

Authority given to close Gormley Road

The York Engineering Department has been given authority to terminate the Gormley Road east and west of the CNR tracks and set in motion the construction of turning basins which will eventually adjoin the proposed Gormley bypass.

Local residents will have a last say at the Region's board hearing on the matter on January 8, 1980, 2 p.m. at the Engineering Commission building on Woodbine north of the Aurora Sideroad.

One resident, Syd Goldsmith of R.R. 1 Gormley, has already lodged a formal objection to the method used to close the level crossing.

At this point, he has the backing of Richmond Hill Mayor David Schiller, who stood up at Regional

Council and questioned the engineering commissioner's intentions. The actual decision to close the road to vehicular traffic came on August 30 but in his report to council, Commissioner Bob Hodgson showed how he never planned to close Regional Road 14 in the first place.

Almost 15 months ago when CNR realized York was hoping to put in the grade separation without closing the Gormley Rd., it told the Canadian Transport Commission it wouldn't contribute to the funding. On the other hand, if the road were closed, it would subsidize five per cent of the cost of the project to a maximum of \$62,500.

Last March, York Region was also told if it wanted to qualify for funding under Section 16

of the Railway Relocation and Crossing Act, Transport Canada would require the existing crossing at Gormley to be closed. If not, the project would be handled under Section 17 of the Act.

"Applications which will not eliminate an existing crossing at grade bring little or no benefit to the Railways, which should therefore not be expected to contribute to the cost of construction and maintenance of the structure," stated a reply from the Railway Transport Committee.

Simply put, the difference in funding between Sections 16 and 17 amounts to \$542,000. At present MTC subsidy rates of about 63 per cent, York Region could save over \$200,000 — if it can manage to close the

Gormley Rd. Mayor Schiller wondered why the hearing body for the closing is York Regional or a committee thereof, itself. "I think that leaves anybody objecting to the closing of the road in a frightful position. I think I could guess what the outcome of the hearing will be, especially since the hearing body is our own engineering committee. "I realize we're going by the book but in this case, the book stinks," said Mayor Schiller.

He claimed he would "eat his hat or go out and buy one and eat it" if the matter goes back to committee and the decision is taken to use Section 17 — foregoing the \$542,000 and the additional subsidy by somehow keeping the road open.

"My point is that anyone with property affected by such a closing is put in an untenable position if he has an objection," he said.

He noted the hamlet would be split in half if the crossing were permanently closed and this could cause considerable hardship for residents. Once the bypass is constructed, he said, the only people who will use the critical part of Gormley will be those who live in the hamlet.

In a letter that wasn't published, Mr. Goldsmith said he understood residents have the right of appeal to the CTC through the Region's board

hearing. He contends that closing Gormley Rd. does not constitute the closing of an existing road, which the Act clearly states must be the case in order to qualify for subsidy. He feels the Gormley bypass, with which the present road will ultimately connect, is actually a new road. After last week's meeting, Mayor Schiller said he was uncomfortable with the Region's conscious effort to take all the steps

necessary to close the road.

He noted Council supported the cloverleaf at Gormley and Highway 404 (which wasn't in the original plans), then it approved the bypass and it finally took the decision to build the grade separation.

Residents who wish to object must contact Regional Clerk Robert Vernon in order to get on the agenda for the hearing.

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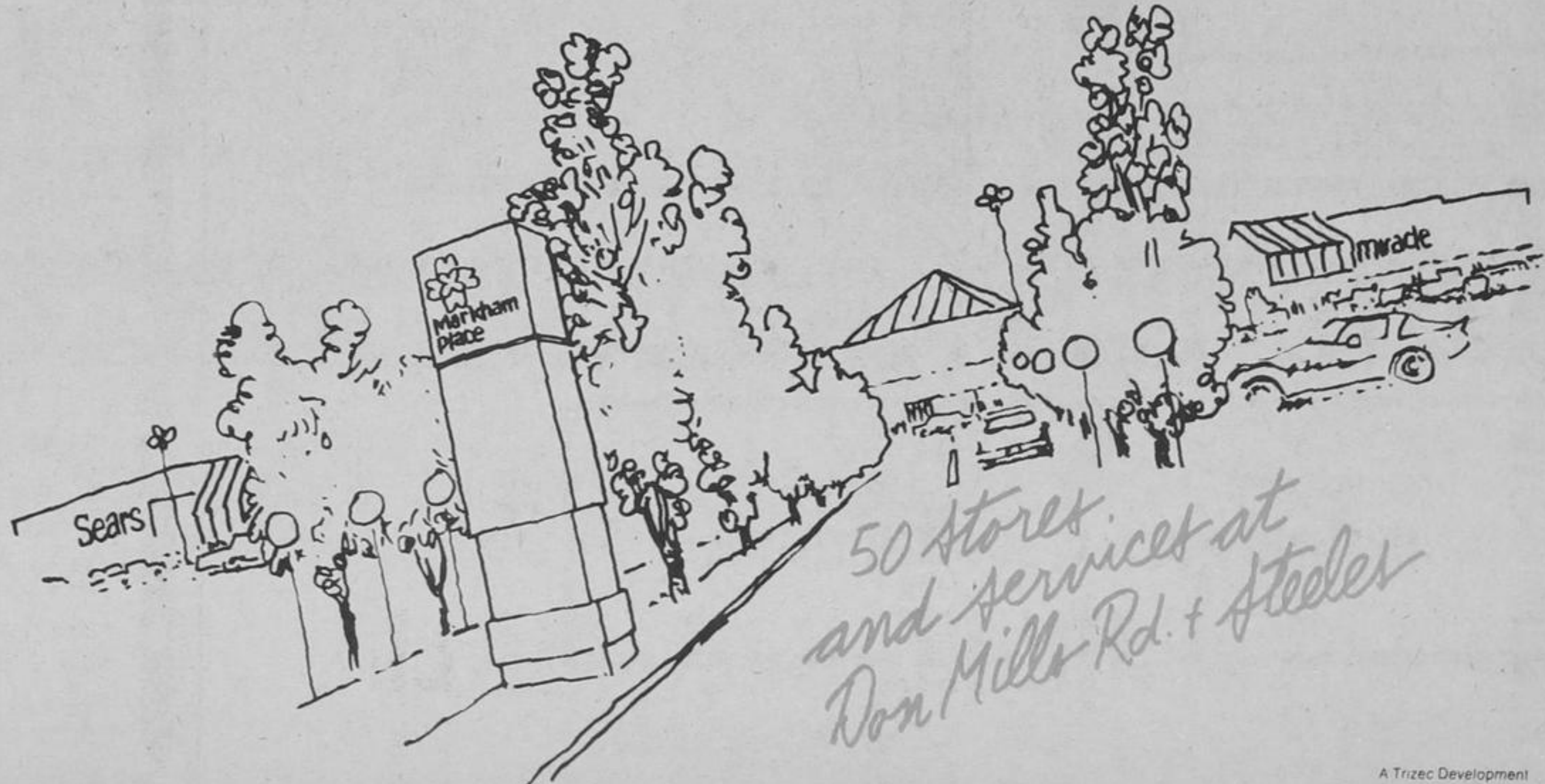
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