

# OPINION

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## Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper  
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### EDITORIAL

## Region needs to check pace of its growth

York Region is hiking its population forecasts yet again.

We're growing by 90,000, with our population now forecasted to reach the watermark of 1.19 million residents by 2021.

By 2026, we are expected to reach a population of 1.28 million people.

It's simply a matter of "very slight fine-tuning," according to John Waller, the region's director of long-range and strategic planning.

While growth has not been without its challenges, for the most part, it has given birth to the prosperous and thriving region we are proud to call home.

Yet, at this point in time, the implications of the "minor adjustment" are major — it couldn't have come at a worse time.

To dismiss the impact of the new numbers as "minuscule" demonstrates how shockingly out of touch the region's officials are with the residents they serve.

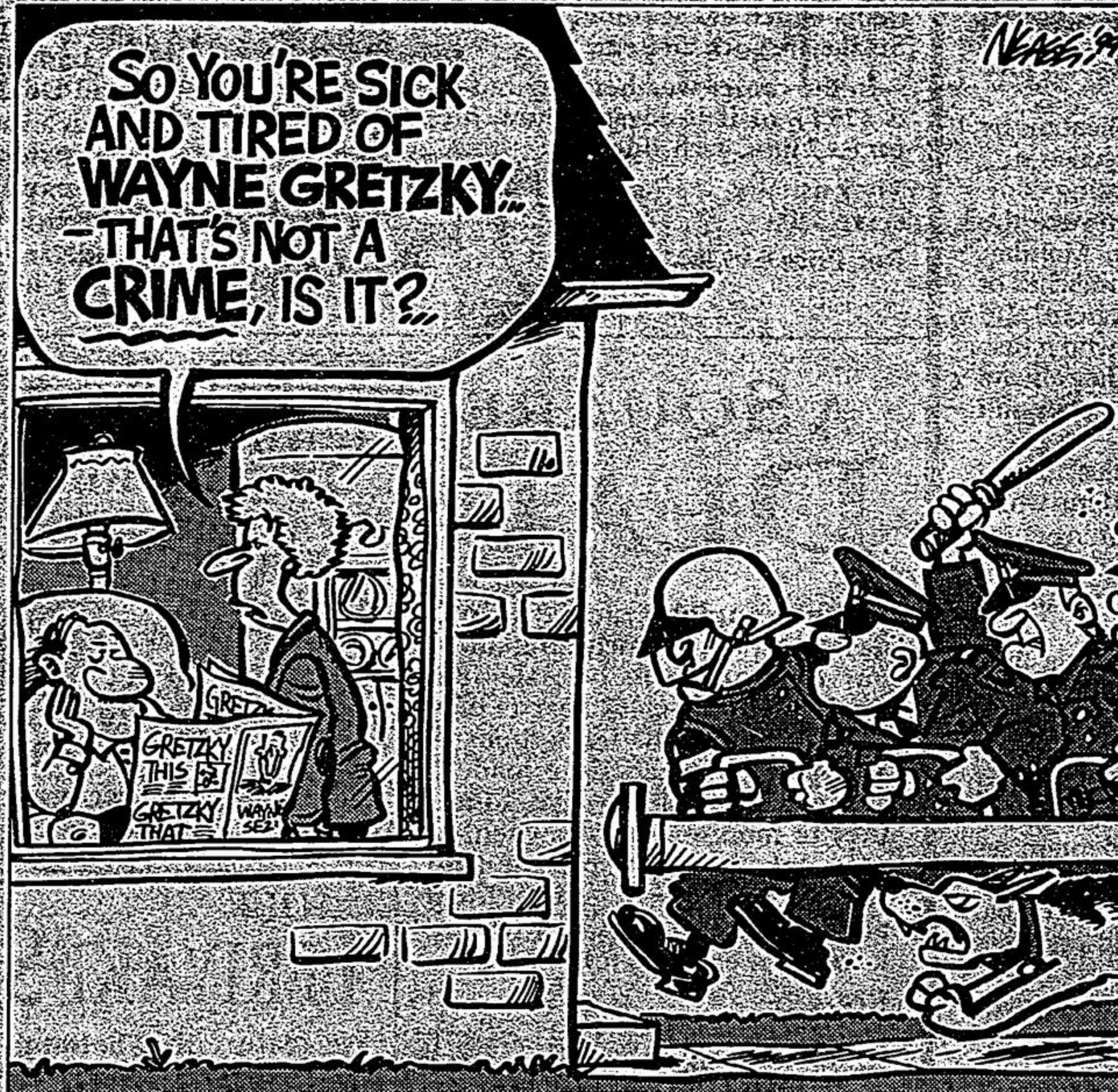
The dramatic growth, combined with cut-backs in federal and provincial funding and the "downloading" of responsibilities, has stretched the sensibilities of residents.

In the Official Plan Report Card process the region initiated this year, residents made it clear — again and again — their quality of life has been affected negatively by the seemingly haphazard and uncontrolled growth spurt.

