

Weekly ridership up 10 per cent since RideCo program's launch

20... manager Anne Marie Aikins, it costs \$15,000 to \$20,000 to add one new parking space to the lot, along with associated maintenance costs.

This pilot project is predicted to cost Metrolinx \$5,200 per month, based on trip demand.

And it won't cost the Town any more money, as it replaced the previous GO drop-off service and received the reallocated funds of \$10,000 per month.

Ward 4 Councillor Rick Malboeuf, who has been very vocal about the state of Milton's

transit system, said he's happy it's not costing the taxpayers any more money, but said it is a small solution to a far greater problem.

"There's issues with the parking lot...all day GO service. There's a lot of problems out here with the GO transit system to Milton and unfortunately it doesn't look like it's going to change in the near future."

D'Alessandro said it will take another two or three months to really gauge its impact, but admits the technology is being considered to replace conventional services.

"We are interested to see how this pilot works. We're testing a lot of features to apply it to a variety of service delivery concepts," he said.

D'Alessandro used the example of the trans cab, a supplementary service offered by Milton Transit and a local taxi operator to provide door-to-door transportation. To book a trans cab trip, customers have to call an information line at least one hour before the departure time. With the RideCo app, users can book a trip home in a taxi or shuttle service using their smartphones while they're commuting.

"It's super convenient. You can see the vehicle show up when you get off the train, hop in and get dropped off at home or on a street corner," said Prem Gururajan, co-founder of RideCo.

The program currently operates weekday mornings, from 6:15 to 8 am, and evenings

from 4:45 to 8:30 p.m.

As far as expanding the service to replace Milton Transit Saturday bus service, which has been under scrutiny for its high cost and low ridership figures, D'Alessandro was less committal.

"Could there be some aspects of a service on Saturday with this concept? Probably. It would make sense, but that's a big question to answer," he said.

Gururajan said he has been in talks with other municipalities to extend the service, as well as with companies outside of Metrolinx and the Town of Milton.

"We're very excited with how things are going. We've only been operational for five weeks and we're seeing people use the service that used to drive or park in the GO station on a regular basis. Some riders use it twice a day every day," he said.

D'Alessandro admits that numbers may be slightly skewed for the month of May because the service was free. However, ridership figures still grew when the service came with a charge in the first week of June, ranging anywhere from \$1.45 to \$1.95.

Gururajan told the *Champion* that the biggest thing is that the program is making a positive impact in the community and he is looking forward to seeing ridership continue to grow.



