

# Many farmers could use cash from sale of land

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A report presented to York politicians last week warns despite an expected surge in population across the region, the area only has 13 years of housing land available.

Currently, there is a 12.2-year supply for single

detached homes, a 10-year supply for semi-detached and a 12.8-year supply for row house units.

Some of the best land in the region has already been used for development in the Markham area, Mr. Smalley said, and as long as prime fertile farmland isn't the first to

go, the decision likely won't be too detrimental.

Gerald Kellington, president of the York Region Federation of Agriculture, says while he doesn't like the fact more greenspace is being used for housing, farming is no easy undertaking and not as lucrative as it once was.

But that has to be weighed by what's best for the community, he added.

"I can't see it as a good thing for the agriculture community. They talk about sustainable living in York Region, when they talk about that, do

they want food produced in the region?" Mr. Kellington asked.

Mr. Kellington admitted, however, hardpressed farmers need to secure a future.

"Over the last few years, the only way to have retirement money is from selling their land," Mr. Kellington explained.

"Farmer's farm because it's what they want to do, but it gets to the point where they can't make a living."

There are three significant areas — north Markham, north Vaughan and north

East Gwillimbury — where land is available but using it for housing would require changes to the region's official plan and local official plans, Mr. Waller said.

"York Region has always been blessed with good farm land and we've seen it disappear from Toronto up," Mr. Kellington said. "It's a very good area. That's why people settled here in the first place."

As of 2004, York Region has lost 16 per cent of its farms to urban sprawl.

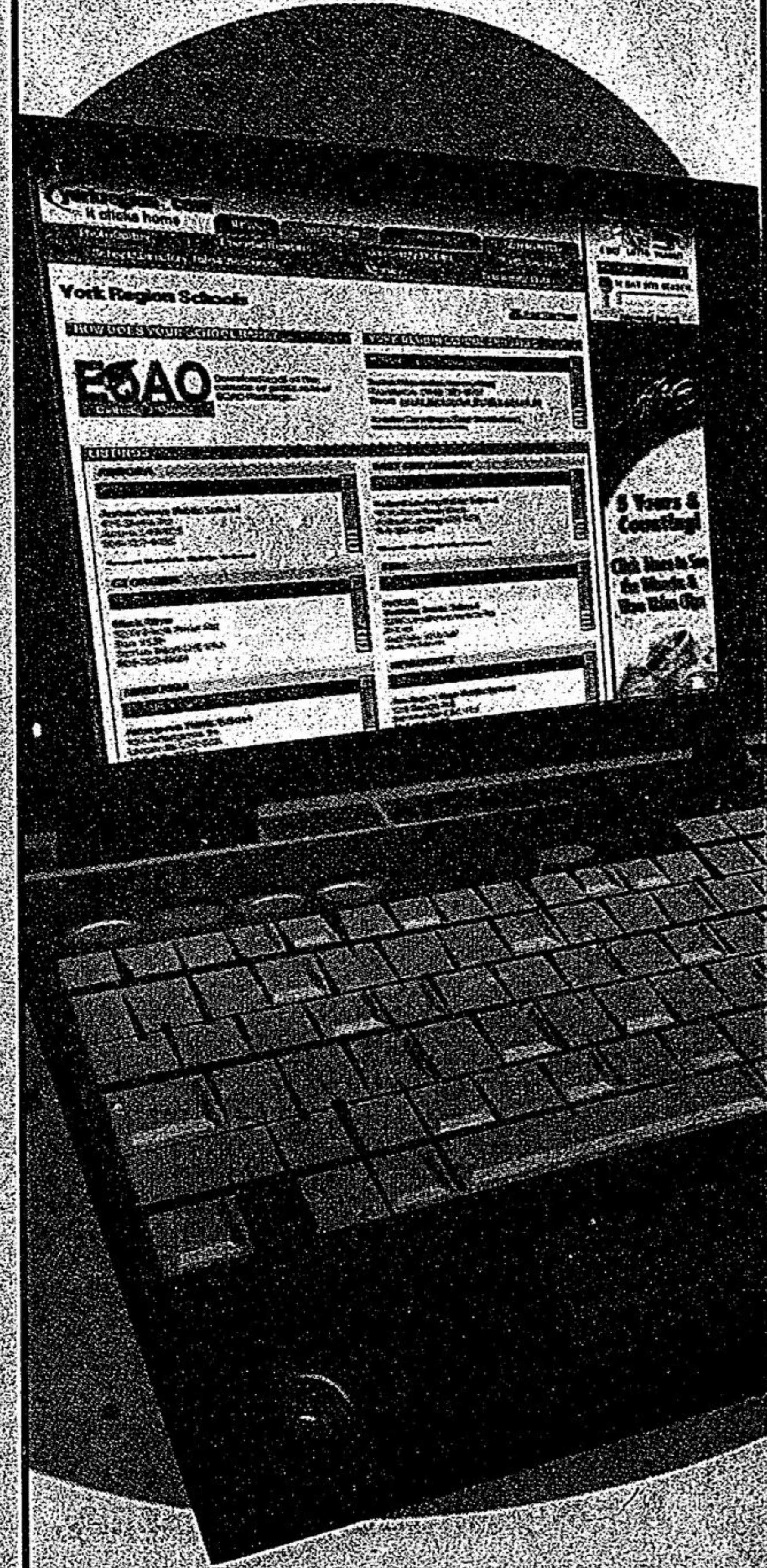
While the hunt for housing land is acute — planners

need about 10 years to plan new communities — land supply for apartments is adequate for the next 18 years.

To gather public input, town hall meetings will be held through March and April allowing residents to give input into how the region should manage growth over the next 25 years. No dates have been scheduled.

York Region's population is 920,000 and under the province's growth plan, an additional 600,000 people will be living and working in the region by 2031.

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