

greater Saint John

STAFF RECOMMENDS SLOW APPROACH ON PROPOSED ASHBURN ROAD PROJECT

BRUCE BARTLETT
TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

SAINT JOHN • The approval process for a multimillion-dollar commercial and residential development proposed for the Ashburn Road area by East Point developer Troy Northrup may hit a speed bump on its way to the city's Planning Advisory Committee Tuesday night.

A staff recommendation calls for a two-stage approach so that the city will have time to assess the impact on finances of future infrastructure projects

if the project goes ahead.

"Among the recommended stage-two requirements the developer will be required to complete the provincial environmental impact assessment process prior to development, along with a requirement that the lands revert back to their existing zoning should the first phase of development not occur within eight years," a report, prepared by city staff for the advisory committee, reads.

Joel Levesque, a spokesman for Horizon Management Ltd., the company formed to develop the land, said the company is pleased with the report.

"We believe it will give Horizon Management the ability to move forward with the development," Levesque said in an emailed statement on Monday.

Other major items on the agenda for the PAC Tuesday include the proposed new headquarters for Irving Oil Ltd., on King's Square, a new liquor store on the corner of Union Street and Wellington Row and the conversion of St. Patrick's School on the lower west side into a multi-use space.

City staff recommend approval for the other projects, which require

variances and a rezoning.

In Irving Oil's case, the bylaw says that the setback on a multi-storey building should be at the fifth-floor level. The company's design has the setback beginning on the third floor to better match the scale of its neighbours, including the Imperial Theatre.

The report says the building is proposed for the city's major business, office and retail area so it is an appropriate use of the land and meets the city's goal of intensifying use in the uptown

PLEASE SEE → **DEVELOPMENT, B2**

On robust labour markets, old Lorne school



Kurt Peacock
the next city

Sometimes the stated unemployment rate provides an incomplete picture of the overall state of the economy – it's not just who is out of work, but just how many are potentially ready and able to work, that best provides a snapshot of a particular community's economic strength.

The latest labour force survey contains data that helpfully fleshes out this observation. In large part because Canada's oil patch is still experiencing such a sharp decline, Calgary, the western Canadian metropolis whose boardrooms have directed much of the country's growth over the last decade or so, now has a fairly high unemployment rate for a major urban centre.

February's national labour force survey put the Calgary jobless rate at 8.4 per cent, which was marginally higher than the 8.3 per cent unemployment rate for the Saint John CMA for the same period. This data point alone would suggest that Calgary's immediate prospects are diminishing – for context, the western city's unemployment rate was effectively half of Saint John's at the start of 2015.

By another measure, however, the Calgary economy remains quite a compelling model for urban economic success. Even if Calgary has a slightly higher percentage of currently jobless residents than Saint John, it also has a higher percentage of employed residents. While this sounds like a paradox, it's not – the employment ratio in Calgary stands at 66.9 per cent, compared to 59.4 per cent for Saint John. The reason why Calgary has a higher percentage of both jobless and employed residents in the same labour force survey is because of Calgary's significantly higher labour force participation rate – it stands at 64.8 per cent in Saint John, and comes in at 73.0 per cent in Calgary.

City hall, along with local economic development officials and provincial labour market bureaucrats, ought to be turning over every stone in order to turn around Saint John's less than robust labour force participation rate. It's obviously a fair bit below Calgary's – no surprise here, as Calgary has been one of the strongest urban economies in Canada for more than a decade – but the Saint John participation rate is also a fair bit below many of our urban peers. In Moncton, the participation rate was 66.6 per cent in February; in Halifax, it was 68.1 per cent; in St. John's, it was 68.1 per cent.

Even if part of the participation rate gap between Saint John and its Atlantic peers can be partly explained away by accounting for an employment-boosting higher public sector presence in other centres (both St. John's and Halifax are provincial capitals, and Moncton is home to ACOA), there remains a constant – the higher the number of adults actively participating in the local economy, the more likely it is to be

PLEASE SEE → **ECONOMY, B2**

Riding for diabetes research



Kyle Wheaton is planning the longest bike ride of his life to raise money for the Junior Diabetes Research Foundation in hopes of saving his nine-year-old daughter Charlie Wheaton from having to endure the pain which comes with having the life-long disease. They are seen together at their home on the west side of Saint John on Monday. PHOTO: REBECCA WATSON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

Treatment ordered for husband who choked wife

Kirk Leblanc will serve jail sentence in community

MIKE LANDRY
TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

SAINT JOHN • A Saint John man will be allowed to serve his jail sentence at home for assaulting his wife in November and December, but one of the conditions is he will have to attend treatment related to intimate partner violence.

Although an order for counseling is included in the sentencing, it's not usually specified. Judge Andrew Palmer included the specific

PLEASE SEE → **COURT, B2**

Fredericton Police Force agrees to destroy all copies of lawyer's prints

MIKE LANDRY
TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

SAINT JOHN • The Fredericton Police Force must expunge all its records of fingerprints and photographs taken of a Saint John lawyer acquitted last year of obstruction of justice.

Rodney Gillis signed a consent order with Chantal Gauthier, the lawyer representing the Fredericton Police Force, its police chief Leanne Fitch and officer Mark Lord, on March 4. The order was filed with the Court of Queen's Bench in Saint John on March 9.

With the order in place, there was no need for a scheduled hearing on Monday in Saint John.

Gillis filed a motion against the force, Fitch and Lord on Jan. 27. He was seeking the destruction of the documents, written confirmation of anywhere the documents had been shared and \$5,000 in costs.

The consent order grants most of Gillis's requests, but says no costs will be ordered.



Saint John lawyer Rodney Gillis has won a motion to have his fingerprints destroyed by the Fredericton Police Force. PHOTO: ADAM HURAS/LEGISLATURE BUREAU

As well as expunging its records, the force must provide a list of anyone who was provided copies, or access, to

the documents. Before destroying the

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