

# DEPUTATION REQUEST

PUBLIC MEETING  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
MARCH 24, 2021

**Subject:** Development Cost Charges

**Spokesperson:** Susan Sheard

**Name of Group or person(s) being represented (if applicable):**

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**Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:**

Area-specific development charges vs uniform region-wide charges

Meeting Type (Name of Board, Committee, or Council): Council

Meeting Date: March 24, 2022

Agenda Item Number (if known): C.1

Subject: **Item C.1 Development Cost Charges**

Please attach your correspondence to this email or type your letter below.

**re: item C.1 Development Cost Charges**

**The YR 2022 Development Charges Background Study Draft states (p. 197) that** “Under section 10 of the Act, before passing a development charges bylaw, Council must consider the use of area-specific development charges.”

The report explains that “Area-specific development charges are most appropriately applied to clearly defined localized area(s) where the growth-related infrastructure provides a clear benefit to the anticipated development.” However, then the report states that “Historically, the Region has levied a uniform, Region-wide charges for its services, with the exception of the water resource recovery facility located in the Village of Nobleton” and goes on to cite justifications for the use of region-wide, rather than area specific development charges.

Along with the decisions including: 1) the expansion of urban boundaries, and 2) the redesignation of greenbelt fingers from agricultural to rural, this resistance to area-specific development charges strikes me as yet another example of Council sticking doggedly to an approach to development that does not support its stated goals, cited in [York Region Climate Change Action Plan 2020](#) “To Reduce Greenhouse gas emissions with a long-term goal of becoming a net-zero Region by 2050”.

The Ontario government seems to think that, as long as they flood the market with electric vehicles, they can encourage regional governments to pave farmland to their heart’s content and still meet ghg reduction targets. This notion is deeply flawed in numerous ways that I think are probably clear to all of you, but I’d be happy to elaborate later if you’d like. For now, suffice to say that if York Region is serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, development charges have to be specific, not just to the type of housing, but must also be specific to whether that housing will be built in greenfields or in already urbanized areas.

Please consider the following statement from “**The High Costs of Sprawl: Why Building More Sustainable Communities Will Save Us Time and Money**” (<https://climateactionnetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CostsofSprawl-FINAL.pdf>):

“If the municipal tax system was a business it would quickly go bankrupt. By undercharging for sprawl developments, the tax system creates demand for a product it loses money on (sprawl homes) and discourages a product (efficient homes) that could save it money. This is like a restaurant charging \$1 for a prime steak and \$300 for a hamburger — not exactly a financially sound pricing model, but that is precisely how our municipalities are structuring their development charges and property tax systems.”

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**The same report provides some inspiring examples:** “Kitchener, Hamilton and Brantford charge higher development charges for builds in greenfields than builds in urbanized areas, providing a financial incentive not to bulldoze farmland and forests. Both Kitchener and Waterloo have used DC systems to facilitate growth in their old downtown cores, areas with services that were underused. Following Caledon’s example, 31 municipalities could also provide discounts for innovative non-residential developments that put less strain on municipal services. Peterborough has eight special planning area charges for its greenfields, all of which add thousands of dollars to recover costs for providing services from these harder to service areas. Caledon has discounts for services not required, special area charges and 10 - 44.5 per cent discounts for environmental efficiency.”

Finally, I would like to say that I appreciate that it cannot be easy to be a regional councilor or mayor, and I have the utmost respect for those of you who take an open-minded and educated approach to the very weighty decisions you are required to make. At the same time, I must also say that I’m horrified by how few of you are willing to exercise the flexible thinking that is required protect the climate, our farmland and our regional water sources for future generations, and I sincerely hope you will see this opportunity to enforce development charges that incentivize compact, livable communities instead of more sprawl developments.

Thank you,

Susan Sheard

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