

Putting the region back in the plan

## TRANSIT GETS SCHOOLED

By Jake Tobin Garrett

It was fitting that a conference on the subject of public transit and post-secondary education was held at **York University**, where the centre of campus is currently being torn up to make way for a shiny new subway station.

“I’ve always seen York University as sort of peripheral to the city, but if you look at it in a regional context, it’s really at the centre of the region,” conference co-organizer and urban planning consultant **Sean Hertel** told *NRU*. “I think that’s very instructive to the role that colleges and universities have, not only to the social and economic vitality of our region, but also as important cogs in the transportation network.”

**Toronto** city councillor, conference organizer and keynote speaker **Adam Vaughan** argued that linking post-secondary institutions can give a “purpose” to building transit, refocusing the debate away from endless handwringing over technology—will it be subways or light-rail? We need to change the conversations from subways, subways, subways, to service, service, service, he said.

With 650,000 students at universities and colleges around the GTA you have the operating capacity to sustain new lines, Vaughan argued, which can connect the clusters of density found in these institutions. You also have a collective of people who could be mobilized to advocate for a better transit system.

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Federal boundary redistribution

## REDRAWING THE LINES

By Julie Baldassi

Over the past few weeks, responses to the proposed federal electoral boundary redistribution have been flowing in on committee agendas around the GTA. It is an unavoidable process that the **Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission** is required to undertake after each 10-year census. This time around, the number of electoral districts in Ontario will increase substantially—from 106 to 121—to match the growing population in the province.

Beyond accepting that redistribution simply must occur, there is little consensus on how the lines should be redrawn. Many of the region’s municipalities say that the proposed districts make seemingly incongruous groupings of communities, while leaving others split down the middle.

Traditionally in Canada, aligning electoral districts along municipal or community boundaries has been a reoccurring point of conflict.

“You have no right to maintain your community—that’s not part of the protections that the right to vote gives you... Part of the problem is that Canada has so much land. You need to have a large enough population to justify an MP and therefore when you have a low population, it has to be a fairly large geographical region,” said **Canadian Civil Liberties Association** general council **Nathalie Des Rosiers**.

Des Rosier gave a talk at the

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## Straightforward Legal Solutions

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# UPCOMING DATES

- OCTOBER 3**  
Halton Region Council, 9:30 a.m.
- OCTOBER 4**  
Urban Land Institute, **The Intensification of Downtowns in the 905**, 7:30 – 9:30 a.m., Le Parc Hotel, Markham
- BILD GTA Leaders Dinner**, reception at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m., Le Parc 1, Concord
- OCTOBER 4 – 5**  
Credit Valley Conservation, **Low Impact Development in Action**, 8:30 a.m., Mississauga Living Arts Centre
- OCTOBER 8**  
Oakville Council, 7:00 p.m.
- OCTOBER 9**  
Caledon Council, 9:30 a.m.  
Richmond Hill Council, 7:30 p.m.  
Aurora Council, 7:00 p.m.  
Whitby Council, 7:00 p.m.
- OCTOBER 10**  
Durham Region Council, 10:00 a.m.  
Brampton Council, 1:00 p.m.
- OCTOBER 11**  
Peel Region Council, 9:30 a.m.
- OCTOBER 11-13**  
National Heritage Summit with keynote speakers Ros Kerslake, Mark Kingwell and Andrew Emond, Fairmont Queen Elizabeth, Montreal
- OCTOBER 15**  
Halton Hills Council, 6:30 p.m.  
Pickering Council, 7:30 p.m.  
Oshawa Council, 6:30 p.m.



Hamilton's employment land needs

# INDUSTRY BOOM

By Jake Tobin Garrett

While the City of Toronto is watching its manufacturing and industrial sector decline, the City of Hamilton is seeing the opposite. There, the city is having so much success in attracting industrial and manufacturing development that finding more land to accommodate it has become important.

“We’re literally bursting at the seams in many of our business parks,” Councillor **Jason Farr** told *NRU*.

