

"Need More Industrial Land To Balance Ratio"

Following is the address given by Richmond Hill Planning Director Harold Deeks to the Richmond Hill Rotary Club January 14.

Mr. Deeks has been planning director for Richmond Hill for 14 months. Prior to coming here he was in the planning branch of the provincial government.

Before I begin, Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that under Section 10 of the Planning Act the province makes it mandatory that "the planning board shall investigate and survey the physical, social and economic conditions in relation to the planning area and... without limiting the generality of the foregoing it shall... hold public meetings and publish information for the purpose of obtaining the participation and co-operation of the inhabitants of the planning area in determining the solution of problems or matters affecting the development of the planning area."

"to get to the other side, of course." While such an answer apparently satisfies most people, it would not satisfy a planning board. Planning boards are by nature too curious about what makes things tick to let the matter rest so full of uncertainty. Like the scientist the planning board believes in basing its opinions on fact.

For instance, if a planning board were dealing with the same riddle about the chicken they would likely first try to establish whether it was curiosity or hunger that led to the chicken crossing the road.

If it was hunger - was it food or sex? If it was sex, then was she an attractive Plymouth Rock White or a pretty little Rhode Island Red?

How many chicks resulted of each color and sex? And of those chicks how many more would grow up to cross the road for the same reason? Would there eventually be a need for a chicken cross-walk across the road? If so, how much would it cost? After all, council must know the cost in order to establish their budget and set the tax rate. Eventually by-laws must be passed accordingly, and implemented. So goes the process.

and patience - answers usually lead to further questions which need to be answered. But eventually certain relationships usually evolve from the cumulation of facts.

It is upon these relationships or trends if you like that the planning board expresses a well studied constructive opinion upon which council can act with reasonable confidence.

During the past six to eight months much data and material has been gathered together for the planning board but there is still a great deal to accumulate, which will take more time - for there apparently are no easy solutions to the planning problems of Richmond Hill. If there were, you probably would have heard more from your planning board during the past six months.

Most of you are aware that the traffic problem is becoming more and more serious. Already it seems that the Yonge Street pedestrian in Richmond Hill now has the right-of-way only after the ambulance picks him up.

Our statistics show that daily there is a total of some 31,500 two-way vehicular movements going to, from and through Richmond Hill - one third of which go right

through the town, another third go between Richmond Hill and non-Metro communities in all directions, the other third between Richmond Hill and Metro.

It is significant to note here that while the Newmarket-Aurora areas generate some 8,000 trips daily through Richmond Hill only about 1,600 trips daily actually involve a purpose such as business with Richmond Hill. The other trips are mainly Metro oriented.

Richmond Hill itself generates over 10,000 trips daily between itself and Metro of which for every one trip between Richmond Hill and downtown Toronto two trips take place between Richmond Hill and Willowdale.

Actually 25 per cent of the Richmond Hill Metro trips are Willowdale oriented. But even of greater significance, these trips, apparently are predominately for business rather than shopping purposes.

My purpose in detailing this movement of traffic to, from and through Richmond Hill is to quickly give you a picture of how the Metropolitan Toronto complex daily dominates the routines of Newmarket and Aurora as well as of Richmond Hill.

Will Yonge Street be made into a pedestrian mall within a central business district contained by a ring road system which permits the free flow of traffic?

Or will Yonge Street become a one-way street southbound and Church Street extended a one-way street northbound? Or will Yonge Street remain as it is with traffic being by-passed via Lennox-Pugsley Avenue extended?

Some quarters might suggest a bypass route from Yonge Street via Essex-Newkirk Road which involves over or underpasses at two points on the railway line.

It is evident that whatever solution is finally adopted the purchase of property and construction needs will cost Richmond Hill money.

Adequate municipal services will also be required for development. Fire needs will require that the old water distribution system originally oriented on the pumping station at the pond must have a new trunk system oriented on the more recent water plant facilities located as you all know in the eastern part of town - for in effect part of your tree like distribution system is being supplied through the branches instead of the trunk.

Sanitary sewage capacity also leaves much to be desired because of insufficient storm drainage facilities in the Beverly Acres area.

The problem becomes quite ridiculous when one realizes that the zoning bylaw permits the entire Beverly Acres semi-detached housing to become apartment blocks which would mean a density of some 13,000 persons, not including the Skopits Sub-division.

With respect to the town as a whole I would be somewhat remiss if I did not mention that the demand for new schools and school sites will greatly increase during the next 20 years, at a rate considerably greater than the rate of population growth.

As a result of higher birth rates of the last decade, which are expected to continue, the percentages of the total population which are school age, in particular high school age, will rise.

In addition, a greater percentage of school age children are expected to attend school, again primarily in the high school age. Old schools naturally will require replacement or enlargement. All of which will cost you money. This tax increase could be substantially high in some years or low if the non-residential assessment increases at a faster rate than would be required to provide for the school tax.

