

King Township looks to the future

SERVICING CHANGE

By Jake Tobin Garrett

It may be small, but things are brewing in **King Township**. The introduction of sewer and water services to the township's two settlement areas—King City and Nobleton—has spurred interest in local business growth and building on smaller lots. The township is also in the midst of creating its first ever economic development strategy.

While King is **York Region's** largest municipality in terms of land area, it's the smallest in population size. With 20,000 people currently and a growth plan projected population of 35,000 by 2031 it's a community that will get only a "drop of" growth compared to its neighbours, as Mayor **Steve Pellegrini** put it to *NRU*.

Pellegrini became mayor of King in 2010, taking over from the long-serving **Margaret Black** with a promise to prepare an economic strategy, enhance communication and review the township's priorities and finances.

"We're looking to ensure that we have a strong local economy," he said, noting the township is starting to see some commercial growth with the introduction of businesses like liquor and grocery stores.

One of the catalysts for the township's local business growth has been the introduction of municipal services in the villages of King City and Nobleton. Up until fairly

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Solving the problem of large-scale fill

SOIL BANK SOLUTION

By Julie Baldassi

Across Ontario, millions of cubic metres of fill are unearthed annually, and with a number of major development projects on the horizon like the Highway 407 extension, priorities in **Metrolinx's** Big Move, and the ongoing wave of residential, commercial and industrial construction, the volume is anticipated to continue growing.

The solution, up until now, has been to truck tonnes of fill out to rural sites and leave it there. But in recent years, there has been much discussion about finding a more efficient way to reuse soils in other projects. There is a need to begin as an industry to look at ways to reuse fill, looking at it as "a resource, rather than a waste," according to **Greenwood and Associates** president and urban planner **Ellen Greenwood**.

Greenwood hosted a soil management workshop yesterday, which included presentations from a number of Dutch soil management experts, who are seen to be progressive on this issue. Greenwood hopes the event will help spark a pilot project for a soil bank, a solution the Netherlands has employed since 1990.

"The Netherlands is a small country; we can't go around our challenges. We have to use soil as a resource, and not as a waste. Canada is such a vast country, so you can always go around your problem. But that's just it—

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UPCOMING DATES

- FEBRUARY 20**
Mississauga Council, 9:00 a.m.
- Halton Region Planning and Public Works,**
9:30 a.m.
- FEBRUARY 21**
York Region Council, 9:30 a.m.
- FEBRUARY 25**
Burlington Development and Infrastructure Committee, 1:00 p.m.
- Brampton Planning, Design and Development Committee,** 1:00 p.m.
- Oshawa Development Services Committee,** 1:30 p.m.
- King Township Council,** 6:00 p.m.
- Uxbridge Council,** 7:00 p.m.
- Ajax Council,** 7:00 p.m.
- Mississauga Planning and Development Committee,** 7:00 p.m.
- Oakville Planning and Development Council,** 7:00 p.m.
- Milton Council,** 7:00 p.m.
- Pickering Council,** 7:30 p.m.
- Richmond Hill Council,** 7:30 p.m.
- FEBRUARY 26**
Caledon Council, 1:00 p.m.
- Aurora Council,** 7:00 p.m.
- Markham Council,** 7:00 p.m.
- FEBRUARY 27**
Halton Region Council, 9:30 a.m.
- Brampton Council,** 1:00 p.m.



Reimagining Pickering's downtown

GOOD BONES

By Jake Tobin Garrett

While the **City of Pickering's** downtown may have all the right bones in place—civic buildings, public parks and commercial spaces—the city is undertaking a visioning process that seeks to flesh it out into a vibrant, dense place that can accommodate future growth.

There are very few planned downtown centres “that have all the right ingredients in the right place,” **Urban Strategies** partner **Melanie Hare** told *NRU*. Pickering's downtown is also one of the province's growth centres and one of **Metrolinx's** mobility hubs.

“The opportunity in Pickering, in my opinion, is to capitalize on that and manage growth in a way that allows you to create that critical mass that kind of tips it over from being a place with all the right ingredients to a really vibrant, place-distinct, vital downtown.”

