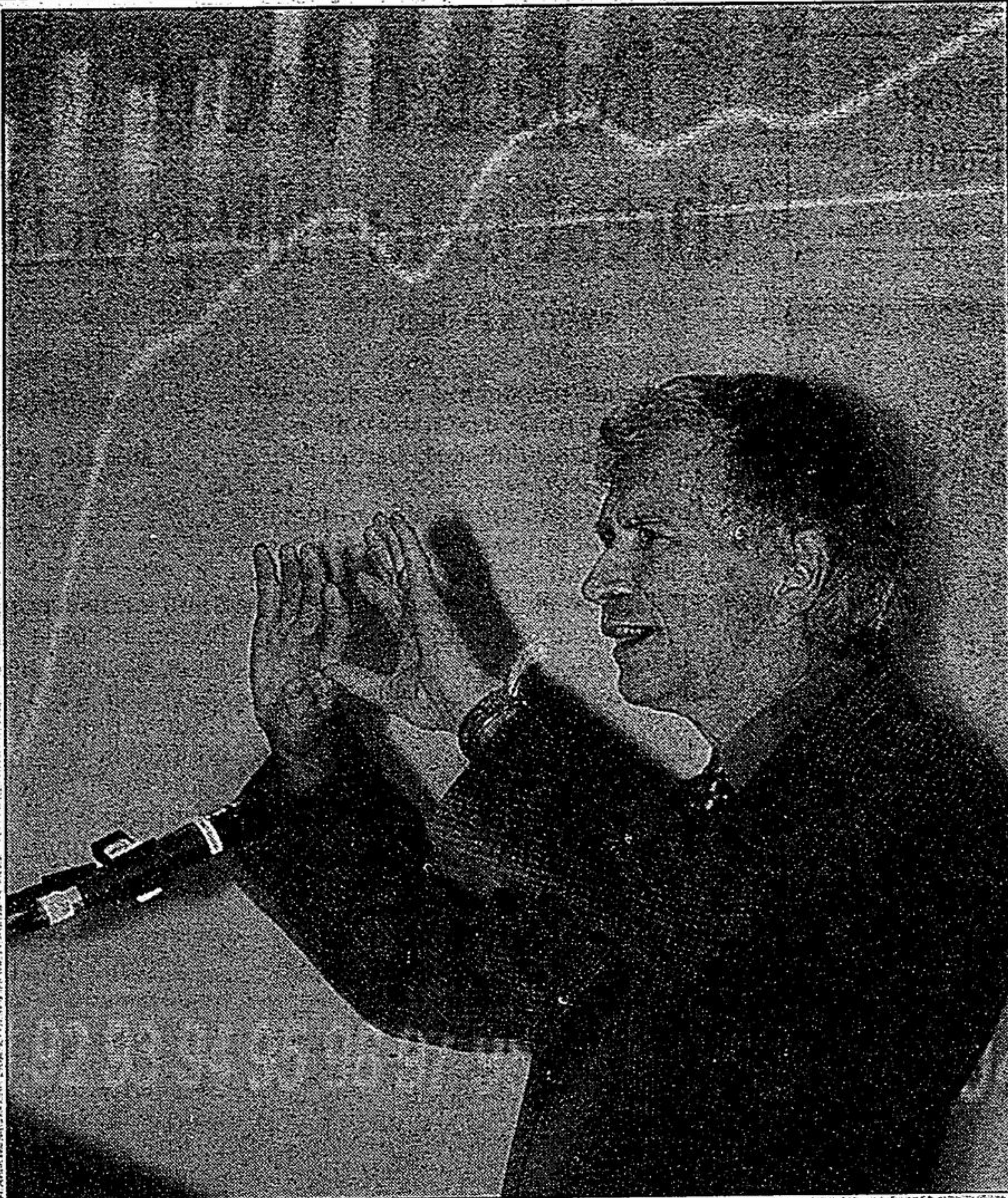


Frank Clayton, president of Clayton Research, speaks at a forum on the province's greenbelt legislation in Richmond Hill yesterday.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Developers laugh at minister

From page 1:

academics clashed over the implications of sweeping environmental protection.

The crowd of more than 400, consisting mostly of developers, erupted in laughter when Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing John Gerretsen declared his government would stand by its election promise to establish a greenbelt and curb urban sprawl.

"I reject the notion there isn't enough land to take care of population expansion over the next couple of years," Mr. Gerretsen said.

With the population across the Golden Horseshoe expected to balloon by more than four million people over the next 25 years, a greenbelt is essential to protecting Ontarians' quality of

life, he said.

"Sprawl needs to be reined in. It's bad for people and it's bad for the economy," the minister added.

House prices would rise by more than 30 per cent around the GTA by 2014. It's bad news for homebuyers and people moving to the area, he added.

However, researcher Frank Clayton re-affirmed the homebuilders' belief a greenbelt would lead to a land shortage and eventually price many future homebuyers out of the market throughout the Greater

Toronto Area.

Armed with statistics from past Ontario housing market trends and examples of similar government efforts to curb sprawl in England, Mr. Clayton said Mr. Gerretsen was "misinformed".

"You can't control people's behavioural patterns. Planners try, but you can't," Mr. Clayton said.

The question is not if home prices will skyrocket following the establishment of a provincial greenbelt, but by how much, he said.

House prices would rise by more than 30 per cent around the GTA by 2014. It's bad news for homebuyers and people moving to the area, he added.

"The most vulnerable people in the market will pay more for housing."

YORK REGION RAPID TRANSIT PLAN Markham North South Link Corridor Public Transit Improvements Environmental Assessment (EA)

Public Consultation Opportunity

As one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada, York Region is facing a number of transportation challenges. In response, the Region has initiated the York Rapid Transit Plan (YRTP) to develop a rapid transit network in four corridors in York Region.

Environmental Assessments are proceeding in all corridors and the Region is nearing completion of the South Yonge Street and Highway 7 EA's. Work is also progressing in the Markham North-South Link Corridor (See map of study area) under an EA Terms of Reference approved by the Minister of Environment on July 13, 2004. Since July, the study team has been evaluating a number of potential solutions to address transportation issues in the study area, including significantly improved public transit services. This may include Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on one or more north-south corridors.



This public consultation will be in the form of an open house display and will present:

- A description of existing transportation issues and the preferred solution for addressing these issues
- Conclusions on transit technologies
- Preliminary methods of improving public transit, including potential routing options
- A methodology and evaluation criteria for evaluating alternative locations for the undertaking

The scope and success of this study depends on public input and participation. We invite you to attend one of the upcoming Open Houses to review the interim findings of the EA Study. The details are as follows:

Tuesday, December 7th, 2004
Town of Markham Anthony Roman Centre
Great Hall, 4:00 - 9:00 p.m.
101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, Ontario

Thursday, December 9th, 2004
First Markham Place
Shopping Centre
4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
3215-3275 Highway 7 East
Markham, ON

To obtain further information on this study, visit our rapid transit website at www.yorkinmotion.com or the York Region Web site at www.region.york.on.ca/yrtp

If you wish to have your name placed on our mailing list, or to direct questions and comments please contact:

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