You must be prepared to plan and with the many zoning bylaw amendments that follow. You must be prepared for a modernization of the central business area directed to:

- 1 Provide parking.
- 2 Relieve traffic congestion and minimize hazards to pedestrians inside the centre.
- 3 Eliminate non-shopping land use within the centre.
- 4 Replace ugliness

with beauty through the co-operative action on redesign of signs and facades and on provision of open space.

5 Protect adjacent neighborhoods by setting the centre apart from residential areas, providing adequate traffic ways into the shopping area, and providing ample parking space within.

You must be prepared to consider industrial annexation. And you must as a community initiate a well integrated and all inclusive promotion plan.

Richmond Hill deserves no less.

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However, while Yonge Street will likely retain a significant volume of through traffic, oriented as we have seen on Willowdale and other areas, it will become more and more a short trip business route with an attendant increase in business activity.

At the present time some 4,000 trips daily are oriented about Richmond Hill's business area which is greater than for the three shopping centres combined. It would appear therefore that the Yonge Street business district is still very much alive and kicking in spite of all the talk to the contrary.

With respect to future office development about one third of new office space expected for the Metropolitan Area during the next 20 years is expected to locate in the fringe areas of which Richmond Hill is a part.

Some of this will accommodate local employment, such as professional offices, and part will be for head offices and branch offices which do not require or desire proximity to downtown Metro offices.

Long range development prospects for the Richmond Hill business area are bright, if advantage is taken of the trend.

However, useful parking areas will be required in addition to a free flow of traffic in all directions about and through the central business district.

At the present time the area adjacent to the central business district is limited as to residential population density increases because of the lack of storm drainage facilities.

New residential populations of course also require school facilities. Already the McConaghy School is at capacity so that a new school will be required to service such a population.

Can you pick out a new school site of some four or five acres within the central area? How much will it cost? Will the location meet the needs of the school board?

While the central area of Richmond Hill is a very interesting study in itself we should not confine ourselves tonight to any one particular aspect of the town.

Let us see what is happening in one of the residential areas, say the most critical, the north-east quadrant of town, Beverly Acres and Skopits Subdivisions which are reputedly extremely well planned. What do we find as we adjust our little microscope?

We find that there are over 3,000 two-way vehicle movements to, from and through the area each day of which 70 per cent are Metro oriented.

We find 1,207 dwelling units of which 1,187 are generally occupied. I say generally occupied because the population changes. There are 33 pupil changes on the average every month at the Beverly Acres School.

So the population of some 5,681 persons seems to be continually in a state of flux. Some of the children from Beverly Acres go to the Crosby Heights Public School but the remaining pupils attending the Beverly Acres Public School fill it to capacity.

Examination of the enrolment at the Beverly Acres School reveals there are nearly twice as many children enrolled in kindergarten as there are in Grade 8.

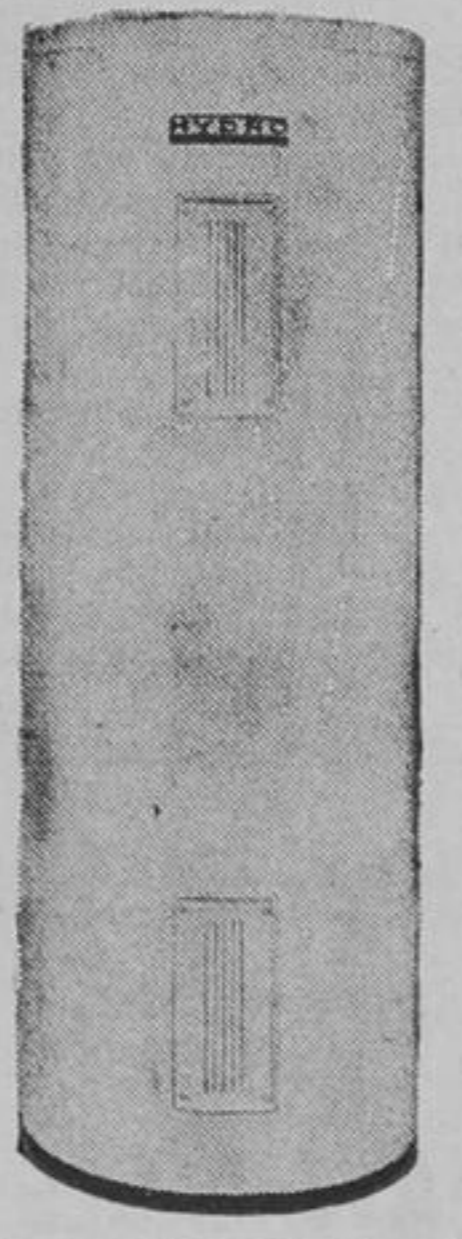
Our population statistics indicate there are now enough existing children in the area to keep the kindergarten enrolment at the same amount for at least five years. It doesn't take much imagination to realize that before too long two Beverly Acres public schools will be filled where there is now only one.

Once again I ask you to pick out a new school site of some four or five acres. How much will it cost? Will the location meet the needs of the school board? As a citizen you can't duck the responsibility. And council cannot thwart it; the law requires you to provide the school.

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