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TRANSPORTATION: York Region residents paying too much for inadequate service, regional chairperson says

Give us better service or we pay less, Fisch tells GO

BY LISA QUEEN
STAFF WRITER

More GO trains and buses are available to York Region commuters these days, but regional chairperson Bill Fisch says local taxpayers are still paying too much for inadequate service. Fisch convinced GO Transit's board of directors last week to demand the province review how much each region in the GTA should be contributing to GO.

In January, the provincial government downloaded GO Transit on to the GTA regions, but the province still con-

trols how much each region must pay to cover GO's \$106 million annual costs.

York's share has been set at 11.2 per cent, about \$12.8 million, but the region receives only 5 per cent of GO's service.

Toronto and Hamilton-Wentworth are also



BILL FISCH
Convinces GO to demand province review funding

angry about their share of the funding. Fisch, a member of GO's board, said York wants the province to know it won't continue under the current arrangement much longer.

"Either you give York Region better service or we pay less. It's one way or the other," he said.

GO has improved service in York, including adding a second train to Bradford, providing better train service on the Whitchurch-Stouffville line and beefing up bus service.

But the service still falls far short of that enjoyed in other communities,

Fisch said.

Each region is now trying to determine how much it should contribute. But Fisch cautioned ridership shouldn't be the only criteria.

"Toronto may not have a lot of passengers, but there are great economic benefits to the GO train bringing in passengers to fill their office towers," he said.

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But GO chairperson Eldred King said for the board to provide York with more trains, it would have to spend millions of dollars building overpasses on the Whitchurch-Stouffville, Richmond Hill and Bradford lines where they cross CN tracks.

Three overpasses would cost \$150 million.

"We don't have any of it," King said. "We still think the province should contribute something to that particular capital expansion."

King, who was appointed by the province, argued it is inappropriate for the Tories to pull provincial funding from GO.

"Certainly, the realty (property) tax should not be paying for it," he said.

Although the province gave GO a one-time grant of \$106 million this year, King insisted it is not enough.

"That's only one-tenth of what we really need. If the province provided funding to GO, it would reduce the amount they would spend building or expanding highways."

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In our Home Living Sale insert included in this newspaper, please note: Page 23 (Item A) Eaton Viking washers start at \$499, not as illustrated. Maytag washer was shown in error. Page 27 (Item 7) Century Fold 'n' Go care centre - pattern not as shown. We sincerely apologize to our valued customers and regret any inconvenience or confusion this may have caused.

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ADVERTISING CORRECTION
In our Fall Fashion Preview insert included in this newspaper, please note: Page 59 Rado watches \$2,000 price is higher than advertised. Copy should read: Rado watches \$2,500. Page 55 Luca B for Calico shoes \$90, not as illustrated. Shoe is available in black or taupe only. We sincerely apologize to our valued customers and regret any inconvenience or confusion this may have caused.

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