

\$Millions To GO Rail Ward 4 Talk On Modular Homes

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New Richmond Hill-Thornhill area residents are now much more likely to be downtown and central Metro commuters. The location of a North York station or stations on the new service yet remain to be fixed.

Bales says it's significant rail commuters will be able to work or read newspapers for up to two hours a day on the public transit network, time they now spend devoted to driving their cars. The amount of benefit will depend on what location of Metro may be the local worker's destination. It will be especially good for downtown area workers and shoppers.

MORE BUSES HERE
"We may even have to have something like dial-a-bus. The new rail service might fit in well with that. We may have to start Richmond Hill local buses earlier in the morning. The service is now mostly for housewives. We may have to change local bus routes and have early morning express runs to the station on major routes such as Crosby Avenue and Markham Road to make it easier for people to get out to the trains," said Bales.

"As the BAIF area of Richvale gets more built up, we may have to extend service in that area. There will be much less need for families here to have a second car," said the Richmond Hill transportation chairman.

MAIN BENEFIT
Bales says the main benefit of the new rail service will be to take the expected pressure off the extended Yonge Street subway line, as well as reducing bus and automobile traffic. People should also be able to get back and forth a little faster.

Rail traffic will relieve the pressure for parking downtown and at subway terminals. Parking for commuters from this area at the new Finch Avenue terminal will be short starting in April when the subway extension opens. Parking is now almost non-existent for cars from here at the York Mills station, now the end of the subway line, Bales said.

Markham's Muldrew says the rail commuter service will make this area much more desirable to live in and give local parents a break they've never had before. They've been stuck with a lot of commuter driving and second cars, while being the chauffeur slaves of their children going to ball games, hockey, etc.

THORNHILL'S PROBLEM
He says the rail service announcement means the timing of Markham's local transit service last year couldn't have been better. If the area has had a problem, it has been getting in and out. The new rail service, the subway extension to Finch and the new Union Station rail service will relieve this problem. The improved local transit that can come with the changes will be another factor which can do nothing but make property values go up.

Muldrew described Monday's announcement as exciting, another cog in what is being done. When more details are available the town will be able to start designing improvements in its own local bus system to tie into the rail system. The town is finding there is quite a need to connect all of Markham to transit in the Yonge Street corridor.

He says last year's studies didn't show the need to link the Old Village and Unionville areas to Yonge Street. There'll also be other major changes in the existing Thornhill bus service when the Metro subway opens to Finch Avenue. There was a meeting between Markham and the Provincial Department of Transport and Communications for talks on improvements, he said.

EAST-WEST BUSES
The Thornhill councillor said discussions are at a very preliminary stage and staff members are doing feasibility studies for linking all of Markham to Yonge Street via transit. Finances also have to be looked at. But in only a few months Markham transit has proven successful.

"There are going to be other major announcements regarding transit before the rail commuter service starts," said Muldrew. Service has to be improved and extended to all areas, while being as convenient and economical as possible. Everything possible must be done to help get people out of cars and into transit vehicles.

Councillor Muldrew said there are moves afoot to coordinate transit on a Southern Ontario regional basis and the outcome on this depends upon the provincial government's reactions to the recommendations of studies being made. "Each local municipality has its own transit system and they should be related to each other," he said.

MARKHAM SUCCESS
The Markham chairman said his town's present local transit is a minimal start on a six-month trial basis and is to be reviewed this year. It has already proven successful and changes won't be made to take the service away. Only improvements are to be made.

Now residents have really

seen the small buses, the attractive little vehicles are proving acceptable on local streets. People want them going by their houses and the town isn't having many of the problems encountered at first when citizens were fearful. Now people are calling up and asking to have the buses on their local streets.

Muldrew says dial-a-bus would be the ultimate service that could be tied in with rail service, but it is also the most expensive. Housewives would probably use it but it is doubtful if businessmen would, since they would have to add on the cost of transit into Metro. Right now Markham can't really afford it, and to interfere with the fixed route service would be taking bus service away from school-children who are now major users.

CHANGES IN APRIL
Right now the town couldn't afford both fixed route and dial-a-bus service anywhere. If there are to be immediate major changes in Markham transit service, they will come at the end of March when the Finch subway station is to open. Talks with the province and Metro are now under way to see how far fares can be integrated with Metro transit.

Monday's announcement of Richmond Hill-Thornhill commuter train service was made jointly by Transport Minister Jean Marchand; Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Donald Macdonald; Transportation and Communications Minister Gordon Caron; and Metropolitan Toronto Chairman Paul Godfrey.

Mr. Marchand journeyed from Ottawa to Toronto City Hall for the press conference. The trains will run about 1 1/2 hours during each morning and evening on week days. The announcement follows a series of tri-level discussions over the past year between the Federal and Provincial Governments, and Toronto officials.

