

# Pickering's 'small city' of Seaton may not be on the map for years

*Durham pushing Province on issues around yet-to-be-built community*

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DURHAM -- The studies are still being done, so it could be years before a shovel gets into the ground in the Seaton area of Pickering.

That, however, hasn't stopped some developers with filing an appeal with the Ontario Municipal Board to have their subdivision plans dealt with.

Regional Council's planning committee heard Tuesday that construction work for Seaton is still at least three years away from starting.

Seaton was expropriated in the early 1970s by the provincial government so a community could be built to service a planned airport in Pickering.

It's roughly bounded by Hwy. 7 to the north, the border with Ajax to the east, the West Duffins Creek to the west and the CP rail line to the south.

Dorothy Skinner, a senior planner with Durham, said the Central Pickering Development Plan (CPCD) outlines how Seaton will be developed. Once fully developed, there will be up to 70,000 residents and 35,000 jobs created, she noted.

Fifty-three per cent of the area will be left in a natural state, Ms. Skinner said.

"The expectation is Seaton won't be a bedroom community," she said.

The Province appointed a facilitator to deal with the CPCD last June, with the objective to hasten development in Seaton.

Regional Chairman Roger Anderson noted there are "a number of issues on the table," including policing, ambulance services, works yards and health.

"It's a small city up there. To be perfectly blunt, the Province hasn't responded to those issues at all," Mr. Anderson said.

There are many issues that need to be addressed, said planning commissioner Alex Georgieff.

"Things wanted, we'll need the assistance from senior levels of government to make it happen. To make Seaton happen, to be a truly 21st century city, the Province has to step up to the plate."

Mr. Georgieff and Mr. Anderson met with Infrastructure Minister Bob Chiarelli recently to talk about Hwy. 407. They also dealt with Seaton, Mr. Georgieff said.

"The infrastructure minister has a pretty good handle to make it happen," Mr. Georgieff said.

Pickering Mayor Dave Ryan said a 'pre-hearing' to deal with developers' OMB appeal could be held in March.

A 'pre-hearing' is held to try to narrow down the issues that could be dealt with during a full OMB hearing.

Pickering isn't going to "rubber stamp" the developers' applications, he added.

"We keep reminding the Province they're planning Seaton in isolation. It's part of a bigger context," Mr. Georgieff said.

The school boards project 19 schools in Seaton, Mr. Anderson noted.

The Province isn't allowing schools to be built near natural heritage areas, so they would have to be in the middle of subdivisions. That will mean higher densities, Mr. Anderson said.

He noted that in addition to schools, other infrastructure would be needed, including works yards, fire, police and ambulance stations, and parks.

Planning staff have been trying to tell the Province that there isn't enough land to "squeeze" in 35,000 jobs, Mr. Georgieff said.