

7000 New Condos mean \$5.9 million for Catholic Board, \$0 for Public Board

The city's approval of 7,000 new condo units last week will generate \$5.9 million in Education Development Charges for the Toronto Catholic District School Board, but \$0 for Toronto's Public Board.

The TCDSB collects \$841 per condo unit built in the city. The 7,000 new units approved by city council last term mean \$5,887,000 for the TCDSB. Although the public board serves more than double the number of students, it receives \$0.

The 7,000 new units are in addition to the 70,000 already being developed in Toronto. At the old rate of \$693 per unit, the 70,000 permits already approved by the city mean \$48.5 million for the TCDSB. The Toronto Catholic Board also collects 67 cents per square foot non-residential development.

In an open letter to provincial party leaders, the TDSB has asked for changes to section 257.10 of the Education Act that would allow the TDSB to collect Education Development Charges and to use them for renovations, additions and new school construction. Currently Education Development Charges can only be used for the purchase and upgrading of land. Because the TDSB has land, it is not allowed to collect Education Development Charges.

At Avondale, a new school construction site where the funding has come from the sale of other schools and school yards, TDSB Trustee Mari Rutka states that, "Without funding, schools will not get built without a substantial sacrifice of Toronto green space..."

"The regulations regarding Education Development Charges made sense for suburban horizontal development," says TDSB Trustee Chris Glover. "But now we have vertical development and none of the money from the developers is going to the local public schools to prepare spaces for the kids who will live in the condos."

"The Ottawa-Carleton and the Ontario Public School Boards Association have passed motions asking the provincial government to change the regulations to Education Development Charges," says Jennifer Mackenzie, Chair of the Ottawa-Carleton DSB. "We need Education Development Charges to cover additions and new school construction over and above the cost of land that they currently cover."

"In a densely populated city like Toronto, the TDSB is being forced to sell valuable green space in order to pay for renovations, new additions and new schools," says Heather Mitchell of the Toronto Sports Council. "The city is already short of playing fields, the provincial policy needs to be changed."

Alan Hrabinski, a Toronto resident says, "I was shocked and disappointed that the provincial government does not allow the Toronto District School Board to collect Education Development Charges to support the development of new schools in new developments in Toronto while the Toronto Catholic District School Board has access to them."

A press conference will be held:

Avondale Secondary School – 171 Avondale Avenue, North York

Thursday Sept 4th, 2014 at 10:30 a.m.

Contact: Nancy Trendoff – 647-292-5223