A staff report to the October 3 general issues committee notes that there is only around 50 acres “left in city ownership within our business parks,” adding that “it is important for the city to have land we can directly use for our business attraction efforts.”

To that end staff is recommending discontinuation of an incentive program and reallocation of its \$2-million in approved funding to the city’s land banking program, which is used to buy land in the city’s seven business parks to grow city-owned employment land supply.

Originally intended to provide financing to private developers for the servicing of their industrial lands, the program recommended to be discontinued—accelerate shovel-ready strategy for industrial servicing and transportation, or ASSIST—had not been used to advantage

by private developers. This was due to a number of factors including the amount of funding available and interest rates that made the program untenable for the private sector, Hamilton growth planning director **Guy Paparella** told *NRU*.

**Why don’t we invest in actually buying land and building infrastructure for the land that we own and let the private sector follow.**

• Guy Paparella

The money from the ASSIST program would be better spent buying land to increase the supply of city-owned employment lands, he said.

Paparella explained that, in the case of city-owned employment lands, where the city controls the marketing, servicing and real estate sale, “it’s just a little easier to move the product.”

“Why don’t we invest in actually buying land and building infrastructure for the land that we own and let the private sector follow.” He referenced a case where Canada Bread was brought onto city-owned land, which spurred Maple Leaf to take up shop on private lands next door. There’s a certain momentum to this, he said.

Farr said that the city is also trying to create new employment lands. CONTINUED PAGE 5 ▶

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# TRANSIT GETS SCHOOL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

We need to “put the region back in the regional transit plan,” Hertel said, adding that few things capture the region better than its web of universities and colleges.

“We’re way past these arbitrary municipal barriers and I think our transit system has to acknowledge that and respond positively to that...I think we need a true regional transit system that transcends boundaries that really have been rendered artificial.”

This artificiality can be seen in the commuting patterns of students who must cross municipal boundaries to get to school, and the travel patterns of those who live and work across the region.

One student at the conference spoke about how the focus on peak demand and a 9-to-5 lifestyle was one that left many students, who don’t have these regular schedules and need evening transit, out of the equation.

Hertel told *NRU* he agreed. “We can ask the question ‘Where do you live?’” he said. “But we can also ask ‘When do you live?’” Our transit system needs to catch up with how the people in the region are currently living their lives.

These realities of living and working in the region raise questions about fare integration, a point touched on by York University student **Michael Collens**.

Students don’t care what colour the busses are, he said.

Transit system operators, however, do care what colour the busses are. Hertel brought up the case of the Steeles West subway station, which will sit at the northwest corner of York University when finished. The design of that station had to take into account the different transit systems feeding into it.

“Right off the top we were hampered from a design perspective by the fact that the fares weren’t integrated,” he said, adding that the terminal had to be designed in such a way that busses can drop passengers in unpaid zones and direct them to purchase a second fare to board the subway, or vice versa.

This transfer system, which requires multiple payments of different fares, can become tricky for students crossing municipal boundaries to get to school, Collens said.

Despite all this, Hertel noted that the Greater Toronto Area is actually in an enviable position relative to other North American regions. We’re in a situation where people “want to take transit, but they’re feeling that transit maybe doesn’t want to take them.”

“We have the density, we have the land use, we have the



GO Transit lines and GTHA campuses

SOURCE: COUNCILLOR ADAM VAUGHAN

## GTHA Campus Populations

Centennial	42,000
Durham and U of Ontario	11,115
George Brown	66,500
Humber and Guelph-Humber	86,900
McMaster	32,000
Mohawk	55,100
OCADU	4,250
Ryerson	30,700
Sheridan	52,000
U of T Mississauga	15,000
U of T Scarborough	14,000
U of T St. George	75,000
Seneca	110,570
York	62,000

SOURCE: COUNCILLOR ADAM VAUGHAN

demand. Now we need the service to step up.”

