





GROWTH: Council agrees to phase in hike

Higher charges scare developers, not mayor

BY SANDRA BOLAN

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The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville will pick the pockets of commercial developers three times in the upcoming year, as council has opted to phase-in its development charge increase.

The commercial/retail development charge will go from its current rate of \$6.05 to \$9.68 per square foot when fully phased-in.

"We were hoping to avoid any increase in the development charge," said Robert Howe of Goodmans LLP on behalf of the Stouffville Developers Group. "If it's not possible to avoid, then we need to minimize the impact."

On Sept. 1, commercial/retail developers will have to pay a development charge of \$6.59 per square foot.

On March 1, that rate will go to \$8.19 a square foot and on Sept. 1, 2010, the full rate of \$9.68 will take effect.

This new rate will put Whitchurch-Stouffville second only to Richmond Hill for GTA commercial/retail development charg-

"I'm not scared of being No. 1 in DCs," said Mayor Wayne Emmerson.

The residential development charge has also increased. However, the new rate will not be phased in. As of Sept. 1, a single detached home will have a development charge of \$11,929, which is up from \$10,573.

"We have no choice as a council to make

the DCs what they need to be to provide the services we need for our residents," said Councillor Clyde Smith.

While the commercial/retail and residential development charges are on the rise, the town's industrial rate will go down from \$4.69 to \$3.20 per square foot. Like the commercial increase, the industrial decrease will be phased-in during a one-year period.

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> Councillor Clyde Smith, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

New to Whitchurch-Stouffville's development charge bylaw is a partial exemption from the commercial/retail rate for major office space buildings, which are defined as 20,000 square feet or more.

The town's existing rate, indexed to 2009, of \$6.32 per square foot of gross floor space will be applied.

"Some of the businesses we'd like to attract do come in the form of office buildings," said Dave Cash, the municipality's CAO.

All rate changes take effect Sept. 1.

Park road costs soaring

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Design revisions have almost doubled the projected cost of the second phase of the Park Drive extension through Stouffville Memorial

Council budgeted approximately \$2.6 million for this portion of the project, but when bids were received last month, they ranged from \$4.6 to \$5.6 million.

The new section of Park Drive will start at the intersection of Park and Burkholder Street, wind south and connect to the portion of Park located just north of Hoover Park Drive, next to the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library/ Lebovic Leisure Centre.

The two softball diamonds that back onto homes on Thicketwood Boulevard will be removed to make way for the road. New diamonds will open in Bethesda Park.

The recycling depot is also coming down. The outdoor pool will not be affected.

"This budget figure was prepared primarily based on the design concept approved in the Class EA completed in 2003," wrote Tom Parry, director of engineering and capital projects for Whitchurch-Stouffville. "Since that time, the detailed design requirements have changed, introducing some cost increases," which include additional road length, enhanced landscaping and a storm sewer extension.

To help bridge the gap between the actual cost and what was budgeted, some of the work will be removed or deferred, which will bring the total cost of the project to \$3.4 million.

"The development charge update, current-

ly under review, includes funding for the Park Drive extension in the amount of \$3,493,215," wrote Mr. Parry.

Mar-King Construction Company was awarded the contract with their bid of \$4.6 million and has decided to remain with the project despite the changes.

This is the second and last phase in the Park Drive extension project. Last year, Hoover Park Drive north to the Lebovic Leisure Centre entrance was complete.

Construction of Park Drive is expected to start in mid-August, with the road completed to base asphalt by the end of November. The final grading and landscaping of the site will be done in the spring of 2010 and completed by mid-June.

BIKE PATH, MEDIAN IN PLAN

Phase two of Park Drive's extension includes:

- a centre median
- decorative street lamps
- a combination sidewalk/bike path integrated with Memorial Park
- landscaping adjacent to the rear of the lots fronting onto Thicketwood Boulevard
- parking lot improvements to deter drivers from using it as a thoroughfare to Main Street
- skateboard park will be relocated to the east to accommodate parking lot improvements