

Extra parking standing empty

With a shortage of public parking a problem in Markham's downtown core, a 140-space lot sits underused just a short walk from Main Street.

The municipal lot is located just west of Markham Village Lanes off Peer Street. The reason it's used so little, according to Barry Pettit, public relations consultant for Markham Village Lanes, is because few people know of its existence or realize it's public parking.

Mr. Pettit complains that the town will not allow Village Lanes to put up a larger, illuminated sign to give the lot higher visibility along Main St. because of Heritage Markham restrictions.

At present, there is a small 'P' sign at Wilson and Main Streets, a partially hidden sign posted on a fence north of the entrance to the Village Lanes, and a larger 'P' sign at Wilson and Peer Streets and at the entrance to the lot itself.

Another problem contributing to poor usage, Mr. Pettit added, is that the lot sits next to a Parks Department building and yard, with many mistaking the lot as private instead of public parking.

With Markham's high density and high per capita car ownership (97.8 percent of Markham households have at least one vehicle, 69.2 percent have two or more and 8.6 percent have more than five), adequate parking space is essential.

"No place to park has hurt the downtown core," Mr. Pettit says. Joe Pickard, chief administrative officer for the Town of Markham, feels current signs are adequate and that people will soon discover the new lot.

Confusion as to whether the parking is public or private won't be a problem for long either, he added, since the Parks Department will be moving in a month.

Before the Village Lanes project, the lot was used as a storage area for municipal vehicles, since Peer Street was too narrow for the area to serve as public parking, says Mr. Pettit.

Manuel Elkind, the president of Markham Village Lanes Inc., bought land along Peer Street and donated it to the town so the street could be enlarged, thus allowing the space to be used as public parking.



Christmas spirit

In the true spirit of Christmas, McNeil Pharmaceutical (Canada) Limited of Stouffville, in co-operation with its employees, donated \$1,000 in toys and clothing to needy families in the area. The donations were picked up and distributed by members of the Stouffville Lions Club including

Al Stacey, (left) and Cliff Aiken. Organizers on behalf of the McNeil staff were Judy Smirnov, (right) and Mary O'Connor. Employee donations were matched by the company.

— Charlotte Cave

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Pickering too close to Metro for Toyota plant

Pickering was knocked out of the running for Toyota's first Canadian assembly plant because the town is located too close to Metro Toronto, says Durham Region chairman Gary Herrema.

Mr. Herrema claimed that Toyota wanted to be a "big fish in a little pond" when it opted to construct its factory in Cambridge, a small municipality near Guelph. Pickering was on the short list of possible locations for the multi-million dollar investment, along with Markham and the eventual site choice.

The Cambridge decision ended speculation that Toyota would build on 600 acres of Ontario Land Corporation property at Brock

Road and Conc. 4.

Although disappointed that his regional municipality failed to attract the Japanese auto manufacturer, the chairman said Durham is being considered by several other companies that may locate in Ontario.

Still, Mr. Herrema said he'd hoped Toyota would select Pickering so that a steam-generating waste disposal plant could be built near the factory.

"That option is gone now," he said in reference to a proposed solution to the region's garbage disposal problem.

Pickering is one of eight municipalities within Durham Region.



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