

Rings alarm bells on huge York-Durham servicing scheme costs

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Our sewage treatment cost will increase by about \$182,000 next year to pay the capital costs of services to Markham and Vaughan.

In this plan, which must be approved by the OMB, goes ahead — it not only means there will be no growth in Richmond Hill (outside of BAIF) for the next decade, it also means all taxpayers of this municipality will be paying their share of this system for the benefit of Markham and Vaughan.

We will be unable to attract industrial development and unable to offset the inflationary spiral each year by industrial and commercial development.

Unacceptable answer

I cannot accept the explanation given for the deletion of the connection of the Pugsley Avenue plant to the Metro system that the size of the pipe (which will eventually service Oak Ridges, Aurora and Newmarket too) cannot be determined at this time.

The population figures for those three areas have been determined by the Toronto Centred Region Plan, Region of York proposals and the official plans of the two northern towns.

Those figures are known, so the pipe size can be determined.

The cost for sewage service on the average house assessed at \$20,000 is about \$26 per year now.

Next year this is estimated to be \$70 on the same house (almost three times as much).

Cost of water

The same logic applies to the water system, with the province planning to phase out the town's existing wells and bring in water from Lake Ontario through the Metro system.

This will require new feeder mains since the whole pattern of distribution will be changed.

Tenders are being called now for the construction of a trunk main from the Metro reservoir on Bathurst at Highway 7 to Carrville Road, which will introduce the first of this lake water into the town's system.

The present annual cost of producing water for a family of four is estimated at \$30. The new cost will add at least 37½ cents to be paid to Metro for the water to the 39 cents per 1,000 gallon capital costs, bringing this cost for a family of four to more than \$90 annually.

To this will have to be added the crown's administrative costs.

After agreements are signed, they always go up, never down, in my experience.

Double or triple

Add these figures together, and you can see my estimate that the cost to the residents and ratepayers of Richmond Hill for sewage and water services will double or triple is a conservative one.

Until now the cost of sewage treatment has been levied against the total assessment of the whole Town of Richmond Hill.

If council decides to designate sewer areas, and I believe it should, the cost will be not two or three times as much, but for those on sewers will be much greater than that.

I believe you will agree with me it is only fair those receiving a service should pay for it and those who are denied that service in the foreseeable future should not be required to pay for it.

Cutting Hill lifeline

So far I have been asked to make a decision without all the facts,

without all the implications being known. Regional staff haven't been able to answer all my questions.

I want sufficient allocation for sewage disposal to protect the people of Richmond Hill, so the present ratepayers are protected against an intolerable tax burden for someone else's benefit.

It's cutting off our lifeline. The money spent on the South Yonge Corridor Study has been wasted, since it was based on the assumption the area would be serviced and planned development could occur.

I can't interpret what that development, with the industrial development north of the Elgin, and the redevelopment of the Mills property, would mean in tax dollars.

No choice now

The province has decided the matter of servicing for us and we no longer have a choice — only Metro water (fluoridated) and the big pipe.

Now we have to find out how we are going to pay for it and protect our ratepayers.

In order to protect them we have to have services at a rate we can afford to pay.

We are all concerned about the environment and about having our municipality progress in a planned quality growth.

The people of Richmond Hill will no doubt be very concerned, as I am, and should request full disclosure from elected people regarding the social and economic impact of these proposals that are inexorably being imposed upon them.

My present research into this subject has provided me with further questions that should be answered by elected officials, such as myself, if the residents of Richmond Hill are to have any opportunity of participating in these decisions that are being made.

Open questions

Here are some of the questions I think should be answered, before any taxpayer can adequately form an opinion:

1. Are ratepayers in Richmond Hill fully aware their costs for water and sewer could be increased a minimum of \$100 a year (my personal estimate) starting on January 1, 1976?

2. Are the people, not at present served by sanitary sewers prepared to have their water bills doubled on January 1 (my personal estimate) — for example, the Richvale area?

3. Are Richmond Hill taxpayers willing to absorb doubling or tripling rates for water and/or sewers?

4. Should Richmond Hill have services' agreements imposed on the town by a regional council decision, with the regional councillors voting on the agreements coming from King, Whitechurch-Stouffville, East Gwillimbury and Georgina, when they are not directly financially affected by the costs of these agreements?

5. Are the taxpayers content to have these costly services imposed January 1, 1976, without any further discussion or input on their behalf?

6. Are there reasonable and economic solutions to the provision of services that the provincial government has overlooked?

7. Are Richmond Hill taxpayers subsidizing the provincial government services for the Ontario Housing Action Program projects in Milliken Mills, Thornhill or Woodbridge?

8. Why has regional council changed the location, design and timing of construction of the trunk sewers after the draft agreement was approved and the public meetings were held, without notifying the people or the council of Richmond Hill about these changes?

9. If the sewage treatment plant

on Pugsley Avenue is not to be connected to the interim services, what value accrues to the taxpayers of Richmond Hill to be part of the agreement, until such time as this town plant is connected?

10. When are the ratepayers of Richmond Hill going to see a draft of the new proposed rate bylaw for water and sewers, that has to be

passed by Richmond Hill or regional council, or will these rates be imposed by the regional council in Newmarket without our people knowing?

Meeting June 9

I have asked for a meeting of the Richmond Hill engineering committee and the minister of the

environment to discuss the agreement.

I would ask the people and this newspaper to make their views known to me or to any other council member so we can establish by this June 9 meeting what the taxpayers of Richmond Hill wish to put forward as their point of view.

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- travel or cause any vehicle to travel at a greater speed than fifteen miles per hour on any of the roadways or parking areas of a park, or in any place so as to interfere with or endanger any person in a park.
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