

# Demand sparks building boom

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For the longer term, more staff would need to be hired if growth continues as forecast and more materials, particularly DVDs and talking books, would be required.

"A lot of residents moving here are from the city," Mrs. Nordheimer said. "They have high expectations."

In 2004, an average of 575 new housing starts was forecast for the municipality every year until around 2021 in a report by C. N. Watson & Associates.

A new report presented at last week's council meeting by Andrew McNeely, the town's manager of planning services, predicts up to 1,100 housing starts each year until 2010. About 900 to 950 of these homes will be in the urban community

## 'Everyone wants to come to Whitchurch-Stouffville.'

Mayor Wayne Emmerson

of Stouffville itself.

The numbers come from a telephone survey of homebuilders. This rate of growth means Whitchurch-Stouffville could have almost 39,000 people by June 2010. The current population is around 26,000.

The Watson report had estimated a population of 34,000 for 2010 and 53,000 for 2021.

A total of 5,333 housing units have been given the green light, which include homes already built or under construction.

There can't be more homes than that until capital improvements are made to the Big Pipe, including an expansion to the Duffins Creek Water Pollution Control Plant and the twinning of a collector system, which the region predicts will be completed by the end of 2010.

Lake Ontario water is slated to be brought into town around the fall of 2008, adding to the capacity now available to the town through groundwater.

Some people may say the new figures are a "huge surprise," Mr. Emmerson said, but he doesn't think so. The original report should have had higher forecasts of 600 to 700 new households coming on board, he said, adding that the rate of housing being constructed in Markham and Richmond Hill should have been factored in.

"The demand for housing is market driven," Mr. Emmerson said. "Everyone wants to come to Whitchurch-Stouffville."

It also means if the economy slows or the rate of housing increases again in neighbouring municipalities, the pressure on Stouffville would lessen.

Since being elected in November, Mr. Emmerson said he has not allowed any more housing permits to be issued until the appropriate infrastructure is in place. He wants Hoover Park Drive to be complete, something he hopes will be done by late February.

"That should have been done before the Wal-Mart opened," he said. He also wants to see Millard Street finished between Hwy. 48 and Ninth Line, so residents can easily get from one end of town to the other. As well, an environmental assessment is currently being done as the first stage of having the "jog" taken out of Ninth Line at Main Street.

One factor hastening the rate growth in town was the approximately 18-month delay in the completion of the Big Pipe, the Ninth Line York-Durham Sanitary Sewer Project.

It was finished in summer 2006, along with the bypassing and closing of the sewage plant in Memorial Park.

That delay meant builders had longer to market and sell lots, increasing the demand from homebuyers.

In 2006, the town issued about 1,100 new residential building permits. Around 950 of these are for new home construction in the community of Stouffville itself.

In June 2006, a population increase for Stouffville of around 2,000 people was estimated from 2004. That means construction of around 700 homes over those three years, Mr. Emmerson said.

The housing boom in Stouffville has been pushed forward by a strong economy in the GTA, low mortgage and financing rates and the fact building has slowed in nearby municipalities such as Markham and Richmond.

There's also better transportation for residents here, including access to Hwy. 407 and 404 and improved GO train and bus service.

In rural areas, growth projections and building permits are on target with about 125 to 150 new building starts per year, mostly in the Ballantrae Golf & Country Club and Savoia subdivision.

The town is preparing its 2007 operating and capital budget submissions taking the new figures into account.

The budget is to be presented next month.

## HERE WE GROW AGAIN

► **INCOMING:**  
3,000 newcomers a year are expected in Whitchurch-Stouffville, up from original projections of 1,800.

► **CHANGE ENTRANCE SIGNS:**  
Population of Whitchurch-Stouffville today: 26,000. In 2010: 39,000.

► **PLAY TIME:**  
Soccer pitches and ball diamonds are to open at the new Bethesda Park in 2008. Construction of a third arena is to begin the same year.

► **DRINK TO THAT:** Lake Ontario water will make its debut in Stouffville in 2008.

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