

## Stouffville Tribune

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# OPINION

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## EDITORIAL

### Growth remains region's top issue

At the mid-mark of the first year of the new millennium, growth and the issues related to it remains York Region's biggest challenge.

Think of how growth affects you today.

Your commute to your job, whether it's in Toronto or in another part of York Region, has become an experience in frustration.

But the alternative, public transit, makes your pulse quicken and your tension level skyrocket.

Your child's school playground is filled to capacity with portable classrooms.

Your visit to a hospital emergency room in York Region may have reflected the demands growth is placing on our health-care system. You may have had to wait a long time, while cases more urgent than yours were seen by a burdened staff of health professionals.

Your suburban dream home, which was located in a nice little subdivision surrounded by farms and green fields, is now surrounded by other suburban dream homes.

These are the bulk of worries growth brings to a community. People aren't truly concerned about the number of residents a region has until it starts to impact on the daily part of life — the school, the hospital, the driving.

That's when we all begin to feel burdened.

Think of the numbers — they're staggering. By 2031, the Greater Toronto Area's population will reach 7.4 million; the bulk of that growth coming before 2011.

The GTA's challenge — in fact, York Region's challenge — is to properly manage growth while working to attract the types of businesses and industries that support that growth.

We need to keep the economic wheels rolling while we protect the quality of life residents of York Region have come to expect.

York Region officials, and officials across the GTA, are beating the bushes around the world for economic development opportunities. We're trying to make the region an attractive destination for corporations.

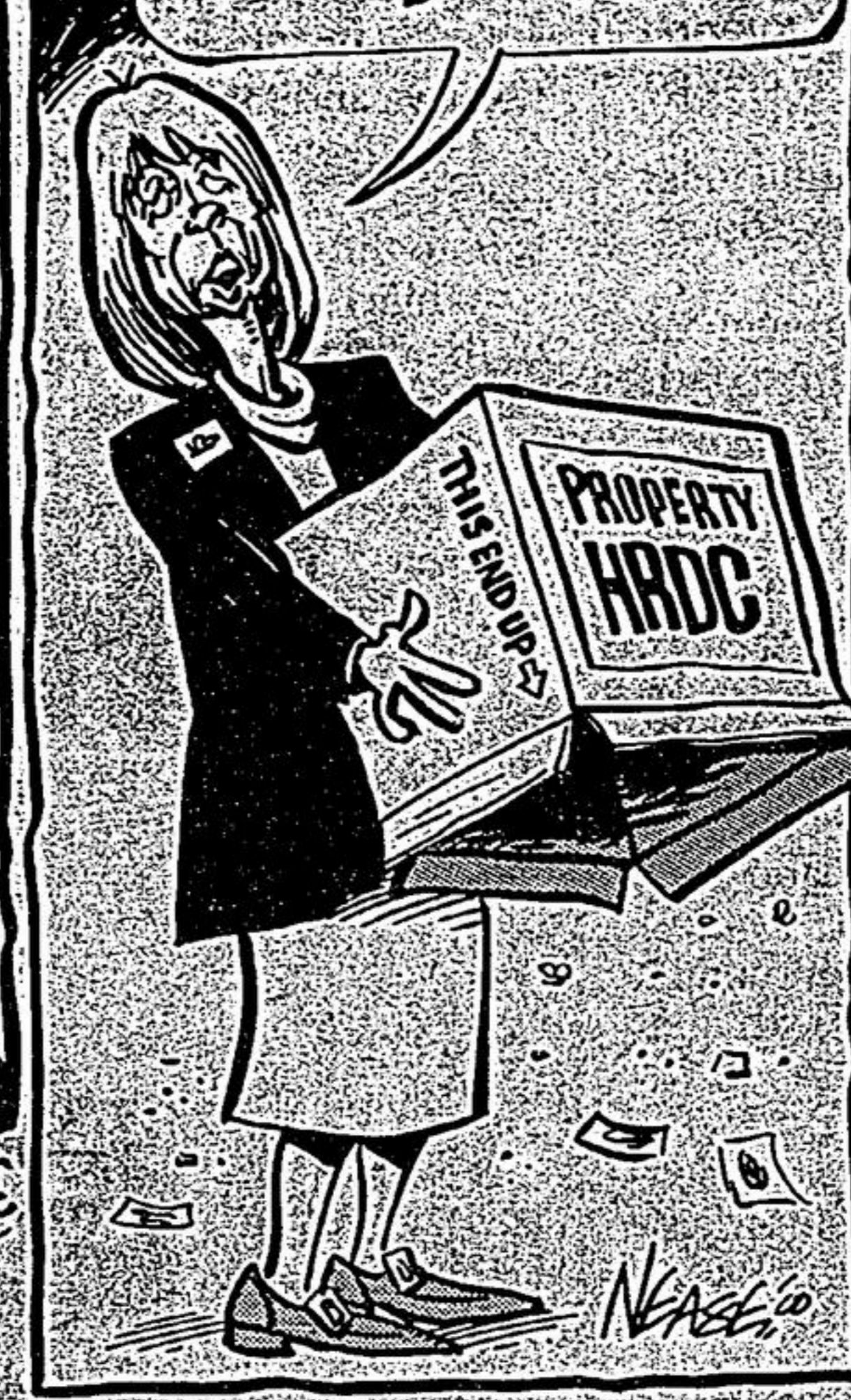
York Region officials are also working diligently to identify what's important to residents from preserving the environment to planning communities better and how to serve those residents better.

