

TRANSPORTATION

High-fine traffic safety zones closer to reality

BY MIKE ADLER
STAFF WRITER

York Region municipalities may get what they need next month to create community safety zones where bad drivers are charged twice-normal fines. Markham Regional Councillor Gord Landon said the special zones, recently approved by the province, are necessary to control traffic.

"I think we have to do something to wake up the public," he said this week.

But Landon said municipal and regional staff must first agree on common rules for the zones.

Those guidelines might be ready next month, a Markham committee was told this week.

Too many high-fine zones "may result in inadequate police enforcement," making the zones less effective,

town staff warned in a report.

The province allows municipalities to put a safety zone on a part of any road "where public safety is of special concern," such as beside a school.

But it has advised municipalities to think about police enforcement when sizing their safety zones.

"Too large and enforcement may not be appropriately targeted, too small and it may not be clear whether the driver committed a moving offence within the zone," the solicitor general's ministry said in a statement.



GORD LANDON

Regional councillor

says special safety zones are needed



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Province extends deadline for privatization of 407

BY MIKE ADLER
STAFF WRITER

The province needs an extra month to find a buyer for Hwy. 407, the office of Privatization Minister Rob Sampson confirmed this week.

"Otherwise, everything's going along as planned," said Deborah Reid, Sampson's communications assistant.

Last fall, Sampson set the deadline for final bids at the end of this month, and said he hoped to reach a deal in March. Bidders will now get until the end of March because the sale process is complex, Reid said.

The province has said a buyer must agree to build the planned eastern and western exten-

tions on the Mississauga-to-Markham toll road, starting construction this spring.

A spring start is still planned, Reid said. "If the bids close at the end of March, I don't think it will take much time to get a shovel in the ground."

The eastern 407 extension from Markham Road to Brock Road in Pickering may still face obstacles.

Earlier this month, the Hwy. 407 Action Group warned Sampson it has asked federal authorities to assess the project, and that the Toronto-based Better Transportation Coalition may challenge the provincial environment ministry's approval of the extension in court.

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