Urban Strategies is the lead consultant on the vision that will accommodate 20,000 new people and jobs by 2031. While it started a year ago, an open house held last Wednesday showcased the draft directions for that downtown vision.

Those directions set out the framework for the transportation and pedestrian connections, built form and public spaces that will create a lively downtown.

One of the comments from residents has been that they would like better walking

environments. “The distances to walk aren't far,” Hare said. “But the conditions for pedestrians are not great in much of the downtown.”

New finer-grained streets and pedestrian connections with sidewalks and street trees could create a more pleasant and safe walking experience. Additionally, the plan calls for more connections, both pedestrian and vehicular, across Highway 401 to connect neighbourhoods to the south of downtown.

Transportation is one of the main challenges that Hare identified, pointing to several congested streets in the area. “The solution to managing growth and greater activity in the downtown has to come with a balanced transportation solution,” she said.

“The plan introduces a number of design improvements to existing streets that would create more balanced or complete streets,” she said. “So the introduction of a cycling network which is more formalized, the creation of wider sidewalks—the creation of sidewalks period.”

The plan also lays out the potential built form, including proposed heights for areas in the downtown. Right now the downtown has everything from townhouses to 25-storey towers; however, the plan proposes places where taller “landmark” buildings could go that would

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SERVICING CHANGE

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recently these communities were serviced with wells and a septic system. However, Pellegrini said that now King City is fully serviced and all that is left are some local connections in Nobleton.

The introduction of municipal services has paved the way for some commercial activity that wasn't viable before, with residents expressing interest in starting businesses.

In order to facilitate this kind of business growth, some of the township's by-laws and official plan designations need to be changed—a project Pellegrini said “is on the list to get done.”

“The villages [of King City and Nobleton] have changed now,” he said. “Before there weren't any [municipal] services, so restaurants and things like that were not permitted. So somebody comes in now and they've got an old heritage house and they want to turn it into a restaurant. They have to go through an official plan amendment just to do that.”

Many decide not to bother once they find out the cost and time associated with an official plan amendment, he said. However, if the township allows those types of uses through an official plan review then “it opens up the opportunities for all the lands along the main thorough ways,” he said.

The introduction of municipal services has also come with more changes for the township, including the ability to build on smaller lots.

The township doesn't contain any provincial growth centres, but both King City and Nobleton are identified as settlement areas where growth will be accommodated. In terms of intensification, Pellegrini said that people are beginning

to apply for severances on some of the large lots in both communities.

“[Previously] you needed minimally two acres to build a home,” he said. “Now that the big pipe is in King City you're seeing 50-foot lots.” While some would say that is still large, it's quite small for King.

“We're starting to see severances pop up here and there on some of the large parcels where the homes are older,” he said. “Lots of developers will come in and buy the big lot, tear down the house, and put two new homes up.”

When asked how a change like that was going over with residents, Pellegrini said that “change isn't always well received.”

He noted that a lot of these new developments change “the look and the landscape of the street. There were a bunch of streets that had sprawling bungalows and now you've got some of these huge monster homes going up. Some [developers] might just put up even one huge [house] on the one lot. They dwarf the homes around them.”

The vast majority of the township is protected by the Oak Ridges Moraine and the greenbelt, he said, which has led to properties values of \$1.2- to \$1.9-million because growth is only happening in King City and Nobleton. “Everything else is off limits...it's driven the market value of the lots up.”

Some may view that as a constraint, but he said he views it as an opportunity. “We get a little bit of growth,” he said, but pointed out that this growth will almost double the township's population. “Now we just have to be fiscally responsible with that assessment [growth] that we're getting.” [nru](#)

GOOD BONES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

help create a downtown skyline as seen from along Highway 401.

Ultimately, the plan will generate official plan polices, design guidelines and zoning strategies that will work to implement the new vision, Hare said.

While Urban Strategies is the lead consultant, it has have been working with **HDR** on transportation and **Halsall Associates** on sustainable systems. [nru](#)



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SOIL BANK SOLUTION

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you go around it without going through it,” **Netherlands Partnership** Canada cluster manager **Hans van Duijne** told *NRU*.

