

DC study, bylaw revamped again

By Mark PavilonsEditorLocal JournalismInitiative Reporter

King's 2025 Development Charge Background Study and Bylaw returned for more tweaking, sparked by recent changes mandated by the Province. King council and staff reported on the DC bylaw, which is set to expire Jan. 13, 2026. Since the release of the background study on in October, the Province enacted Bill 60 ??Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025 ??which introduces several amendments to the Development Charges Act (D.C.A.) that impact the Township's 2025 background study. Staff noted that in order to provide additional time to make the necessary updates to the Township's background study, the Township must undertake a minor amendment to the current D.C. bylaw to remove the expiry clause. The Township retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (Watson) to undertake a comprehensive D.C. background study and prepare a new bylaw. The D.C. background study was released on Oct. 27. Since then, several amendments in Bill 60 make revising the bylaw necessary. The Act introduces new estimation rules, required D.C. classes, updated reporting requirements, and changes to reserve fund administration and local service policies. To ensure the Township's new D.C. bylaw reflects these updated legislative requirements, an addendum to the background study is being prepared. Additional time is required to complete this addendum so that the updated analysis fully incorporates the new legislative framework and its implications for the Township. Staff pointed out that recent amendments to the D.C.A. under Bill 185 introduced a streamlined process for amending a D.C. bylaw where the sole purpose is to repeal the expiry provision or extend the expiry date. Bylaws amended through this process do not require a D.C. background study, are exempt from the standard public process requirements, and are not subject to appeal. The extended expiry date continues to be subject to the 10-year maximum bylaw term set out in the D.C.A. Notice of bylaw passage for this minor amendment must still be provided in accordance with the D.C.A., except that the notice does not need to specify a last day for appeal, as the appeal provisions do not apply. The Township now has to make a minor amendment to the current D.C. by-law to remove the expiry clause. This will maintain the Township's ability to collect D.C.s under the existing bylaw while providing additional time to complete the addendum to the D.C. background study. Councillors expressed dismay that Provincial changes continue to throw monkey wrenches into their studies. Councillor Debbie Schaefer said the changes delay King in making progress on the bylaw. It has become very time-consuming for Township staff, especially when the aim is to have less red tape, not more. ?We're going in the wrong direction,? she observed. Several submissions were received by the Township on the new bylaw. The Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) is ?encouraged to see the Township considering a reduction to its Development Charge rates through this review. In the current economic climate, initiatives like this are essential, as they directly support the creation of new homes by alleviating financial pressures in the development process. ?The proposed reduction sends a clear signal to the development industry that the Township recognizes the challenges in today's housing market and is committed to being part of the solution to help get homes built. ?The York Region Federation of Agriculture (YRFA) noted that farm worker bunkhouses should be exempt from DCs since they do not generate growth related capital costs. The definition of ?Agricultural Use? should be clarified regarding farm worker bunkhouses. Farm worker bunkhouses are defined as an agricultural use both in the Provincial Planning Statement and by MPAC. ?YRFA firmly supports the principle that growth should pay for growth so that the cost of new infrastructure is not unfairly shifted onto existing property taxpayers. At the same time, it must be recognized that agricultural structures ? such as barns, silos, grain bins, greenhouses, livestock barns, and bunkhouses ? do not generate increased demand for municipal services in the way other types of development do. These farm buildings support ongoing agricultural production and help ensure farmland remains viable and productive, rather than driving population growth or new service needs. ?Growth-related capital needs can be attributed to all new residences. The construction of new farm buildings/structures, however, does not generate growth-related capital costs, they stressed. ?Therefore, development charges should not apply to farm buildings/structures. If they do, farmers are bearing more than their share of the municipality's additional capital expenditures. ?Imposing additional development charges on necessary farm structures only exacerbates these challenges, effectively penalizing farmers for reinvesting in their business. By removing DCs on farm worker bunkhouses, the municipality can alleviate an undue financial burden on farmers, encouraging them to reinvest in their operations. We know that when farmers can keep more of their money, they reinvest and drive economic growth. For every dollar increase in farmers' revenue, there is a \$0.84 increase in provincial GDP.?