Going to school: a transit summit was organized by the **City Institute** at York University and Councillor Adam Vaughan, with support from the **Canadian Urban Institute** and **Spacing Magazine**. [NRU](#)

# REDRAWING THE LINES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

**Canadian Electoral Alliance** town hall last evening to address issues with Canada’s first-past-the-post system.

**Durham** regional chair **Roger Anderson** said that the proposed boundaries are “a major disappointment” for his region. In an interview with *NRU*, he pointed out that **Clarington**, which has a population of nearly 85,000, could be split in three districts.

One of these districts would go from the Oshawa-Clarington border all the way to Port Hope, a community nearly halfway between Toronto and Kingston. Another new district called Haliburton-Uxbridge would group the partially-urban Uxbridge community with communities near Algonquin Park—places that could be called the antithesis of urban.

“It could be up to a four-hour travel time for an MP to see a constituent or a constituent to see an MP,” said Anderson.

**Mississauga** is another community faced with what it sees as incongruous grouping, where the proposed riding of Brampton-Gore would comprise residents of both Mississauga and **Brampton**.

Mississauga mayor **Hazel McCallion** vociferously denied that a divided riding could work well for municipalities.

“Any riding that is divided between two municipal entities does not work. It has never worked for us. They can’t serve two masters. They either serve the municipality in which they are living, which is usually, and they neglect the municipality that they don’t live in. We have had very bad experiences,” she said.

Like Clarington, many other municipalities, such as **Aurora** and **Richmond Hill**, would be split into different ridings. Many people described the splits as affecting the “cohesiveness” or “synergy” of a community.

In Aurora, the proposed boundaries would “literally split us in half,” said mayor **Jeffrey Dawe**. Half the town would be grouped

with **Newmarket**, which Aurora has had “an historical affiliation with.” The other half would be grouped with Richmond Hill.

“Before, the ridings [in Richmond Hill were] split so that it didn’t split our urban core in half. It left the northern, more rural part on its own and left the urban southern part as one entity. But the new boundaries would go down even further south to Major Mac and split our community as we know it and the bulk of the population in half,” said Richmond Hill mayor **Dave Barrow**.

As Barrow pointed out, municipalities work closely with the federal government on infrastructure projects. Barrow and Dawe both worried about how their communities would be served if the towns were faced with MPs in different political parties.

According to a recent [poll](#) by the firm Pollmaps.ca, the **Conservative Party of Canada** stands to see big gains as a result of the new boundaries. In 2011, the Conservatives won 166 out of 308 seats. Its current majority would increase to 191 seats out of the new total of 338.

“The process is supposed to be based on population shifts and it should be independent and evidence-based. But there always is a political underpinning to these decisions,” said Des Rosiers politely.

Mayor McCallion didn’t mince words.

“Is there a political interference in the arrangement? I would be surprised if there wasn’t. There are others who have made statements to me that there is political [interference]. I don’t know. I don’t have proof of political interference, but I would be very surprised if the parties don’t get involved in some way,” she said.

Eight public meetings will be held by the Electoral Boundaries Commission throughout the GTA, and many more outside of the region (*see sidebar*). All of the mayors who spoke with *NRU* said they planned to attend these meetings to express their opposition and propose new ideas. [nru](#)

Date	Municipality	Location	Time
October 18	Richmond Hill	Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel & Suites, 600 Highway 7 East	11:00 a.m.
October 19	Richmond Hill	Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel & Suites, 600 Highway 7 East	10:00 a.m.
October 25	Hamilton	Crowne Plaza Hamilton Hotel & Conference Centre, Pavilion A Room, 150 King Street East	11:00 a.m.
October 26	Hamilton	Courtyard by Marriott Hamilton Hotel, Hamilton Boardroom, 1224 Upper James Street	10:00 a.m.
October 30	Oakville	Holiday Inn & Suites, 2525 Wycroft Road	1:00 p.m.
October 31	Mississauga	Central Library, Classroom No. 3, 301 Burnhamthorpe Road West	10:00 a.m.
November 1	Brampton	Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriot, Bramalea Room, 150 Westcreek Boulevard	10:00 a.m.
November 2	Brampton	Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriot, Bramalea Room, 150 Westcreek Boulevard	10:00 a.m.



