

Don't run deficits, MPP warns York boards

BY MITCHELL BROWN
Staff Writer

Thornhill MPP Tina Molinari has one word of advice for school trustees who are thinking of running deficits.

Don't.

"I've been there," she said. "It's not a solution. It takes years and years to balance the budget and, in the end, it's the students who pay the price."

School boards in Toronto and Ottawa have voted to defy Ontario's Education Act and run a deficit if the province doesn't come up with more money for education.

"I understand the challenges they are facing," Ms Molinari said. "But it's breaking the law. I wouldn't recommend anyone do that."

"I would advise them, instead, to make whatever changes they need to make to balance the budget."

The Toronto District School Board voted unanimously Wednesday to reject a budget that would have cut \$89.5 million from the school system.

They follow the lead set by the Ottawa-Carleton school board, which voted last week to run a deficit to draw attention to the need for more funding.

Ms Molinari has some experience with deficits; a York Catholic school trustee from 1988 to 1998, she was named its chairperson at a time when it was grappling with a \$32-million deficit.

"We ran a deficit because we were inequitably funded," she said, explaining the pub-

lic and Catholic systems were funded differently, giving the separate board less funding per capita.

"(But) there's a new funding formula now. It needs to be reviewed, which is what we're doing, but it's a lot better and fairer than before."

Under the Education Act, the government can order a board to make cuts and trustees who fail to comply can be fined a maximum of \$5,000 and restricted from running for municipal office for five years.

About half of Ontario's 72 boards are facing budget shortfalls and they are being urged by labour leaders to defy the law and post deficits.

"School boards are not the problem," said Earl Manners, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

"The provincial government is trying to play a shell game with education funding to force trustees to make the false choice between programs and negotiated salary and benefit improvements for employees."

But York Region's public school board won't be joining the fight.

"The YRDSB has no plans to run a deficit," spokesperson Ross Virgo said. "Our commitment is to work with the resources we have to deliver the best possible education to York students, adding the board is discussing its funding needs with the province at every opportunity."

Chris Cable, of the York



TINA MOLINARI: Balancing budgets still the best way to go.

Catholic District School Board, said it's too soon to talk about the specifics of their budget, given the board just received its annual general legislative grant Friday.

However, a recent report discussed the need for more funding in several key areas, including staff salaries, text-

books, special education, transportation and the costs associated with housing one of the fastest-growing student populations in the province.

"I can tell you that the (provincial grants) did not address these points," she said. "We will, obviously, have to make some difficult decisions."

The Catholic board's next meeting is Tuesday.

Even though the province announced May 10 that all boards would share an extra \$350 million dollars in the coming school year — an overall funding increase of 2.5 per cent over last year — school boards and labour leaders say it's not enough.

"The government gave us some extra funding, but it in no way comes close to what's really needed," said Toronto school board chairperson Donna Cansfield.



