

Presentation to Halton Region Council, May 28, 2008
CS-33-08 Development Charges Update

Chair Carr, members of council,

My name is Kurt Koster, I am the chair of BurlingtonGreen, an environmental advocacy and outreach association.

We believe that development should pay its own way, as spelled out in the Places to Grow act. The absolute maximum share that residents should bear, is the statutory discount mandated by the provincial government.

We believe that of all the factors that an industry considers before locating in a community, development charges are a minor part.

Most of you here seem to believe that Development is good for our community. Without a completed Carrying Capacity study, we may be adding development that we cannot support sustainably.

One week ago, I was one of 15 delegates at the A & F committee meeting. Of those 15, five represented the development industry or chambers of commerce. The remaining 10 were either ratepayers or spoke on behalf of ratepayers groups. Not a single one of this group supported any resident's sharing in the capital costs.

Staff claims that the Region engaged in extensive public consultation to facilitate the 2008 DC update. Let's look at the real facts. There were 15 Development Charges Advisory Committee meetings. However, there were only three ratepayers compared to six development representatives on this committee. This committee was disbanded before the additional 160 million taxpayers share was considered. There were 14 stakeholders and technical meetings; ratepayers were not present at any of these. There was one public workshop and two public meetings that were poorly advertised as not a single ratepayer group knew about them. How much consultation have any of you, who are supposed to represent the taxpayers, done with your constituents on this issue? I suspect very little.

This whole process has been dominated from start to finish by the development industry or their lobbyists. It is akin to inviting the foxes to help in the design of the new henhouse.

We recommend a postponement of a decision on this issue by one month during which period public consultation meetings, well advertised, can be held in each of the four communities to hear what taxpayers have to say on this issue. This recommendation also has the support of Oakvillegreen.

A recorded vote, Chair Carr, on all deliberation on this issue will assist us in reporting back to our members.

Thank you.