

# Fewer homes go up in Stouffville, across GTA

BY SANDRA BOLAN  
sbolan@yrmg.com

New home building permits are about 66 per cent of what was predicted for the first half of the year, but the town's CAO is not worried.

"We haven't seen any sign the demand is falling off. It just seems to be a cyclical thing," Dave Cash told The Sun-Tribune.

The municipality's 2013 business plan projected between 350 and 375 new residential building permits were to have been handed out between Jan. 1 and June 30 of this year.

In reality, it is estimated there will be 200 new residential building permits, according to the Aug. 13 report to council.

One reason for the lower than anticipated permit application number is the Minto project on Main Street and Baker Hill Drive. Mr. Cash said construction was expected to get underway this year, but has been delayed.

Whitchurch-Stouffville's decrease in new home building permit draws is not unique.

Total new home sales within the GTA are down 30 per cent from June 2012 and 36 per cent over the past 10 years, according to Realnet's website.

"The blistering pace of the last few years is not sustainable," said James McKeller, professor and director of real estate and infrastructure for the Schulich School of Business.

Another issue may be price.

The average new home within the GTA costs \$645,854, according to the Building

Industry and Land Development Association, which the group said is an all-time high.

In July, 783 low-rise homes were sold across the GTA, which is 45-per-cent lower than the 10-year averages, according to stats compiled for Building Industry and Land Development.

## MILLION-DOLLAR HOMES

Locally, new homes range in price from \$339,990 for a townhouse in Minto's Orchard Park development to \$1,144,390 in the Orchard Ridge subdivision in the Hoover Park Drive and Tenth Line area.

The average assessed value of a Whitchurch-Stouffville home, according to MPAC, is \$575,000.

Maybe it's the price, but a shift in what people want to live in and where is underway. Approximately 55 per cent of new homes are condos, according to Mr. McKeller. And they are being built in the city, not the 'burbs and are being sold to single women in their 30s.

"People want to buy housing where they can find a job," according to Mr. McKeller.

In the 1980s and '90s, knowledge-based companies were on located the outskirts of Toronto, now they're heading back downtown.

"They've had 30 or 40 years of good times at the expense of the city, but the tables have turned," Mr. McKeller said.

He also noted that those living in the suburbs are more likely to be families and

service industry workers.

"If you're a single person, why would you buy a home in Stouffville?" he said.

"Smaller communities, like Stouffville, will increasingly feel these challenges, which is the challenge for knowledge jobs," he said.

Another hurdle is the downtown core.

One way suburban municipalities are attracting new residents is by creating village atmospheres where people don't need cars and there is good train service to the city. Other requirements include good bakeries, restaurants and things to do — such as movies and theatre, according to Mr. McKeller.

"Build a vibrant downtown that would attract well-educated people," he said.

York Region has mandated Whitchurch-Stouffville have 400 new housing starts a year as part of it intensification plan.

As such, part of the plan is to grow upwards

## Port-a-pak for year-old school

The school is just a year old, but St. Brendan's Catholic Elementary School is already over capacity.

Come next week, 184 students will be taught in an eight-classroom port-a-pak.

The port-a-pak, which is more permanent than a portable but costs less than an addition onto the school, was brought over from Newmarket's Notre Dame elementary school because its student population is declining, according to Bryce Eldridge, superintendent of plant at the York Catholic District School Board.

Schools are constructed based on a "sustainable capacity" forecast of student population, not peak capacity, according to Mr. Eldridge.

"It's far too expensive to try and fund a program like that," he said, noting schools are expected to be in use for 30 years.

Which means, for the next two to eight years, St. Brendan may be over capacity.

The junior kindergarten to Grade 8 school, which is located on Hoover Park Drive at

within Stouffville, not outwards in the rural areas.

"I'm expecting next year we're up in actuality, likely in the 400 range," Mr. Cash said.

One project currently before council is the PACE/Geranium plan at Main and Lloyd streets.

The proposed building had six storeys, 82 residential condo units and three commercial/retail spaces on the ground floor, one of which is PACE Credit and Savings.

Area residents oppose the building because they say it is too big for the land and it does not fit in with the established homes.

A public information session dealing with a new proposal will be held Sept. 9 from 7 to 9 p.m. in the council chambers.

A special council meeting on the project takes place Sept. 24 at 7 p.m.

with files from Torstar News Service

Ninth Line, was constructed for a student population of 553, according to Mr. Eldridge.

In its first year, it had around 500 students.

## 'Healthy' growth at high school

Stouffville District Secondary School will have about 100 more students roaming the halls come next week.

Enrollment is anticipated to be 1,280. Last year it was about 1,170, according to Reid Wilshire, the school's principal.

"We're healthy," he said.

"It's certainly not a number we can't manage," he said.

Three years ago, when Mr. Wilshire started at the school, there were closer to 900 students.

"It's very much a progressive thing," he said.

School starts for the Grade 9s at 9:20 a.m. Tuesday. The rest of the students start back Wednesday morning.

— Sandra Bolan

WWW.SHOP.CA

SHOP HAPPY  
SIGN-UP FOR FREE & GET  
\$25 TO SPEND  
ON YOUR FIRST \$100 PURCHASE



SHOP.CA

## Sheffield Judo Club

Grand Re-Opening at a New Location

118 Sandiford Dr., Unit #3, Stouffville ON

www.sheffieldjudoclub.ca

sheffieldjudoclub@gmail.com

Steven and Aartje Sheffield

Both 6th degree black belts, former Canadian Judo Champions and NCCP Level 3 Certified Coaches.

Developing Champions and Judoka for over 20 Years in Whitchurch-Stouffville

Recreational and Competitive Classes available

Improve Fitness - Learn Self-Defense - Compete (Judo is an Olympic Sport)

Free Trial Lesson

Open House  
Saturday,  
September 7th,  
2-4pm

905-868-6414