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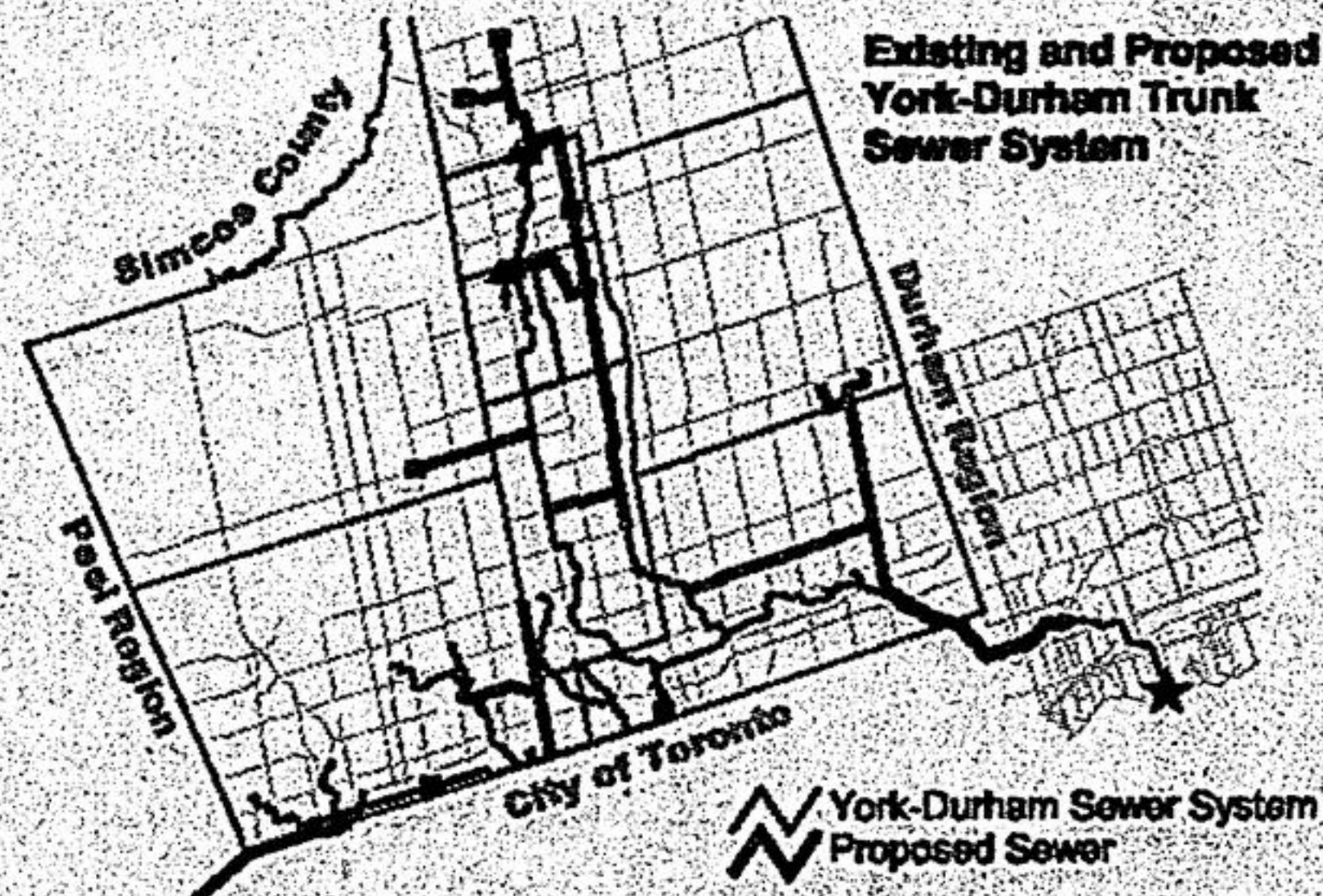
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NOTICE OF COMPLETION York-Durham Trunk Sewer System Master Plan Update

In 1997, the Regional Municipality of York completed the Master Plan Study for the York-Durham Trunk Sewer System (YDSS). The map below identifies the municipalities in York Region serviced by the YDSS. The 1997 Master Plan Study identified and reviewed sewage servicing alternatives necessary to meet current sanitary sewage servicing needs and future growth as identified in the Regional Official Plan (ROP). Several priority and strategic projects to be implemented during the planning period were described in the Master Plan. Priority projects were those required to address pending problems in the existing system and were identified for implementation within 5 years of the 1997 Master Plan. Strategic projects were those required within 10 years to service predicted development and to provide key components of the ultimate YDSS servicing scheme.

Approximately five years have passed since the Master Plan was completed. As York Region continues to experience one of the highest growth rates in the Greater Toronto Area, wastewater demands on the YDSS have continued to grow in proportion to the number of residents and employees serviced by the system. Local sewer systems in Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Aurora, Markham and Vaughan will continue to rely on the YDSS to convey and treat sanitary wastewater. Looking further ahead, extensions to the communities of King City, Stouffville, Holland Landing and Queensville are well into the planning stages. The YDSS Master Plan has been updated to ensure timely decision-making on this important infrastructure, considering the recent assumption of specific trunk sewers by the Region, a new 2036 planning forecast and implementation status of 1997 Master Plan projects. Proposed YDSS Priority and Strategic projects including future extensions to satellite communities have been confirmed through the Master Plan Update.