# INDUSTRY BOOM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

“We’re all full up in a lot of them right now.”

The city is currently waiting on the OMB decision for Aerotropolis, the airport employment growth district, which, if approved, would provide a big boost in the land Hamilton has available for industrial business growth.

Farr said that concerns over that project must be “weighed against the jobs we can create and maintaining our pace that we’ve set for ourselves [with industrial development] right now, which is pretty fast. We need to make sure that we have some land available.” [nru](#)

# GTA IN BRIEF

## DURHAM

### [Oshawa airport feud](#)

Oshawa’s airport advisory committee is taking issue with several council assertions regarding a runway extension proposal for the Oshawa airport. The committee does not agree that there is significant community opposition to the proposed extension, saying that council presented a petition in opposition to the runway

from less than 1 per cent of the population. Nor does the committee accept the assertion that funding is not available for the project. According to the committee, the formal requests for funding were not made to the regional, provincial or federal governments, and staff never made a recommendation for the city to fund the extension. The committee claims that council approved and subsequently cancelled a series of open houses

and public meetings. As such, the committee says that council failed to meet its obligation to Oshawa ratepayers to make a comprehensive,

well-informed decision in the best interest of all ratepayers.


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# GTA IN BRIEF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

[“Strategically important” Ajax hotel proposed](#)

At the community affairs and planning committee meeting on Monday, Ajax approved a site plan application submitted by **Tasico Hospitality Group** for a six-storey long-term-stay hotel containing 104 suites. The hotel will be the third building in a hotel and convention centre complex at the northeast quadrant of Salem Road and

Highway 401. Previously, Ajax approved another six-storey hotel, the Hilton Garden Inn, and the Ajax Convention Centre.

In a report to committee, staff said it is of the opinion that the “proposal is strategically important as it reinforces the Salem/401 interchange lands as an area for landmark prestige employment development and will serve an important tourism accommodation.”

HALTON

[GTA Corridor meeting planned](#)

A community meeting has been planned in Burlington to discuss the potential location of the provincial Niagara to GTA corridor highway. The meeting will take place Tuesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Mainway Community Centre.



HAMILTON

[Hamilton deals with pending waves of retirements](#)

At today’s general issues committee, staff is recommending that Hamilton not pursue an early retirement incentive program, which staff says is typically used as a cost-saving strategy to “advance a reduction in headcount,” support organizational changes and create opportunities for emerging talent in the workforce. Staff says a retirement incentive program is not needed and

CONTINUED PAGE 7



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# GTA IN BRIEF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

is confident that through both retirement and regular turnover, there is “sufficient opportunity to identify positions which can be deleted and/or redeployed.”

The report points out that there has been an increasing number of retirements in the last four years—70 in 2009, 93 in 2010 and 116 in 2011. Furthermore, earlier this year it was predicted that 139 employees could retire in 2012, 205 in 2013, and 298 in 2014. As of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 90 employees have retired this year.

PEEL

## [Go West, young people](#)

**Mississauga** was named one of Canada’s top employers for young people in 2012 by the editors of Canada’s Top 100 Employers. Selection for this distinction was based on criteria such as demographics, opportunities for education and development as well as entry level openings.

“The city’s [Youth Plan](#) highlights the city’s commitment to providing the opportunities youth need today to develop the skills to be successful employees and members

of the Mississauga community,” said city manager **Janice Baker**.