Marchand said the federal decision arises from a demonstrated need for commuter rail services in the Richmond Hill-Thornhill corridor. The federal money is to assist the province to extend the heavily patronized GO Transit rail system.

GOOD CO-OPERATION
"This decision is a prime example of the increasing degree of co-operation that has been taking place between the federal government and the other two levels of government along both official and informal lines," he said.

The transport minister said the provision of railway rolling stock for commuter services of this type will make a significant contribution to energy conservation. It is consistent with the type of transportation desired by the people of Toronto as expressed by Metro Chairman Godfrey.

The commuter rail line will help alleviate the stress imposed on the Yonge Street subway during peak periods and will be linked to provincial GO buses with points further north, he said. Recent studies have shown that well-patronized passenger rail services are more than 10 times as efficient in terms of passenger miles per unit of energy compared to private cars carrying one or two passengers.

Energy Minister Macdonald estimates the rail service will take 5,000 cars a day off Metro traffic routes, particularly the Don Valley Parkway.

AD HOC DECISION
Marchand said the money for the service was an ad hoc decision by Ottawa rather than part of a broad new policy. But he said it was an indication the senior government is recognizing it must become more involved in urban problems. The three government levels agreed the best thing to do for the moment to solve the commuter problem north of Metro was to have the Richmond Hill-Thornhill line started as soon as possible, even though it was no complete solution to the traffic problem.

Ontario's transportation minister said the exact location of stations and the fare structure will be determined after study. Fares are to be comparable to existing GO fares. A comparable distance now on the Oakville GO service costs \$1.10 one way with a package of 10 fares costing \$9. The Richmond Hill trains will be 30 minutes apart at morning and evening rush hours. The trip will take 48 to 50 minutes if three stops are included on the way.

NO BARRIE PRIORITY
Marchand said last year's 30-day experiment with a Barrie to Toronto commuter train wasn't used well enough to justify priority launching of such a service. But the Canadian Transport Commission in Ottawa still says its Railway Transport Committee will still rule on the Barrie service, based on evidence taken during a hearing in July.

The provision of federal money for rail commuter service here is a new departure in Ontario. Until now commuter trains, subways, buses and street cars have been financed and operated either by private companies or the provincial and municipal governments.

Ward 4 Ratepayers' Association elected a new slate of officers at a public meeting Monday evening at St. Mary's Anglican Church, but selection of the chairman and the future of Richmond Hill will have to wait for another meeting.

Although the meeting was called to discuss some of the problems faced by the growing town, little debate was generated in that area, the group absorbing itself mostly with naming a new executive and trying to decide what constitutes a constitution.

However, it did make some pertinent points, including the following: People on the outskirts of Richmond Hill - Gormley, etc. - don't feel they are being represented, or that they really live in the Hill; the latter was the chief argument to control the rate of growth; the association should have direct contact with the own planning board to keep abreast of future plans for the area; Ward 4, that part of town with the "most character", was the area that developers wanted to hit the hardest with eight-story buildings; residents of the town should decide whether they wanted to live in Richmond Hill, or become north Willowdale.

"RIDICULOUS"
Chairman Gordon MacKenzie, who advanced the latter theory, immediately termed it a "ridiculous statement", but felt that nevertheless, the problem did exist.

He said the graft could make that its theme at the next meeting, some two months hence. He suggested the election of the chairman could also be left until that time.

The meeting also learned a few more things about mobile, or modular homes, something it has been concerned with lately, following a proposal to put in such a development on 19th Avenue, east of Bayview Avenue.

Reviewing the homes in some detail was Robert Sheppard, 225 Lucas Avenue. Mr. Sheppard, an engineer, said he had a "basic interest" in the building techniques and had done considerable research on the homes.

He said the present mobile home parks shouldn't be confused with the trailer camps

of the 30s and 40s, which were located on the fringes of cities and in non-residential areas without any controls. Today's mobile home was fully modern and had a valid, if limited, place in the scheme of things.

At present, one of every five single family starts in Canada was a mobile home, Mr. Sheppard said. He said their three models: the 12-foot by 65-foot standard model; the expandable home, which could be extended for additional space; and the double wide, which consists of two sections, but was designed to be put together as one unit.

He said there were 23,000 mobile homes in Ontario now, the economies of which were "quite attractive". For example, the average regular home cost \$39,000 and the owner paid taxes on his land, while the mobile home sold for \$16,000 and the land was rented for \$70 to \$90 a month.

SHACK TOWNS?
Some of the objections against the homes included their "shack-town image"; the people in them were "just passing through"; they were not real housing and the owners didn't pay taxes.

The homes also depreciated immediately in the manner of cars, because of the constant changes. The pre-dictated minimum life was 15 to 20 years.