Topping the litany of problems is a transportation crisis of major proportions. No longer can our municipalities boast about their recreational facilities and programs. Children are going to school in portables. Our hospitals and health services are stretched to the limit, with health-care providers struggling to meet demand with resources that are not keeping pace.

The region has two choices: it can take control of growth, listen to residents' concerns, identify the growing crisis in service provision and slow the pace, or it can turn the reins of power over to the developers, who appear to be truly in control of York Region's growth.

It's not simply a growth issue — it's a leadership issue. And residents want leaders who put quality of life before developers' demands.



### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Hurt the gas companies in their wallets, say no to high prices

Gas companies know that we have to buy gas, but I ask you, do we need to support their huge profits?

Here is a simple proposal to hurt their wallets, just like they hurt ours.

When you buy gas, do not buy anything else. That means no oil, windshield or radiator fluid, pop, chips, cigarettes, doughnuts or coffee.

These side lines at the pump make profit for gas companies. If a gas clerk asks you if you want anything else, say, "No, not unless gas prices drop."

HEATHER SPECK  
STOUFFVILLE

## Police do an excellent job protecting residents

As a mother, I empathize with Shaheen Kamadia on the death of her son. As a long-time and concerned resident of this area, I find it disturbing to note that allegations of racism have been made.

Have people lost sight of the fact that the young man was involved in criminal activities? Our police force does an excellent job of serving and protecting.

Would the critics of the manner in which this incident was handled have been as vocal if the police officer had been shot and killed?

Suleman's mother attempted to halt her son's behaviour by bringing her knowledge of

his actions to the attention of the police. I can understand that she is having a difficult time living with the end result.

What I cannot comprehend is why certain factions are now making unfair and, I believe, untrue allegations against the police.

I hope that everyone will make a very real attempt to see that this is not about race, but rather, that it has everything to do with obeying the laws of our country.

J. RIMMER  
MARKHAM

## Amalgamation survey results were unscientific

Re: Survey says: two cities, Nov. 18

Residents of York Region want no such thing and it borders on irresponsibility, not to say outright lobbying, for your newspaper to make such a claim based on what is nothing more than a show-of-hands poll of Metroland readers.

A survey of 60 of Aurora's 41,000 population, 105 of Newmarket's 65,000 population, 103 of Richmond Hill's 120,000, 92 of Markham's 190,000, 29 of Stouffville's 23,000 population and similar minuscule proportions of the region's other municipalities does not constitute a scientific opinion survey.

It is no reflection, whatsoever, of citizens' views on amalgamation in York Region.

Stories like this work only to distort the issue.

GEOFF MCGAFFREY  
AURORA



Dave Teetzel

## Moraine backers must support park financially

Richmond Hill Mayor Bill Bell says, "There is no topic on which there is so much misunderstanding and misinformation as the Oak Ridges Moraine."

He's probably right. All most people know about it is its environmentally significant, a lot of it is still undeveloped — but not for long if the developers have their way. And that's all most people want to know.

Given their druthers, most of us would rather preserve forests and meadows than have another subdivision spewing traffic on to the roads.

That may not be an informed opinion, but it's valid. As a purely quality-of-life issue, there are strong grounds for leaving a substantial chunk of nature undisturbed across York Region.

A coalition of environmentalists is calling for the creation of a Kettle Lakes Park that would stretch across the width of Richmond Hill. It would have been a great idea 20 years ago.

But take a quick trip around the proposed park and you'll see Stouffville Road, the south side of which is lined with housing, Lake Wilcox, which is literally on life support and had to be closed earlier this year, and Bond Lake, which is already being developed.

Of course, the only misunderstanding local politicians really care about is the perception that municipal councils aren't doing anything to protect the environment.

Which brings us, sadly, to the bottom line. The proposed Kettle Lakes Park lands are privately owned, mostly by developers who don't care whether the land is paradise or a parking lot, as long as somebody pays them for it.

At the cost quoted by the coalition — \$35,000 an acre — the 2,700-acre park would cost \$94.5 million. The province and the Rouge Park Alliance recently paid \$400,000 an acre to buy Glen Eagles Park, which would drive the cost of Kettle Lakes Park to \$1.2 billion.

No municipality has that kind of money lying around. Saving the moraine will take a substantial contribution from the federal and provincial governments.

It will be an uphill battle to create a national or provincial park in York Region. Canada is chock-full of natural areas just as beautiful as the Oak Ridges Moraine; the fact they aren't in the GTA is likely to be seen by the feds as a local problem.

So maybe it's time those of us who want to save the moraine put our money where our mouth is.

Instead of staging protests, raise money to buy up moraine land. School children mark Earth Day by buying up Amazon rainforest.

Maybe they should shift their fundraising to act locally.

### LETTERS POLICY

Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The newspaper reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

Write: Letters to the Editor, 37 Sandford Dr., Suite 306, Stouffville, Ont. L4A-7X5. Email: letters@stoufftrib.com

## Stouffville Tribune

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