Henri Groeneveld, who also delivered a presentation yesterday, operates Rotterdam’s municipally-run non-profit soil bank—one of 11 both publicly and privately operated soil banks throughout the Netherlands. The Rotterdam Soil Bank alone turns over about 1-million tonnes of soil per year, bringing in about €12.5-million (\$16-million CDN) annually for the municipality through fees for transporting and housing soils. He told *NRU* that about 30 per cent of the total volume of soils is transported directly from its original site to a recipient, while the majority is stored at one of seven facilities around the city.

In considering where a soil bank could be placed in the GTA, **XCG Consultants** partner and **Ontario Environment Industry Association** board member **Grant Walsom** suggested that people in residential areas could see a soil bank as a nuisance. “They’re not going to want the truck traffic, they’re not going to want the dust, and they’re not going to want the visual obstruction,” he said to *NRU*.

Groeneveld said that he does get some complaints from citizens about noise and dust, but they do their best to mitigate those problems by spraying down the soil and creating a large sound barrier which doubles as a community garden.

“There was no public opposition—we gave good information to people. The soil banks are right near to the houses—almost next to [them]. But people get a city garden on the sound barrier and they are pleased with [that]. You must combine a public function with the work; then there’s no resistance to it,” he said.

In order to establish a soil bank in Ontario, “you need to make sure re-usable soil doesn’t go into a landfill. That’s step one,” Netherlands’ infrastructure and environment ministry soil and water director **Co Molenaar** told *NRU*.

As many people have pointed out, there are legislative changes that would need to be made in order to accommodate a soil bank in Ontario. Walsom and Greenwood both said that the **Ministry of Environment** would need to look at its definition of waste.

“The biggest problem we have is that the ministry classifies soil with any type of contaminant in it as a waste material, even if there is a slight contaminant that could be treated,”

explained Walsom. As a result, soil which could be remediated goes to landfill.

Molenaar explained that in the Netherlands there are steep tariffs on putting soil in a landfill, unless the soil cannot be treated.

Walsom said that quality assurance raises a number of questions for the industry in Ontario. “If you’ve got marginally contaminated soil that will not, say, meet a residential application, but could be used at industrial properties because the quality requirements are different, the question is how do you certify that and how do you store it in a way that will segregate it from cleaner soil?” he said.

Quality assurance is “inherently built into the system,” explained **SIKB** programsecretaris bodembeheer **Arthur de Groof**. The government licences to select companies, which in turn certify developers to participate in the soil bank process.

“By leaving the quality part to the private sector, it relieves the public authorities of a lot of the implementation burdens. The government has outsourced that, so they only have to worry about issuing licences and having some sort of enforcement,” de Groof said.

To the Dutch soil management experts, the idea of implementing a soil bank is a no-brainer.

“Why shouldn’t the Canadian people start a soil bank? It’s economical; it has profits. We are more or less astonished that there is so much commotion going on this subject,” said Molenaar.

But as Walsom pointed out, there are multiple barriers to making these kinds of changes. One is that developers have built costs associated with landfills into their financial model, so there is little impetus to change.

“If you’re redeveloping a property, the value of your development is high enough that you just find a way to get rid of that excess soil or contaminated soil. If you have to send it to a landfill, you pay that price,” he said.

One of the biggest barriers, Walsom said, has been a lack of leadership from the province.

“With the political climate that we have, with the stepping down of Premier McGuinty and so forth, the problem is who is going to take on that mandate? [The province] may be interested in doing that, and people we’ve talked to at the ministry see the value in it, but where is the directive from the top?” he said.

Despite these barriers, Walsom said, “I think it will happen. I really do.” *nrU*

GTA IN BRIEF

[Wynne promises transit spending](#)

Ontario's new Premier **Kathleen Wynne** presented her legislative agenda to Queen's Park Tuesday afternoon, promising action on transit and road improvements across the province. The Throne Speech—which marks the return of the legislature that was prorogued when **Dalton McGuinty** announced his resignation—also promised that municipalities would have a voice in the siting of new power plants, casinos, quarries or wind turbines. The Throne Speech (read by Lieutenant Governor **David Onley**) also committed the Liberal government to working with other provinces to advocate for a national transit strategy.

