

Stouffville Tribune

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David Teetzel

Subway lobby has to gain support from all municipal politicians

Our way or the highway. It's a forceful slogan and one with some truth for proponents of a subway to Vaughan.

Our governments can fix our transit crisis or all those big taxpaying corporations just might hit the highway.

So last week, a group of area politicians and York University president Lorna Marsden launched another lobbying effort to bring the Spadina subway to York University, then up to Jane Street and Hwy. 7.

That nine kilometres of subway is to cost \$880 million — a third of which is to be covered by the Greater Toronto Services Board over the next 14 years.

The rest is to come from the federal and provincial governments, neither of whom have made any commitment.

You would think funding transportation infrastructure for the GTA would be a major plank in the federal election campaign, but I've barely heard a word about it. So the subway lobby has some work to do.

The first order of business is to get all the municipal politicians on board. This is kinda like herding cats.

Richmond Hill and Markham have their own subway proposal, which would take the Yonge line to Hwy. 7.

From a purely York Region perspective, this makes more sense than the Vaughan plan because it's central. For folks in Milliken, for example, it would be faster to drive south to a Scarborough LRT station than it would be to make the frustrating trek west to Concord.

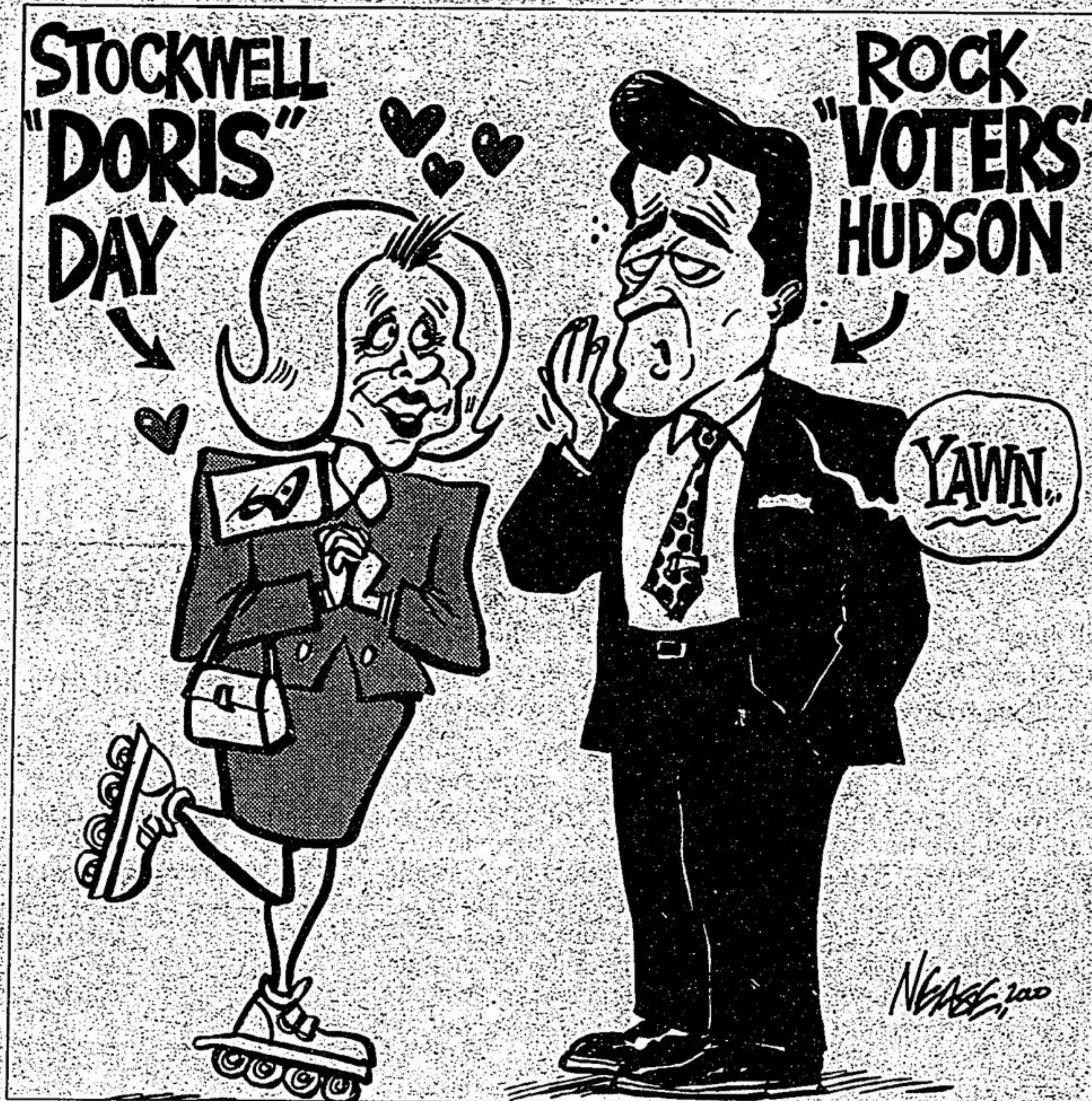
But from a practical perspective, the Vaughan proposal is more likely to receive funding, simply because it serves a university and Black Creek Pioneer Village. The Jane and Hwy. 7 terminus would take people within a short shuttle bus ride of Paramount Canada's Wonderland and Vaughan Mills Mall, should it ever be built.

