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News

Mega-hospital site becomes top priority for roads, services

The location of the proposed mega-hospital for Windsor and Essex County is forcing city planners back to the drawing board.

Dave Waddell • Windsor Star
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Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens speaks during a press conference at County Road 42 and the Ninth Concession, the proposed location for the Windsor and Essex County Acute Care Hospital will be built. PHOTO BY JASON KRYK /Windsor Star

The area around the proposed [mega-hospital for Windsor and Essex County](#)

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has now become a priority for city plans and new infrastructure.



The mega-hospital site on County Road 42 will become the focal point in the city's revamping of plans for 6,300 acres it took over from the Town of Tecumseh in 2003.

John Revell, Windsor's chief building official, said the city will re-evaluate its priorities to ensure access roads and supporting infrastructure is in place for the project.

"The hospital will be like an anchor store in a mall that draws in people and other businesses," Revell said of the site on the southeastern corner of County Road 42 and Concession 9.

"The hospital was never designed to be a standalone. It'll create other opportunities in the medical field and to serve the people working there.

“You’re going to start to see things happening real fast, land speculation and such.”

Revell said the city will begin to review existing plans over the next six months to a year and things will pick up once approval to proceed with the hospital is given by the Ministry of Health.

City Coun. Rino Bortolin is concerned those needs could heap substantial costs on city taxpayers

.

“I’m 100 per cent supportive of the project, but there’s going to be some secondary and tertiary costs to this,” said Bortolin, who is also worried the city and province are promoting urban sprawl in a region with no projected population growth for the extended future.

“In having to expand Lauzon Parkway, County Road 42 and Concession 9 because the hospital is going to that site, how are the costs going to be shared?”

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“Will the province help? Because it’s a regional hospital, will the county chip in or will the city foot the bill by itself?”

“We could be looking at a \$100-million in roadwork for this.”

Bortolin added the city needs to start readying itself for medical professionals to uproot from traditional medical plazas to locate closer to the new hospital.

“We’re going to see some hollowing out of neighbourhoods and medical plazas,” Bortolin said. “Let’s ready ourselves now to make sure we have a plan how to handle it.”

Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens said area politicians plan to explore funding options with the province about some projects.

While he thinks widening County Road 42 might be hard to sell to the province, he’s more optimistic about partnering with Queen’s Park on the Lauzon Parkway extension.

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“A major project like this I think can help leverage the Lauzon Parkway extension,” Dilkens said of the proposed six-lane roadway connecting to Highway 401. “That’s a \$100-million project and the city can’t do that on its own.”

Dilkens said the plan is for County Road 42 to be made into a four-lane road from Walker Road to East Puce Road.

He pointed out the development he expects to take place around the hospital, both residential and commercial, will also help pay some of that cost. In addition, the city projects the Windsor Regional Hospital Met campus land, which it will acquire in a land swap for the former Grace Hospital site,

will produce \$250,000 annually in property taxes just from residential use.

“We’ll have to pay for some infrastructure, but the city and county will get significant benefits from this hospital investment,” Dilkens said.

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Revell said improving access to the hospital will be a priority once things get rolling, but he’s confident other infrastructure costs won’t be significant.

“We anticipated development in that area, so we already have a new sewer trunk line along County Road 42,” Revell said. “There’s another sewer line running up (Concession 8) for the new jail.

“The hospital just has to hook up across the road.”

Windsor Regional is responsible

for the cost of bringing utilities to the site, said Kevin Marshall, the hospital’s director of corporate services.

“To bring utilities to the property will be about \$800,000 to \$1 million,” Marshall said. “It was budgeted into the land acquisition costs.”

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