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Town wants industrial jobs

*Mayor hosting
roundtable with
landowners*

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

As a step towards helping local businesses thrive and attracting new companies to the area, Mayor Wayne Emmerson will be holding a roundtable on economic development.

He will invite owners of industrial and commercial lands in the municipality to meet with him and town staff in late November.

Discussions will centre on how the town can help these landowners and to see "what they are doing to promote their land," Mr. Emmerson said.

The initiative comes out of the final recommendations

of the town's Business Retention and Expansion program which started about a year and a half ago and included a survey of 97 local businesses.

It is important for the town to "maintain the current supply of industrial and office lands and not support the conversion to retail and residential uses," Mr. Cash said in the report released earlier this month.

Having more of these lands available will mean more jobs in town and provide a better tax base, Mr. Emmerson noted.

Hed like to have this kind of meeting a few more times during the next year.

Other recommendations in the report include having the town encourage York Region to review its policy on the servicing of industrial and offices lands in Gormley with the intention of

adequately accommodating businesses in future Gormley properties, at Woodbine Avenue and Stouffville Road, are serviced septic systems and well water.

The town will be working in co-operation with York Region Transit and GO Transit to have transportation available in Gormley Routes along Stouffville Road should be developed to connect with Yonge Street services within the next five years.

The report also encourages a diversity of retail and business services in Stouffville's downtown area. A downtown community improvement plan is to be implemented.

At present, retailers in downtown Stouffville receive half of their business through foot traffic. Most customers are within a 15 to 30 minute drive radius.

When it comes to traffic congestion, 81 per cent of business owners believe it's a problem on Main Street, while 62 per cent feel there's too much traffic on Stouffville Road.

Under the program, information will be made available to local business owners on such issues as helping the next generation of entrepreneurs carry on family businesses.

They could be provided with information on succession planning and other topics through resources from York Region, as well as a local business information kiosk.

The survey found that only 54 per cent of local businesses have a succession plan.

The 97 businesses surveyed ranged from one-person operations to companies employing 300 or more.

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