The YDSS Master Plan including the 2001 Update was carried out in accordance with the master plan provisions of the



June 2000 Municipal Engineers Association Municipal Class Environmental Assessment document. The 2001 YDSS Master Plan Update report is available for review and comment at the following location:

The Regional Municipality of York
Transportation and Works Department
17250 Yonge St., 1st Floor
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

With respect to implementation of the YDSS servicing strategy, it is important to note that in order to fulfill remaining Class Environmental Assessment requirements individual projects identified in the 2001 Master Plan Update will require additional documentation/investigations at a project-specific level. This will also include further consultation leading to the filing of a project specific Notice of Completion to review agencies and the public.

For further information on the YDSS Master Plan Update please contact any one of the following individuals listed below:

- | | |
|---|--|
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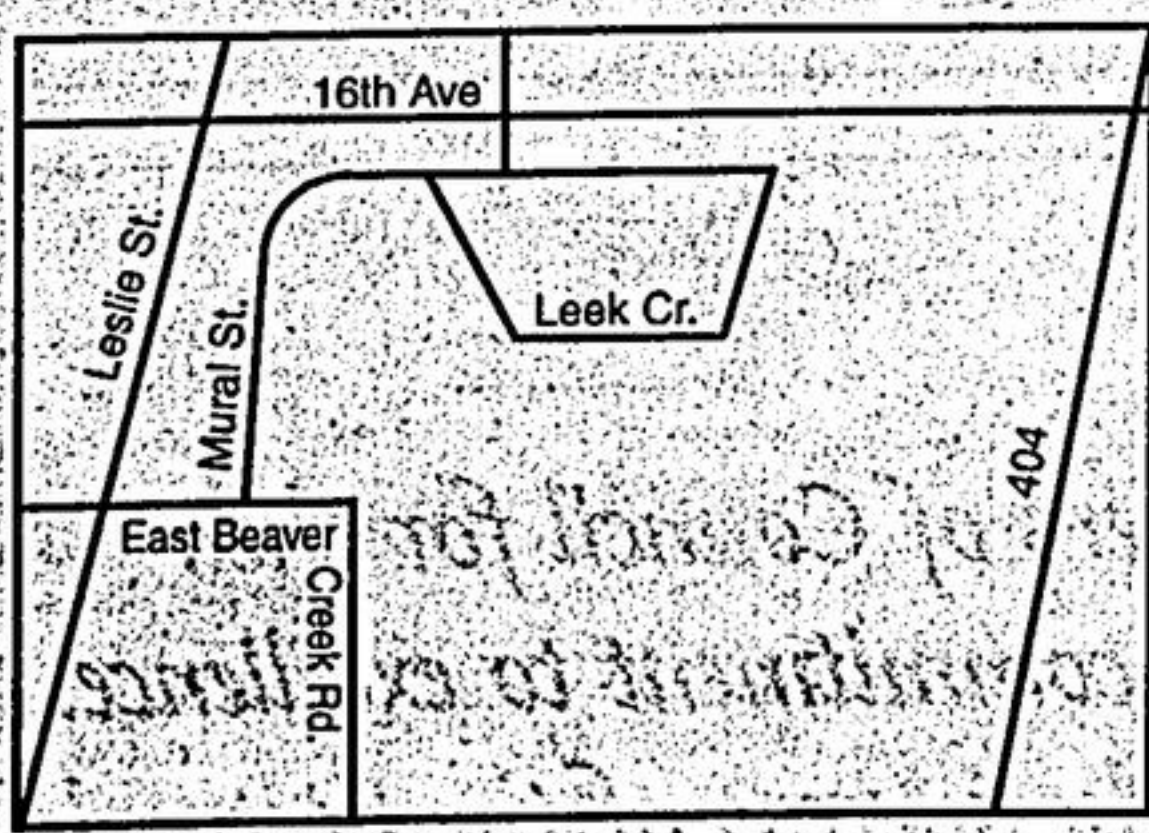
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