

Area's rapid growth taking its toll on the environment

This week, the provincial government is expected to open the flood-gate of mass residential growth into Innisfil.

I appreciate the economic stimulus that is associated with residential development, and can acknowledge that Barrie is certainly best positioned to deal with marketing industrial lands and reducing the impact of environmentally hazardous septic systems.

However, growth must not be permitted to occur without the appropriate checks and balances. The County of Simcoe and City of Barrie's growth plans both aspire for residential development at a much too rapid pace.

We must not lose site of the fact that growth does not pay for itself, and that Barrie is already playing catch up providing recreational facilities,



Patrick Brown
BARRIEMP

schools, roads and other infrastructure to support its current population.

I would like to ask Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, The City of Barrie and the Minister of Municipal Affairs Jim Watson to please take into consideration the effects rapid residential growth would have on Lake Simcoe.

The pace of growth occurring in Barrie over the last 20 years has had a significant impact on our quality of life. Future development must only be permitted in a fashion that does not overwhelm Lake Simcoe.

As a councillor, I represented the city on the Lake Simcoe Conservation

“ We are just now turning back the clock on the environmental damage caused by our rapid development, and have made tremendous progress in the last two years thanks to the unprecedented federal investment of \$30 million to help clean up Lake Simcoe.”

Authority, and had the opportunity to learn firsthand the negative impacts associated with urbanization on our lake.

Currently, more than 100 tonnes of phosphorus enter Lake Simcoe on an annual basis. While phosphorus is a naturally occurring nutrient that all living things require to grow and live, too much contributes to an unhealthy ecosystem.

The visible result is the excessive amount of aquatic plants that are choking local beaches, marinas and waterfront properties.

We are just now turning back the clock on the environmental damage caused by

our rapid development, and have made tremendous progress in the past two years thanks to the unprecedented federal investment of \$30 million to help clean up Lake Simcoe. I do not want to see this good work undone because we choose to cater to the impatience of residential developers rather than the best interests of our residents.

I can't help but ask myself if development decisions are being based on what is best for Barrie or what is best for developers?

I wonder if an additional 30,000 homes in the south end of Barrie would hamper our ability to keep Lake Simcoe clean. I believe it is

incumbent on the provincial government to bring forth that case before any flood-gates to massive residential growth is opened.

Most summer days 50 years ago, my family went swimming at Johnson's Beach. If there is one thing I want to ensure in public service it is that we never imperil the ability of our grandchildren to do the same. Future generations deserve to enjoy the environmental gem that Lake Simcoe and Kempenfelt Bay are, and must never need worry about 'no swimming' signs at city beaches.

Patrick Brown is Barrie's MP