DURHAM

[Whitby lands for future development](#)

At a planning and development committee meeting last night, Whitby staff recommended approval of an application by **Frank Longo** to amend the zoning by-law at 309 Powell Road from residential 2, which allows for a maximum lot coverage of 20 per cent, to

residential 2A, which allows for a maximum lot coverage of 40 per cent for a one-storey dwelling or 33 per cent for a dwelling greater than one-storey. A single-detached dwelling currently exists on the property, and the developer intends to create four new lots within the rear yard.

[Oshawa development outlook](#)

Oshawa council received a staff report Tuesday on development activity in Oshawa during the past year, and what is anticipated in 2013. The full report is available [here](#).

In 2012, 1,337 building permits were issued for a value of more than \$310-million. The top three building projects were: **Tribute's** 165 single-detached dwellings north of Taunton Road East between Townline Road North and Simcoe Street North, which had a permit value of \$70.3-million; **Great Gulf Homes'** 165 single-detached dwellings north of Taunton Road East between Clearbrook Drive and Grandview Street North, which had a permit value of \$58.8-million; and **Greycrest Homes's** 44 single-detached dwellings

east of Wilson Road North and south of Conlin Road East, which had a permit value of \$15.9-million. A commercial retail and fuel bar development by **Costco Wholesale Canada** at 130 Ritson Road North generated \$18-million in permit value.

As of December 31, 2012, the city had 7,721 units at various stages in the subdivision approval process. Noteworthy projects anticipated in 2013 include: **Minto's** 241-

unit subdivision north of Britannia Avenue and east of Simcoe Street North; **Silwell/Metrontario's** 154-unit subdivision south of Conlin Road East and west of Townline Road South; **Rice Commercial Group's** new shopping centre south of Adelaide Avenue East and West of Ritson Road North, which is estimated to have a permit value of \$16.2-million; and **Durham District School Board's** new Clara Hughes Elementary

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GTA OMB NEWS

Markham apartment approved

In a decision issued February 1, board vice-chair **Susan de Avellar Schiller** allowed an appeal by **Tribute (Unionville) Limited** of the **City of Markham's** failure to enact a zoning by-law amendment. The amendment was to permit a 113-unit, four-storey apartment building with at-grade commercial at 20 Fred Varley Drive, south of Carlton Road.

The site currently contains a two-storey 1960's strip plaza with residential above the stores. The amendment was sought to rezone the lands from general commercial to community amenity one. The amendment would also put in place minimum setbacks, maximum height and setbacks on the upper floors.

While the city supports increased density on the site, it opposes the proposed intensity of development. Staff put forward an alternate concept created by a working committee comprising the mayor, a councillor, city staff, residents and local business representatives. The concept suggests an L-shaped building rather than one with a courtyard.

While the site is not inside the Unionville Heritage Conservation District, its adjacency means issues of compatibility must be considered. As well the site is within a flood plain and a special policy area.

While some issues between Tribute and **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority** were dealt with, TRCA opposes the development. The focus of its objection is "on the question of whether the proposed development is appropriate within a special policy area" and if an official plan amendment is required.

TRCA pointed to the section dealing with special policy areas in the *Provincial Policy Statement*, however, the board noted that new and intensified development was not prohibited for these areas.

The board also pointed out that a holding provision on the proposed zoning by-law would only be lifted once Tribute had satisfied the TRCA with regard to flood proofing. Further, the board decided no official plan amendment was needed because the proposed zoning by-law conforms with the site's neighbourhood commercial centre designation as it maintains a commercial use along with increased residential.

The city expressed concerns about the appropriateness of the massing and design of Tribute's proposed development in relation to the nearby Unionville Heritage Conservation

District. The board, however, pointed out that Tribute has responded to the heritage concerns of the city, altering the design treatment. Further, the board dismissed concerns about views and overlook impacts from the proposed development.


