

Regional transit earns D grade

Residents return 150 report cards

FROM PAGE 1

"If there is one concern all of us have heard is, yes, growth has taken place but what is it we are creating here? We heard many statements such as 'We're just adding another subdivision and more homes'."

Report cards were made available within the community and people were asked to grade the region's progress from A to F on natural environment, economy, housing opportunities and community design, regional centres, road network, transit and water and sewer.

The 150 report card responses received gave the region B and C grades.

Transit received the lowest average score of D, even though the final grade awarded was C.

Transit, residents said, needs to be more accessible and frequent and the five municipal transit systems should be integrated.

A recurring concern expressed by respondents and those in workshops was that many parts of the region are growing too fast and that services and protection of natural resources are being eroded.

"I think what the grades reflect is frustration at the rate of growth, rather than the region's ability to deliver service," Scarpitti said.

The report card indicated the official plan is a good blueprint but needs work, said regional planner John Livey.

"I heard two major messages — we had a good plan but it needs better implementation and it should be a plan for all

inhabitants and agencies, something that involves everybody," Livey said.

A number of recommendations were made following the report card process, including more study of the issues discussed.

Among the 15 recommendations are:

- develop a human services plan and economic development strategy;
- look at the effects of development on the region's open space system and options for increasing forest cover and potential for further acquisition of open lands throughout the region;
- develop a strategy to address deterioration of Lake Simcoe;
- co-ordinate a symposium on the pace of growth;
- hold an ethnicity conference with key service providers and community representatives.

THE REPORT CARD

Natural environment C+
Economy B
Housing opportunities C+
and community design
Regional Centres C+
Road Network C
Transit C-
Water & Sewer B-

Police join forces to fight street crime

BY LISA QUEEN
STAFF WRITER

The RCMP, the OPP and police forces in the Greater Toronto Area are banding together to fight street crime.

York Region is taking \$100,000 from its investigative expenses account to fund the new GTA crime abatement unit. The force will also contribute two officers to the unit, which will operate out of a government building at Keele Street and Hwy. 401.

Although police departments have worked together on joint ventures that cross municipal borders in the past — such as tackling Asian crime or motorcycle gangs, they haven't formally shared resources on other offenses such as break-ins and car jackings, said York Regional Police Chief Julian Fantino.

"This is a gap and one that requires our immediate attention. These groups cost our businesses and insurers literally tens of millions of dollars every year," he said in a report to the police services board. "Even more seriously, those persons who have the misfortune of having their car stolen at gunpoint are often traumatized for years."

Fantino said the unit will save money by ensuring each force isn't spending funds trying to catch the same criminals.

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