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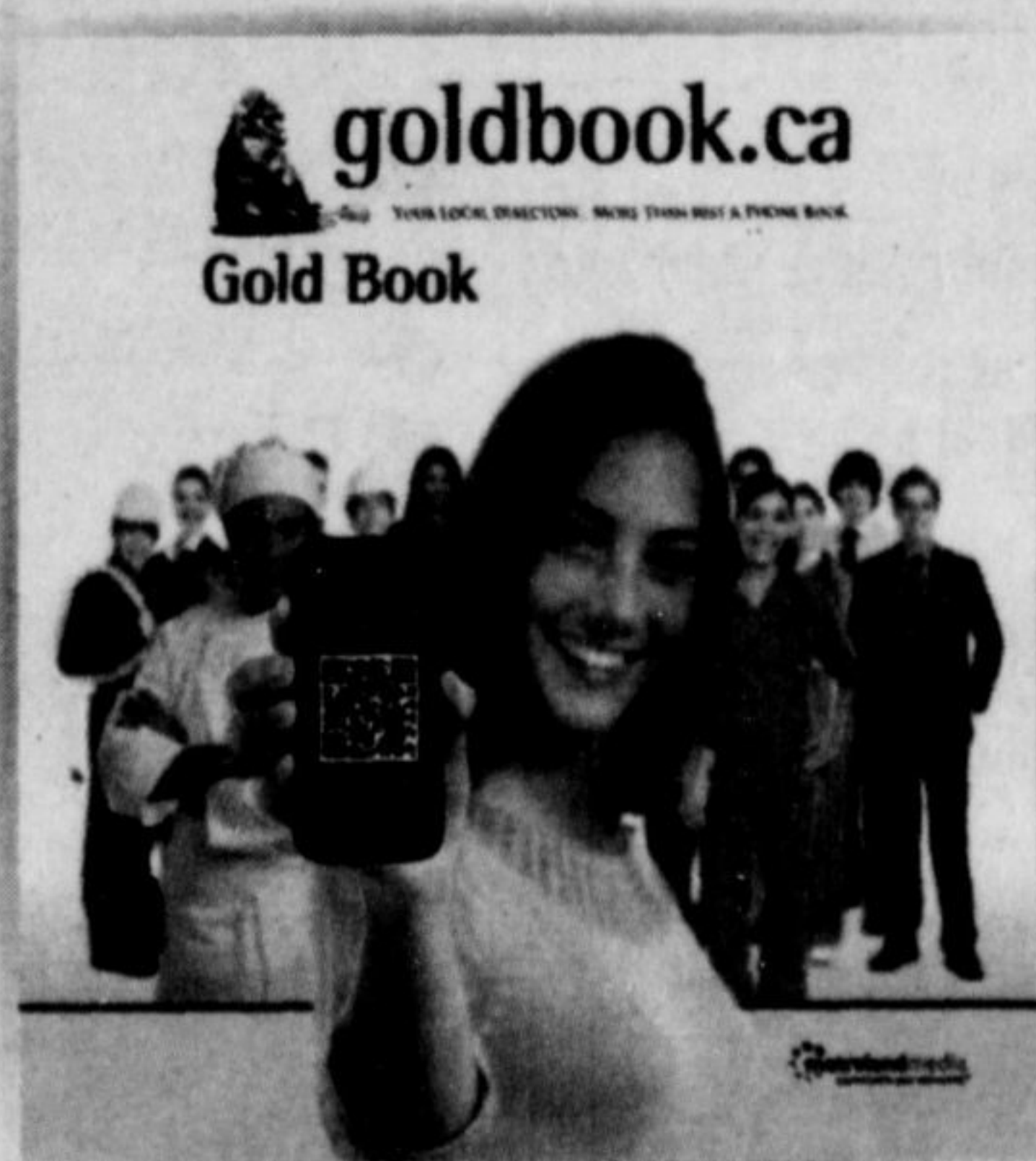
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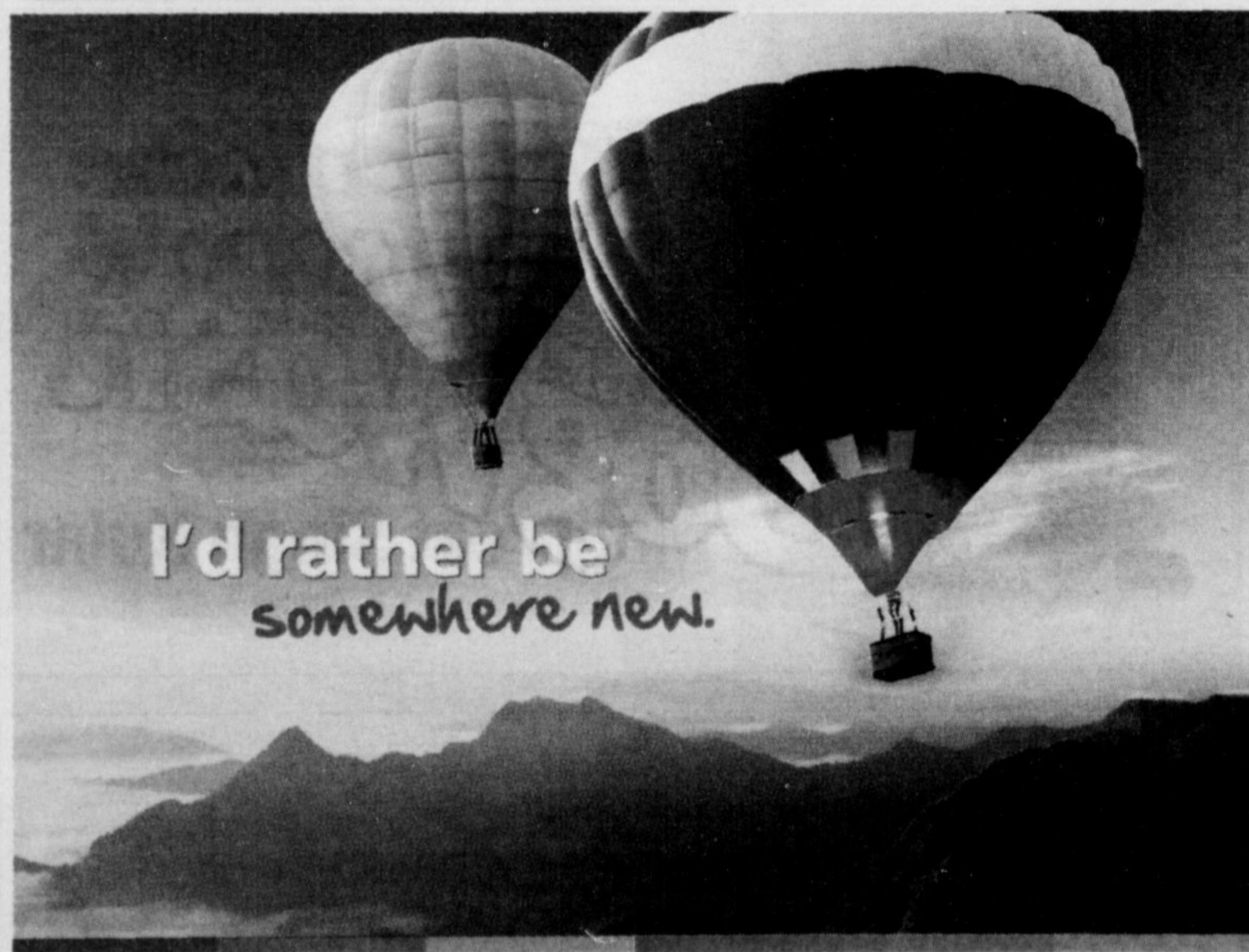
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