

# Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper  
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# OPINION

Best of Nease



Debora Kelly

## Transit turf squabbles take us nowhere

**W**hy don't they get it? Our regional councillors are embroiled in yet another tiresome, interminable turf squabble.

The latest petty dispute arises over the issue of transit.

Rather than consider a regional system, most councillors want an integrated system that would allow the municipalities to retain control.

Local politicians know best the needs of their residents, they insist.

Hmm, then why are most residents deeply unimpressed with the woefully inadequate service now available?

Never mind the warnings of gridlock when the region's population reaches 1.1 million by 2021; we're idling now with a population of 700,000.

## This isn't about residents' needs; it's about who keeps the most blocks in his corner.

The light of the day reveals this so-called concern for our needs for what it really is.

There's Mayor Lorna Jackson nixing the idea of regional service because, heaven forbid, she should have to go "cap in hand" to a regional transit authority to beg for a bus for Vaughan.

Or there's Markham Mayor Don Cousens thinking that providing reliable, efficient regional transit services could be taken by the province as a sign that regional council endorses amalgamation of the municipalities into, gasp, one city.

(I was a teeny-bopper riding the TTC in the boonies of Scarborough, travelling downtown on one seamless system, long before the Harris Tories began banging the amalgamation drum.)

If this isn't political posturing, what is?

This isn't about residents' needs; it's about who keeps the most blocks in his corner.

Markham's Gord Landon is one of the few voices urging council to adapt the regional system it endorsed five years ago.

He knows residents don't give a hoot if the name of their town is on the side of the bus they're riding.

Yet most of our regional councillors are doing their best to ensure residents keep pace with them; going nowhere fast.



## LETTERS

### School prayer should focus on common future

In this world there are many things that we can find to tear us apart. Conflicts and differences of opinion arise everywhere.

Rather than focus on those things that make each of us unique (and yes, different), I would like to make a suggestion that school prayers reflect something we all share — our common future.

It is important to remember that, despite what goes on around us, the most important thing in our lives should be our children and the world they will inherit.

When all is said and done, after we are gone, the future is all that remains.

I feel it is appropriate that those who will be living that future remember this fact in school.

KEVIN PICKARD  
MARKHAM

### Anti-car fanatics promote plan for High Occupancy Lanes

Regarding the possibility of a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane on Yonge Street, north of Steeles Avenue.

So York Region has decided to further restrict an already overly congested traffic situation on Yonge Street for the vast majority of taxpaying citizens and businesses who use the road on a regular basis.

Backed by the anti-car environmentalist fanatics, advocates of this plan seem to be saying that people need to be persuaded (forced) out of their cars to relieve congestion and improve the environment. They say that it is the private citizens and their cars that are responsible for congestion, and that these lanes are the only way to solve the problem. People who have traveled similar roads in Toronto, or who have looked at the facts, know that these lanes do neither.

Last year, the rather liberal-minded state of New Jersey abandoned its policy of two or more passenger lanes and reopened them to all traffic.

Why? Because after studying the actual use of these lanes, they found that car pools using them averaged between 32 and 452 vehicles per hour. Far less than the 700 vehicles per hour which advocates had estimated, and far less than the 1,000 cars per hour the regular lanes carried. Additionally, the thousands of cars and trucks crawling along in the regular lanes were actually causing an increase in vehicle emissions.

But do you think York Region's politicians and bureaucrats have considered these facts?

There are several ridiculous and offensive

aspects to this interest group promoting this HOV plan.

For one thing, virtually every rational person outside of regional and municipal politics knows full well that road congestion is being caused by the massive increase in new residential and industrial developments, with virtually no road building or expansion taking place.

To blame taxpaying citizens for some kind of selfish use of our vehicles for the mess is repugnant. Also, the idea of a government building HOV lanes with taxpayers' money, then denying most taxpayers the use of those lanes, is also profoundly wrong and offensive.

The real reason for HOV lanes is to make citizens and businesses who drive their vehicles on these roads suffer, to spend endless hours per week in traffic jams while we watch those heavily taxpayer subsidized public transit users streak by.

These politicians and bureaucrats continue to ignore the vital need to invest in our increasingly insufficient road system, despite the high taxes and fees homeowners and businesses pay here in York Region. It is time our politicians were reminded they were elected to do what is right for the majority. They were not elected to kowtow to a few noisy and fanatical interest groups who are obsessed with getting us out of our cars, and into government-run and controlled transportation at all cost.

FRANK GRAY  
UNIONVILLE

### Stouffville man's transit trip takes more than three hours

I have to admit that while I have always sat comfortably in the driver or passenger side of a car, I never spared a thought for the poor

people having to ride the GO buses and trains.

But circumstances have changed. Recently my boyfriend decided to attend school in Pickering. Transportation was not expected to be a problem since GO buses and trains pass through his home town of Stouffville.

He has to pay tuition, rent and all the other bills which go along with living independently. It is highly unlikely that anyone in this scenario could afford a car and he is one who cannot.

GO transit was supposed to come to his rescue, but instead he has had a door slammed in his face. Little did we realize that, as ridiculous as it may seem, there are no trains or buses that travel to the east at all.

What's the alternative? That's simple enough — wake up at 5:30 a.m. to catch the early train down to Union Station (\$5.80), then wait for the next train to Pickering station (\$4.30) and then change to the local bus (\$1). At 8:45 a.m., a whopping three hours and 15 minutes later you will arrive in Pickering, which is no more than a 45-minute drive by car away. Do not forget, of course, this trip will be taken twice a day for a total of \$22.20 per day and six-and-a-half-hours of travel time 20 days a month. That's \$444 a month and 130 hours of travel time.

I see a logical route in the cards — pass through Stouffville and then up to Uxbridge before heading east into Pickering. One fare would mean less cost and a direct route would mean less travel time. Would it really be that difficult to add in one route?

I'm truly disappointed by this. I'm sure there are many people who have faced the same problems as this one, surely something can be done to help the paying travelers who use the GO system?

KELLY DUNCAN  
STOUFFVILLE

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