In conclusion, the board found the height and siting of the proposed development was compatible with the heritage district and that the degree of intensification is appropriate.

Solicitors in the case were **Bruce Ketcheson (Ritchie Ketcheson Hart & Biggart)** representing the City of Markham, **Michael Melling** and **Meaghan McDermid (Davies Howe)** representing Tribute (Unionville) Limited and **Jonathan Wigley (Gardiner Roberts)** representing Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. (See OMB Case No. PL111256.)

Oakville hearing scheduled

In a decision issued February 1, board member **Joseph E. Sniezek** scheduled a hearing for appeals by **Fenbrook Homes (Lakeshore) Limited**. At issue was the **Town of Oakville's** failure to approve a zoning by-law amendment and plan of subdivision and condominium. These were sought to permit development of three single-detached and 42 semi-detached dwellings. The site is located at 1215 Lakeshore Road West.

The board scheduled a 10-day hearing beginning April 15.

Solicitors in the case are **Paul DeMelo (Kagan Shastri)** and **Jennifer Huctwith** (Town of Oakville) representing the Town of Oakville, **David Beck** (Halton Region) and **Joseph Susman** (student-at-law) representing **Halton Region** and **Russell Cheeseman** representing Fenbrook Homes (Lakeshore) Limited. (See OMB Case No. PL120855.) 



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GTA IN BRIEF

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School at 610 Taylor Avenue, which is estimated to have a permit value of \$10.6-million.

HALTON

[Medical office to be approved](#)

At Oakville's planning and development council meeting Monday, staff is recommending approval of a zoning by-law for VGR Investment's proposed five-storey medical building and associated retail space at Old Bronte and Dundas West. The development includes a two-storey parking lot with 312 spaces.

In order to complete the parcel, VGR bought 0.23 hectares from the Catholic Diocese's property to the south. The development will expand the centre currently at 2495 Old Bronte and take advantage of its proximity to

the future Oakville Hospital, two kilometers east.

PEEL

Mississauga's planning and development committee will receive an information report at its meeting Monday based on stakeholder feedback concerning the Inspiration Port Credit plan, which will guide the revitalization of several waterfront sites. Reacting to recent moves by large landowners like Canada Lands Corporation and Imperial Oil Limited, the plan features many of the same ambitions as other waterfront revitalization reports throughout the GTA: vibrant, complete streets facilitated by transit and the integration of the city more fully with its waterfront. The next step will be to present three possible master plan concepts based on public

input, which is anticipated in late summer. The plan is being undertaken by staff in collaboration with staff of Canada Lands Corporation and Imperial Oil Limited.

[Equestrian Park contract awarded](#)

The Town of Caledon awarded a \$1.275-million contract to local contractor Sierra Excavation to design and install the equestrian footing system at the Caledon Equestrian Park, the site of the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games equestrian competitions. Sierra Excavation will be aided by Christian Bauer, a Fédération Equestre Internationale-approved footing consultant.

YORK

[Newmarket looks at infill rules](#)

Infill developers in Newmarket will face a tighter height restriction in some of the town's established neighbourhoods if the proposal going before a public meeting at the committee of the whole meeting Monday is adopted. In response to the trend of developers snapping up large lots and dividing them for intensification, the city is proposing changes to the height limit that will effectively reduce the allowed height for a two-storey home by 25 per cent, as well as additional regulations on lot sizes and setbacks. nru



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GTA PEOPLE

Frances Lankin was appointed a part-time Metrolinx board member in January for a one-year term. Lankin recently co-led a review of Ontario's social assistance system and

was president and CEO of United Way Toronto from 2001 to 2011.

David Leith was appointed a part-time board member at Infrastructure Ontario

in January for a one-year term. Previously, Leith spent over 25 years with CIBC World Markets, leaving in 2009 from his position as deputy chairman and managing direc-

tor for the company's investments, corporate and merchant banking activities.

Allison Duff was appointed as a part-time board member

at the Ontario Energy Board February 1 for a one-year term. Duff is a senior consultant with the Dominion General Insurance Company and a consultant with Nuinsco Resources.