit development charge. After this time, the GO Transit development charge will be applicable to these permits upon building permit issuance.

Dated at the Town of Newmarket this 15th day of November 2001.

Dennis Kelly
Regional Clerk
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street, Box 147
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1



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