

Ratepayers urging town to slow Markham growth

By STEVE HOUSTON
Staff Reporter

Markham's planned expansion in its official plan review is still a high-profile issue raising the hackles of local ratepayers groups.

Council and town planning staff came under fire again Wednesday night from area residents concerned about the implications of growth in the plan.

Ratepayers maintain there is enough room for growth within Markham's current boundaries and say existing levels of service must be upgraded before allowing further development.

Other concerns centred on the pressing need for schools, road improvements and the preservation of Markham hamlets.

John Myers, President of the Classics Community Ratepayers Association, asked council on behalf of his group to ensure community input in all stages of planning processes.

The groups views are similar in many respects to those already expressed by the neighboring Unionville Ratepayers Association.

"The review outlines a multiple of reasons to be cautious, as a hasty decision now would be irreversible," said Mr. Myers at the meeting. "Until such time as better transportation and service facilities are in place, we see any expansion as being extremely detrimental to existing communities."

Both the Unionville and Classics group believe expansion consideration should be postponed until the next review in 1992.

Also submitting a brief at the hearing was York Region Board of Education Chairman Charles Cooper.

He cited alarming student growth figures forecasted by the board that indicates it will need 133 schools to accommodate some 84,000 students by 1995.

Currently, there are 100 schools and 51,000 students in the region.

"Providing educational facilities and opportunities for the many young people who are and will be moving into Markham could be very much facilitated by the Town of Markham," said Mr. Cooper.

Specifically, he asked the town to:

- Consider providing approval for residential subdivision development "at a manageable rate."
- Consider assigning staff to "shepherd" board approvals

through the municipal process.

- Consider developing a master plan as used in Richmond Hill to "facilitate the acquisition from developers of land for public use."

- Continue lobbying the provincial government for more and faster school approvals.

Buttonville Ratepayers Association President Gary Leak said several people are "experiencing sadness and a growing anger," with Markham's ongoing growth.

His group too, says the plan to extend area boundaries for growth are premature.

"This review seems to encourage an acceleration of that rate of change," said Mr. Leak.

Hearing aids taken in theft

Aids for the hearing impaired were among several items stolen by a Grinch-like thief on Christmas Eve, said police.

The Canadian National Institute For the Blind, Bolton and Bolton Accountants and Sunbanque Island Suntanning — all located at 70 A Main St. — were robbed after entry was gained by climbing through some ceiling tiles.

At least \$4,500 worth of computers and office supplies were taken from Bolton and Bolton Accountants, while \$1,530 worth of watches and hearing aids were stolen from the Canadian National Institute For the Blind.

A portable AM/FM receiver valued at \$200 was reported stolen from Sunbanque Island Suntanning.

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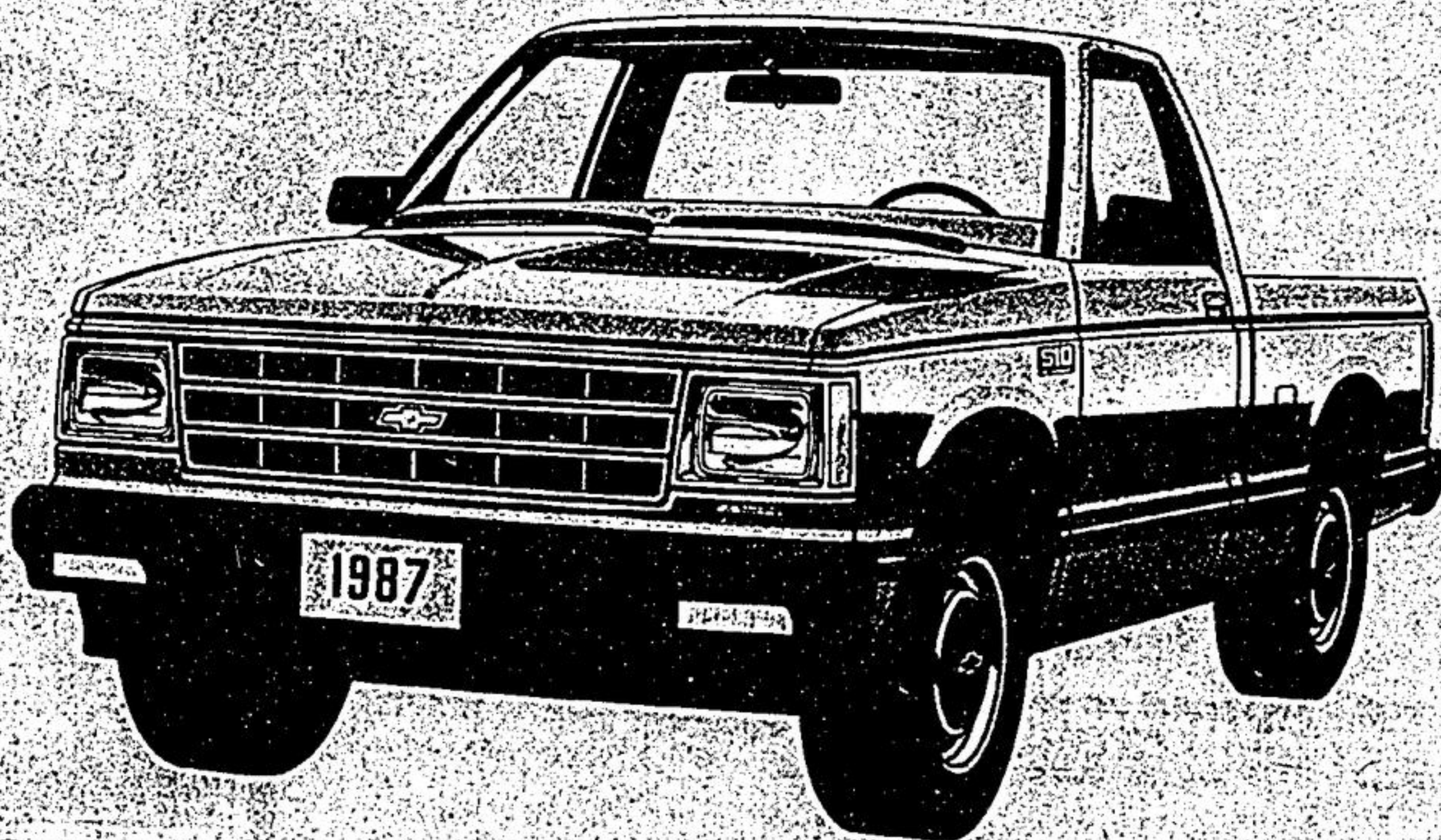
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