YORK

## [Stronachs enter the condo development market](#)

**Stronach Group**, an Aurora-based gambling and horse racing company, has submitted an application to amend the zoning by-law to permit four new condo buildings near Bayview and Wellington comprising 116 units, a sales and recreation centre and tennis courts. The company entered the horse racing industry by purchasing the former holdings of **Magna Entertainment Corporation**, which was owned by **Frank Stronach**’s major automotive supplier **Magna International Inc.** The application was submitted at the general committee Tuesday evening, and staff has recommended approval.

## [Globe-trotting mayors](#)

Last week, **Vaughan** mayor **Maurizio Bevilacqua** signed a memorandum of understanding with the president of the province of Milan, **Guido Podesta**,

to develop a business relationship between Milan and Vaughan. Bevilacqua is on an 11-day trade mission until Wednesday, touring Milan, Turin and Rome to develop economic and diplomatic ties with the cities.

Meanwhile, **Markham** mayor **Frank Scarpitti** is planning a trade mission to China with the **Greater Toronto Chinese Business Association** which is heading to Qingdao, Shanghai, Beijing, Wuhan, Huadu and Shenzhen. [NRU](#)

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# GTA OMB NEWS

## Aurora variances authorized

In a decision issued September 26, board member **Aristotle Christou** allowed an appeal by **Aurora Ridge Homes** of an Aurora committee of adjustment decision to deny three minor variances. The variances were sought to construct a two-storey dwelling at 118 Stemmler Drive, northwest of Bloomington Road West and Yonge Street.

The variances sought were a decrease in the front yard setback from six to 4.55 metres and in the minimum distance of the front steps from the front lot line from 4.5 to 2.95 metres. The third variance was sought to allow construction of a detached dwelling and amenity uses within the Oak Ridges Moraine minimum vegetation protection zone.

The property is zoned detached dwelling second density residential exception zone, with a portion of the land also zoned as woodlands – minimum vegetation protection zone.

Planner **Howard Friedman (HBR Planning Centre Inc.)** provided evidence in support of Aurora Ridge Homes. He noted that the land was zoned to permit single-detached dwellings in 1989 and that development is permitted by the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan* if the land was zoned prior to November 15, 2001.

Friedman argued the proposed development is compatible with other developments in the neighbourhood, adding that it is desirable as it is the last remaining undeveloped lot in the subdivision.

Aurora policy planning manager **Jim Kyle** provided evidence in support of Aurora Ridge Homes under subpoena. He maintained the setback from the woodlot “would not impact the ecological integrity of the moraine,” noting that staff supported the variances.

Kyle said the setback for the front steps was necessary for grade-related reasons and does not affect the intent and purpose of the zoning by-law. He agreed with Friedman that the proposed

development would not negatively affect the character of the neighbourhood and would not create adverse impacts.

The board was satisfied with the planning evidence provided and authorized the variances.

Counsel in the case was **Kenneth C. Hill (Hill Hunter Losell)** representing Aurora Ridge Homes. (See *OMB Case No. PL120249.*) [nru](#)

### Errata

In the September 26th edition, NRU misspelled the name of the firm Stikeman Elliott. In the same issue, NRU stated that GO Transit's newly announced East Rail Maintenance Facility in Whitby will be 60,000 square feet. The facility will actually be 600,000 square feet. NRU regrets the errors.

In the September 12th edition, NRU incorrectly reported on a contract awarded in Markham. Sasaki Associates was hired to undertake the preparation of ‘specifications only’ for sporting venues that could be used for a future RFP for the Markham International Sports Training Academy. Markham Council has yet to decide whether to proceed to RFP for MISTA. Sasaki Associates’ contract is not related to the Markham Pan Am Centre. NRU regrets the error.

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## GTA PEOPLE

**Jennifer Evans** has been selected as the new deputy chief of **Peel Regional Police**. Evans is a 29-year

veteran of the force.

**Jackie Isada** is to take over as Burlington mayor **Rick Goldring's**

chief of staff starting in January. Isada previously held the marketing and strategic partnerships

manager positions with the Burlington Economic Development Corporation. Frank McKeowan will be

leaving the position he has held for two years to pursue business opportunities.