

Town of Ajax History - *A Town is Born*

The 1970s brought many vast changes to the Town of Ajax. On June 22, 1973, the Ontario Legislature enacted Bill 162 to amalgamate the Town of Ajax and the Village of Pickering and annex certain portions of the Township of Pickering to the Town of Ajax. The Village of Pickering and those parts of Pickering Township incorporated into the boundaries of the Town of Ajax have had illustrious histories of their own prior to the formation of Ajax. See **Town of Ajax History – *Founding of Pickering Village*** for a brief history of the Village.

The boundaries of the enlarged Town of Ajax now extended east to the Whitby town line (Lake Ridge Road), north to the south side of the fifth concession of Pickering Township and west to an irregular boundary immediately east of Brock Road. Ajax had grown from 2,985 acres to 16,729 acres, more than 5 1/2 times in size. Thus many new exciting and challenging political and planning problems faced the Council and the people. Ajax was no longer the small compact area it had been. It now took in large older, well-established areas, as well as much agricultural land.

Regional government brought in a new and different political structure. Ajax Council, which took office on January 1, 1974 as part of the Regional Municipality of Durham consisted of:

- Mayor – Clark A. Mason
- Regional Councillor – Mary A. Reid
- Councillors: Henry G. Westney – Ward 1, Donald A. Lawrence – Ward 2, Owen G. Ashley – Ward 3, Colin A. Mackie – Ward 4, James H. Bates – Ward 5

John C. Mackintosh was elected from Wards 1, 2 and 3 and Lucy Bateson from Wards 4 and 5 to represent Ajax on the Durham Board of Education. The representatives elected to the Separate School Board from Ajax were Gerald E. Noonan and D.C. "Jim" Lavery. As a result, Ajax went from a Council of nine consisting of a Mayor, Reeve, Deputy-reeve and six councillors elected at large to a Council of seven. Five of these councillors were elected by wards. With the introduction of regional government, the Town turned over the responsibilities for policing, water, sanitary sewage, social assistance and shared planning to the Region.

The Town of Ajax was represented on the Regional Council by the Mayor and one Regional Councillor until 1988 when the Provincial government approved one additional Regional Councillor to be elected from the Town of Ajax due to the tremendous population growth of the 1980s. In 2016 Regional Council approved the addition of a fourth Regional Councillor from Ajax as a result of continued growth in the community. This change came into effect for the 2018 municipal elections.

The people of the Town of Ajax have always taken great pride in their town planning. In 1972, the province approved the Town's official plan. This was followed in 1978 by the approval of the Official Plan of Durham Region. 1978 was also an important year in planning for Ajax for other reasons. First, it was in that year that the Ontario Municipal Board approved a new zoning or land-use by-law that consolidated four older zoning by-laws from previous jurisdictions. Second, Ajax Council approved the District Plan replacing three official plans from the former municipalities. All this was done to recognize the changes and to organize for future development.