

# OPINION

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**  
 A Metroland community newspaper  
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## Editorial

### Now's time to offer planning input

They say with change comes opportunity.

Here in York Region, there's an opportunity for you to play a significant role in what will change.

The region is embarking on a growth management initiative called Planning for Tomorrow. A symposium was held earlier this month and community meetings will be held over the next six weeks.

The goal is to present a framework for growth and gather input on how you want to see the community evolve.

Make no mistake, standing still is not an option.

York will continue to grow at a rapid rate.

The province has big plans for the region, according to its Places to Grow Act, designed to serve as a blueprint for growth across the Golden Horseshoe.

It designates 25 urban growth centres in which populations are targeted to grow by at least 40 per cent. In York, it has earmarked Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Markham and Vaughan.

In all, York Region is expected to grow from 920,000 to 1.5 million by 2031.

Burgeoning growth in the past may have meant finding empty land and covering it with subdivisions.

But times have changed. As well as the directives in the Places to Grow Act, planners need to make York's future growth fit the confines imposed by the Oak Ridges Moraine Act, greenbelt and other legislation.

And let's not forget the most crucial criteria — creating communities in which people want to live.

It goes beyond deciding what type of development should take place.

It's about providing clean and efficient transportation and infrastructure.

It's about ensuring our business community remains strong and vibrant, and grows in the right way.

It's about providing the best soft services for our growing population.

There are several ways you can be involved in the process.

Attend one of the sessions the region is hosting this month and next. Follow the series in the paper, or online at [yorkregion.com](http://yorkregion.com).

Most of all, talk about your vision for York's future — now.

Too often, citizens wait until construction has started before they take notice. By then, it's too late.

If you don't take advantage of the opportunity, you really don't have a right to complain about what happens.

It's your community. Help plan it.



David Teetzel

### Our society promotes isolation

**H**e was kind of a recluse. They were opposites, she was so outgoing, but not him.

"We would see him in the back yard sometimes puttering around. He never said much, kept to himself."

The first quote was about John LaFleche, the Aurora man charged in the beating deaths of his wife and two children.

The second was about Pero Boroja, the 70-year-old Markham man charged with killing his wife in January.

I don't know any of these people and I have no particular insights into their lives or what caused these tragedies.

But I read these quotes and I wonder. I read about the circumstances of Sivananthi Elango, charged in the murder of her two children earlier this month and I wonder. Her family had moved on to their street in Markham a couple of months ago and most neighbours didn't know them.

We talked to Monika Samant, team leader for the adult crisis program at Southlake Regional Health Centre, about what people could do if they were in such severe emotional stress that they might harm their own family.

Her first advice: Talk to someone you trust.

It makes me wonder, what if you're in a situation where there's nobody to talk to? What if your family is all you have?

We design our homes and our communities with an eye to safety. But usually that's all about keeping the bad guys out. What if we have done so good a job keeping people out that we now need to find ways to let people in?

Is loneliness and isolation as great a threat to our health and safety as random street violence?

Today, our newspapers start a series on how York Region is planning to grow to 1.5 million people by 2031.

That's 1.5 million more people who could be your friend, but unless we radically change the way we build our communities, that's not going to happen.

We build streets that are great for getting from A to B, but lousy as places to stop and chat.

But having places where we can gather and share common experiences may be more vital to our health and safety than we realize. Human beings were designed to be social, but we have created societies that promote isolation.

At our worst, we fight for open space because we don't want more people living near us.

Then we're surprised when that neighbour we never knew does something we couldn't imagine.

## Letters to the Editor

### Residents should get involved to ensure Memorial Park survives

Stouffville residents should pay attention to a number of processes, policies, plans and committees that have been developing for a year and which could significantly alter the appearance and use of Memorial Park.

At a Memorial Park master plan session Jan. 18, the town's consultant conducted an exercise, aided by overhead maps, in which participants were asked to visualize the potential removal of virtually every existing activity in Memorial Park, including the main ball diamond, the grandstand, the outdoor pool, the bowling green, the skateboard park, the toboggan hill, Thicketwood ballfield and the basketball and tennis courts.

A list of "known" and "potential changes" was also provided at the session.

While some changes are directly related to the extension of Park Drive other "known and potential changes" appear to be linked to the strategic plan of action for downtown Stouffville, which incorporates a parking and traffic circulation study for the downtown core area.

A component of this plan is the construction of a two-car "laneway" extending from Park Drive South, behind the main ball diamond's grandstand, to Somerville Street, presumably eliminating all or most of the lawn bowling green.

The purpose of the proposed laneway is to provide rear lane access for service vehicles and off street parking for the businesses south of Main

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address.

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space. Write: Letters to the Editor, 34 Civic Ave., P.O. Box 154, Stouffville, L4A 7Z5 or e-mail [jmason@yrng.com](mailto:jmason@yrng.com)

Street in the vicinity of the park.

The draft municipal cultural policy may also bear on the future of Memorial Park. Although presented as a "policy", the document contains a specific directive to investigate the development of a "cultural complex" in the downtown core.

If such a complex were larger than could be accommodated by the redevelopment of any existing built up locations in the downtown core, large areas of public open space in Memorial Park could become the obvious target for such a facility.

At the Memorial Park planning session, the consultant indicated that "no decisions have been made". There is as of yet, "no plan".

It would therefore seem this is the time for residents who care about Memorial Park to communicate their concerns to town staff and councillors on the future of this historic and cherished part of our town.

JILL MCWHINNIE  
 STOUFFVILLE

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