Mr. Sheppard said that 350,000 people lived in mobile homes in Canada and one of the best such developments was at Sandy Cove, just south of Barrie.

He said the Hellyer Task Force on Housing had recommended this form of housing and it had been one

of the first to receive OMHC approval. In fact, long-term mortgages were now offered mobile homes, just as they were granted regular dwellings. Quoting from the Task Force report, he said: "Many Canadians see it as an answer, but wouldn't want their neighbors to live in one."

However, a recent Metro survey showed that only four percent of its residents could afford to buy a new home, Mr. Sheppard said. Among the advantages of the mobile home was the fact that they didn't tie up land for ever. In 15 or 20 years the land could be used for other purposes.

He said that because the mobile home developments allowed more units per acre than regular housing did, the municipality received as much in revenue per acre from them as they did from regular housing developments.

EXECUTIVE NAMED
Limiting the discussion, Mr. MacKenzie suggested the members contact Mr. Sheppard if they wished to pursue the matter further.

Named to the new executive were: Ron Boredessa, Ingrid Wharton, Richard Hook, Robert Sheppard, Ruth Cook, Bill White, David Wood, Gordon MacKenzie (past chairman); Fred Donaldson and Harvey Street.

Thefts, Vandalism
New BAIF Home Hit
A Scarborough man who plans to move to Richmond Hill will have to delay the move for awhile yet.

York Regional Police said that Edward Clark's new home at 15 Kitsilano Crescent, was broken into some time last week and \$1,000 damage done to the interior.

Holes were kicked into the bedroom, living and family room walls, windows were broken and drops from the chandelier were removed and smashed on the floor.

SCHOOL VANDALISM
Police also reported vandalism at MacKillop Public School, 206 Lucas Street. After breaking in, vandals emptied the contents of three fire extinguishers onto the furnishings, causing \$100 damage.

Also in Richmond Hill, Robert Cameron, 30 Benson Street, had his car windshield and side windows broken, plus the headlights and tail lights smashed in.

The car was parked at Yonge Street and Elgin Mills Road, at a private house, between December 26 and January 3.

DAMAGE NEW HOUSE
In Markham, vandals caused \$300 damage to the walls in a house under construction on Captain Ralph Boulevard.

Break-ins and thefts in the area included: Seventh Day Adventist Church, 80 Elgin Mills Road, microphone, record changer and fire extinguisher, \$62; Cornelius Schuyler, 10019 Keele Street, Maple, nine lighters, three watches, one radio, \$23 cash, \$175.

ILLUMINATION IS
Needed Very Badly
Yonge - BAIF Blvd.
Immediate installation of illumination at the corner of Yonge Street and BAIF Boulevard will be sought from the Ministry of Transportation and Communications by Richmond Hill Council.

The matter was presented to council Monday evening by Ward 4 Councillor David Stephenson who forecast serious traffic accidents would occur if this is not done.

"In the past we have asked for traffic lights and illumination. Three years ago we had the money in the budget for this, but were requested by the MITC to wait for the reconstruction of Yonge Street," recalled Ward 5 Councillor Lou Wainwright.

"You take your life in your hands when you cross Yonge Street anywhere between Highway 7 and Markham Road."

"The situation is becoming critical," Mayor William Lazenby noted.

"It took a couple of deaths to get traffic lights and illumination at the Gormley Limeroad. I hope we don't have to wait for this to happen in the south," stated Councillor Stephenson.

"We have had eight deaths in the southern stretch of Yonge Street in a few years, but couldn't get lights at Garden Avenue (where there is a high school) or at the Dominion Store, a n o t h e r trouble spot," said Councillor Wainwright.

Sanitary sewers and water services. Answering questions by Mayor William Lazenby, he stated the lots will have a 50 foot frontage and will comply with the effective zoning bylaw and with today's standards for servicing.

The proposed houses will sell in the \$50,000 to \$60,000 range, it was stated, in reply to a question from Councillor William Corcoran.

BURNT OLD HOUSE
"I have found Whitechapel pretty co-operative," reported Councillor Graeme Bales. "We had calls about the dangers of an old house on the property and Whitechapel gave us permission to burn it down. Someone could easily have been killed if it hadn't been removed."

Planning Director Hesse Rimmon reminded council the planning department has received many plans of subdivisions and just recently has been given the green light by council to process them.

"We never completed the planning report on this subdivision because of the constraints on services. Council issued a directive that all excess capacity in the Markham Road plant was to be allocated to non-residential development and I didn't see any sense in processing it further. The land is zoned for this purpose. From the planning point of view I can see no problem if council makes the services available."

Rimon also told council it could not expect to get the Ministry of the Environment's stand on the question in writing, but that it had been given verbally.

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