As our population rapidly expands to its 1.2 million target, we don't have much time to waste in implementing the programs to manage growth and maintain our quality of life.

RELAX! THE BILLIONS OF BITS OF PERSONAL DATA ON CANADIANS IS COMPLETELY SECURE!!!



RIGHT IN HERE WITH BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN JOB GRANTS!



David Teetzel

### Let the subway construction (and the Games) begin

There are those who will dismiss Vaughan Mayor Lorna Jackson's statement that any Olympic soccer facility in her city should come with a subway attached.

There are those who will say it's a thinly veiled attempt to grab more facilities for her city.

And maybe it is, but Jackson is absolutely right to do it.

And if it costs Vaughan an Olympic venue, it's well worth it because a permanent transit system is far more important than a couple of weeks of games.

Jackson readily admits hosting Olympic events at the Vaughan Grove Sports Park in Woodbridge would put the community on the world map.

It's just that the traffic generated by these events is more than Vaughan's roads can handle.

Anyone who tries to drive anywhere near Hwy. 7 in Vaughan now knows it's a frustrating experience — and it gets worse by the week.

And Vaughan isn't the only York Region centre that figures in Toronto's 2008 Games bid.

Yesterday, plans for baseball events in Richmond Hill were announced and Markham is to host water polo.

So the Spadina subway should loop from the Vaughan corporate centre back up to Finch station, via Richmond Hill's Langstaff gateway.

It's not as if the subway wouldn't be needed, without the Olympics — York Region has been lobbying for this for about a decade.

Lots of highly placed geniuses have expounded upon how an improved transit system is the solution to York Region's traffic problems.

Alan Tonks, who until recently headed up the Greater Toronto Services Board (whose sole responsibility is transit), said: "If you want to get people out of their cars, expand the subways."

But nobody has done a thing about it. As it stands now, the project is further away than it was six years ago.

The province, the region and the city don't want to spend the money to expand rapid transit and make our roads drivable — but they want to host the Olympics.

Well, the Games aren't worth having unless they leave behind a legacy of facilities.

If the TO Bid folks are the types who like to make elaborate high-falutin' plans, but can't be bothered to provide the nuts-and-bolts that are needed to carry them out properly, the Games will be a disaster. We would be better off letting them go to some other city.

If, on the other hand, more people like Jackson use the 2008 Olympics as an excuse to do all the things that should have been done years ago, it will be the best thing that ever happened to the Greater Toronto Area.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Pesticides, not weeds, are toxic

Re: *Lawn pesticide ban would protect children*, York MP Says, May 18.

It is about time people started to wake up. In beautiful spring weather, you are finally outside, only to be driven away by the choking fumes from someone's lawn spraying. The rise in all forms of cancer are the direct result of the overuse of chemicals.

Dandelions are not toxic and not one insect has ever been eliminated by pesticides. Five pounds of grass seed spread over your lawn twice a year is cheaper and far more friendly.

After all, what's more important: Your family's, neighbours' and pets' health or a perfect lawn?

KURT CRIST  
UNIONVILLE

### Nicotine addicts aren't criminals

I have an addiction. Yes, I am physiologically and psychologically addicted to a filthy, disgusting habit that I and others detest and I wish I could stop.

It is harmful to my health, it is unpleasant for me and those around me and it is expensive.

The catch is the substance to which I am addicted is perfectly legal. It generates millions in revenue for retailers, corporations and especially the government.

Yes, the substance is nicotine. Why can't I stop? There are many medical options, but the catch is, I have several unrelated health problems that make it impractical to take any substance that might tamper with the delicate equilibrium I have spent years trying to stabilize.

Yes, I agree that restrictions on smoking are a good thing. Yes, I understand why many people actively campaign to eliminate smoking from public places.

Long before legislation, I tried to respect the right of others to not be around second-hand smoke.

However, I am not a criminal — I have an addiction.

I am diabetic. If I were a heroin addict, I could get my syringes free. Instead, since they are not covered under any insurance plan I have access to, I must pay almost 10 per cent of my disability income toward their purchase.

I don't expect or even wish for no-smoking advocates to stop their fight.

I am asking that a little bit of realism enter into the equation.

All kinds of governmental support and even public sympathy are extended to those who became addicted to illegal substances.

If stringent restrictions are put in place, what about offering some assistance to help nicotine addicts withdraw?

I would prefer to see law enforcement working to apprehend real law-breakers and see governments working to stop tobacco sales at the source and offer help to those addicted.

But I guess that would just be too expensive and that seems to be what really matters — the dollars, not the dilemma.

GAIL HENDERSON  
AURORA

## 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, 9 Heritage Rd., Markham, Ont. L3P 1M3. Email: letters@econsun.com

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