

York commuters to face 'penalty box' intersections

BY ROGER VARLEY
Staff Writer

Motorists in York Region might soon be faced with warnings to "stay out of the penalty box".

Supt. Eric Jolliffe told the police services board Wednesday the force is considering designating certain intersections as "penalty box zones".

Designed to stop motorists from blocking traffic, intersections would be marked with grids similar to hash marks now found in a number of busy Toronto

intersections.

Any motorists finding themselves stuck in the "penalty box" after a traffic signal turns red would face a fine.

Sgt. Tom Carrique of the traffic unit said police hope to test the program by June or July.

"We have to research intersections to see which are worthy of a trial run," said Sgt. Carrique.

He said the region's traffic and works department will determine which intersections should be included, while the success of

Toronto's experiment will also be studied.

Sgt. Carrique also announced the introduction of a field test for a new automated ticket machine to speed up the process of issuing tickets to errant motorists.

He said a traffic officer will be able to "swipe" the magnetic strip on driver's licences and the machine will automatically record the driver's information on the ticket.

"It will save the officer having to write the ticket by hand and expedite the tick-

eting process," he said.

The two new initiatives were unveiled as Supt. Jolliffe and Sgt. Carrique reported on the results of the first three weeks of the Save-A-Life campaign which started with a traffic

blitz on Hwy. 7 earlier this month.

Since the campaign started, the percentage of motorists on Hwy. 7 complying with the speed limit has jumped to 44 per cent from 17 per cent.

Supt. Jolliffe also unveiled a blue-and-white "Save-A-Life" campaign sign police hope to persuade the Region of York to install on highways and major roads in the region.

York has lowest police costs in GTA, Chief Middaugh tells councillors

From page 5.

Middaugh told the politicians. York has the lowest per-capita cost for policing of those five GTA regions, he said.

The budget met with no opposition from politicians.

Regional chairperson Bill Fisch said, however, there ought to be assurances other forces are contributing to a joint effort to combat terrorism, so York is not

operating — and spending — in isolation.

Markham Mayor Don Cousens, former chairperson of the finance commit-



DON COUSENS
Accepts increase in York Region police budget.

tee, said the police budget is justifiable, although it far exceeds a guideline of limiting departmental increases to the inflation rate.

"I can justify (the increase) because I'm not about to see us have a second-rate police department," Mr. Cousens said.

"Nor are we going to have a shortage of police officers enforcing the laws and protecting people."

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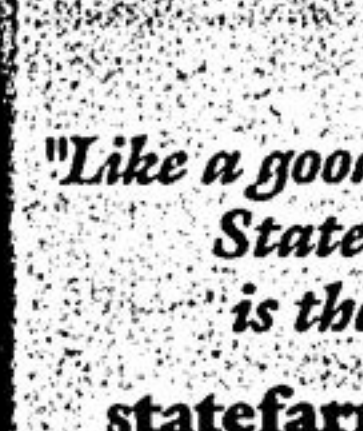
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