

# Medical campus should focus on outpatient care: committee

**By Brock Weir**

As Canada's population increases, so too do the number of people looking for both traditional medical and holistic treatments.

But as these numbers grow, so too does the number of new doctors looking for places to set up practice, train, and build upon their skills.

So, why not create a medical campus, an extensive place for people to receive the treatments they need, while doctors and caregivers continue to hone their skills right here at home? That's the argument being put forward by local business advocates in Aurora trying to make a "medical campus" a reality.

A medical campus would contain such traditional outlets as medical and dental clinics, but also research and laboratory facilities tied in with health and therapy, as well as pharmaceutical developments.

The idea has been under considerable investigation by Aurora's Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), with bringing it forward a cornerstone of the Town's Economic Development Action Plan.

Looking at various locations around Town where this could become a reality, the Committee has been focusing their sites on the Bayview Avenue and St. John's Sideroad location. After considering areas along Yonge Street and Wellington Street in the Aurora Promenade, the soon-to-be-developed lands at Wellington and Highway 404, as well as slightly further west on Wellington at Mavrinac Boulevard on lands currently owned by the Stronach Family, the lands at the north-central end of Town would be ideal, they say.

While there were not many arguments against a medical campus on the Stronach lands near Wellington Street and Mavrinac Boulevard, St. John's and Bayview won the day for a number of reasons. These include the number of medical practices already in the area, as well as a "wealth" of vacant properties and lands. Its location close to two busy streets, as well as Southlake Regional Health Centre also gave it bonus points.

"Our next step would be to continue to evaluate the area and look at their policies and procedures that need to be put in place to allow for those lands to be used for their intended use," said Mr. Ieurullo. "From that, some other investment attraction program would [be able] to draw and attract users to the lands in question."

Speaking in support of the idea, members of EDAC fell one step short of using the phrase "one stop shop" to describe their vision.

Councillor Michael Thompson, who heads up the Committee, said a swath of land focused on being a medical campus would make things "easier for those who come to Town to open up shop" because it would make it easier to avoid planning and zoning issues which they might encounter if doctors or medical businesses might go it alone.

"What you're trying to do is create an environment where medical users can come and locate easily and have a supportive planning environment in place," said Mr. Ierullo. "Out of that, we can begin to look at investment attraction opportunities, marketing, and targeted marketing requirements to that sector."

If the plans come to fruition, investments are made, and companies, doctors, and others make an investment in the medical campus, committee members said they envisioned a place which would not only make it easier for doctors to practice but also for patients to receive care, whether they are looking for a family doctor, a general dentist or referred from their GP or dentist to more specialized practitioners.

"Picture instead of a disparate system, you almost have a shopping mall with two entrances and don't have to think about what is

best for the provider, but what is best for the patient,? said Peter Dickens of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. ?The easier you can make it, the better. Hospitals are aggressively trying to push as much as they can out of the hospital. With ever-increasing rates of infection, the hospital is the last place you want to be, if you can avoid it, and the healthcare system will tell you that.

?The system is moving in this direction. If we are able to get out in front of that movement, even a little bit of a time that is the right direction. Get out in front of it, but make sure you have room to let it grow.?