

Anderson has his eyes on transit in 2008

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By Erin Hatfield

DURHAM - Garbage, growth and buses will top the list of key issues in 2008, Durham Regional Chairman Roger Anderson predicts.

In 2008, Mr. Anderson doesn't hesitate in pin pointing the proposed energy-from-waste facility as being the big issue. The upcoming year will be full of milestones in the joint study between Durham and York regions to find a method of dealing with garbage, currently trucked to Michigan.

Right out of the gate, on Jan. 9, a final report on the consultants' recommended preferred site for a proposed energy-from-waste facility will be forwarded to the Region works committee and the York Region solid waste committee for approval.

"I think if everything works out and it is safe, the project will go forward," Mr. Anderson said. "We have to have a solution for our garbage, but our members of council will want to prove it's safe."

The issue of waste management continues to bring out a slew of public comment and delegations to Regional council meetings and Mr. Anderson said he expects that will continue.

"Council will take all of those into consideration when they make their decision," he said.

Also on Mr. Anderson's radar is the Region's Growth Plan, which he says will have major impacts and will require council's attention in 2008.

"We will have to make sure we have the right mix (of residential and industrial lands) to make sure we have jobs for the future," he said.

Thirdly, MetroLinx (formerly the Greater Toronto Transit Authority) has come forward with a funding request for about \$80 million for Durham. Mr. Anderson said he's optimistic the Province will approve the request and the Region can get rolling on building a better transit system.

"Durham worked hard on that request with MetroLinx," he said. "It will mean better west mobility, new hybrid buses and seven-and-a-half-minute service on Hwy. 2."

All this will translate to more people choosing to take transit, he said.

"It will help them come back to the buses in bigger numbers than they did last year," Mr. Anderson explained.

However, Mr. Anderson is less optimistic about a few projects in 2008, including the extension of Hwy. 407 east and the building of the new courthouse in Oshawa. He said his hope is to see the Province get moving on both of these projects.

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