But a project of this magnitude will require support from Toronto, too. And Mel Lastman isn't a believer.

Here's how the Toronto mayor endorsed the subway extension in The Willowdale Mirror: "That's fine, as long as Vaughan will pay their share. They've always wanted free rides. Like they want to put up \$20 million or something. I don't want \$20 million. Pay your share."

Do you get the idea the old furniture salesman is looking for a way to tie a subway extension into a York Region subsidy for the TTC, not unlike the deal he got on social services?

Lastman knows Vaughan can't afford to build the subway any more than Toronto can. The majority of the cost will have to be borne by the province and the feds — and that will take lobbying from all the municipal politicians in the GTA.



EDITORIAL

Fast on the heels of a municipal election, you're being drawn to the polls once again to mark your preferences federally.

The plethora of municipal signs may have cleared the landscape, but your local concerns have not. Remember that on Monday.

Before you head out to mark your ballot for the federal candidate of your choice, you should consider where the candidates stand on the following issues:

- **Health care:** Get beyond the rhetoric. Ask yourself if your concerns about health care have more to do with quality and accessibility of service than they do about rich people buying MRIs in Buffalo. Ask yourself if the political party you're planning to support has addressed our local needs. We've been trumpeting it for years — York Region is one of the fastest growing regions in Canada. Where's the support from federal and provincial sources for a health-care system that is collapsing under the burden of demand? Is the candidate of your choice willing to fight for your local needs? Or is your candidate likely to be an acquiescent back-bencher?

- **Transit and Transportation:** Ask yourself this question: Why am I forced to choose an over-burdened, over-crowded highway for commuting when, in most countries, there is an effective rapid transit system in place to deal with the commuter traffic generated by a community like ours? Where are the additional routes? Where are the north/south trains?

- **Environment:** We're sitting on one of Ontario's most sensitive environmental areas. Ask the candidates what they will do to help protect our environment and what they will do to further some of our more sensitive causes, such as Keele Valley's imminent closure?

- **Taxation:** What is the party's plan to reduce taxation? How can the party find a more palatable and equitable plan to reduce taxes and finance the services we have come to expect of our government?

- **Accountability:** Easily the most important issue for voters in any election campaign, the accountability of the candidate isn't just a key factor in getting elected: it's a key factor in maintaining support and respect.

You have to ask yourself the following questions: Do I believe my candidate will truly work on my behalf or will the candidate work at the behest of the party leader — would the candidate be accountable to me or to the party?

It's your right to vote, it's your responsibility. Make your mark count.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Much more important to vote for the candidate than the party

I feel I must disagree with Gary Chung's letter in the Economist & Sun, *More important to vote for the party than the candidate*, Nov. 21.

I believe it is extremely important to vote for the right candidate regardless of which party they represent. I believe also, the candidate must reside in the riding in which he/she is running, (not promise to move here only if elected).

We have two candidates (Liberal and Conservative) who want to represent Markham, but neither one lives here. Why not? How can we expect them to represent us?

Don't the Liberals or Conservatives think Markham citizens are so incapable of electing someone living in Markham that they must parachute a candidate here to look after us?

Mr. Chung claims Jim Jones may be the best candidate to represent Markham, but won't he vote for him because of the party he represents.

Does he really believe Jim Jones has suddenly changed from as a good representative of Markham to a wrong choice simply because he changed parties?

Keep in mind that almost every Canadian Alliance member once belonged to one of the Liberal, Conservative or New Democratic parties. They formed a new party out of frustration at seeing their leaders dictate how they

were able to represent their respective ridings.

We all probably voted for Canadian Alliance members at one time or another. To suggest they became bad choices only after changing parties is comical.

On the subject of two-tier health care, the Liberal party already endorses it. In fact, some of its members quite often visit private clinics. (Just ask Jean Chretien).

When I vote, I will be voting for the best candidate (who lives in Markham now), regardless of which party he/she represents and not a candidate that Mr. Chretien or Mr. Clark thinks will win them a seat. I want someone to represent me in Markham, not a candidate that will be booted out of their party if they disagree with da boss.

RICK STOCKTON
MARKHAM

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Talk about who you're going to vote for and why with other readers of the Markham Economist & Sun/Stouffville Tribune.

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