

**LETTERS
POLICY**

The Sun-Tribune
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OPINION

Editorial

Get together to get us around York

What was not long ago a collection of small communities north of Toronto has grown into a suburban metropolis.

More than one million people now call York Region home and, according to growth estimates, another 500,000 will live here in about 20 years.

That's a lot of people headed to work, school and elsewhere, using a transportation network that, in many cases, is crumbling under the pressure of our population.

There's no doubt we're going to grow. Heck, the province's Places to Grow Act has decreed it. This document set out unprecedented goals for development in the Golden Horseshoe area, ruling York must make room for 80,000 to 85,000 more housing units between now and 2031.

But how will these people — and others passing through the region — get where they're going?

Rapid bus routes are part of the solution and Viva is well on its way to making these a reality. Work is beginning this year on dedicated lanes on major routes, including Davis Drive in Newmarket and Hwy. 7.

More, however, is needed.

We require a subway line into the region and new highways, such as the Hwy. 404 extension and the Bradford bypass as, like it or, the automobile is here for the foreseeable future.

Everyone recognizes these simple facts, so why can't our various levels of government get their acts together?

In the south, the region has completed planning on the line that would bring the TTC subway from Finch Avenue to Hwy. 7, but without funding to proceed with engineering work, there is nothing more to be done.

When the province announced its \$11 billion transit commitment in 2007, there were hopes the federal government would ante up a further \$6 billion, but this hasn't happened. Why not?

Can the bureaucrats in Ottawa not recognize a need when they see it? Have they not read Places to Grow?

An integrated planning — and funding — program involving all three levels of government is the only way to ensure our region grows properly, with the necessary supports available.

This current process of one level planning a project, then holding out a hand to the others in search of funds, simply isn't effective. With varied priorities, funding is doled out on a piecemeal basis, often at the whim of whichever party is in power.

Only with all three levels working in unison will growth occur in the way it should.



Letters to the Editor

In search of a sharpener

I live in a new section of Stouffville off of Ninth Line below Main Street.

As do most of my neighbours, I cut the grass and trim the growth around the property from time to time. As most of us are aware, lawn mowers and clippers have sharp edges to help in the process of trimming and cutting.

I thought recently my gardening devices needed some sharpening after three to four years of use, and even more for the clippers.

I called "Canada's Hardware Store", Canadian Tire, and asked if it provided such a service. I was told there might be an itinerant "blade sharpener" somewhere — call a "hardware store" and maybe they can help.

Huh! I tried Schell Lumber, where now Home Hardware is a partner. It has a guy who comes from Goodwood, but he only does lawn mowers if I remove the blade and leave it there Fridays.

Went to Home Hardware in Uxbridge, as I used to live in the area.

It, too, has somebody who only does lawn mowers, when he shows up.

I was given the name of another organization in Uxbridge to call through Home Hardware. Turns out the person who ran it died many years ago and the organization no longer exists.

Is there nowhere in this area where one can go and get his blades sharpened? I am sure most of us would prefer such a service to throwing away the lawn mower when the blades get dull and buying a new one.

We actually had a man who travelled up and down the concession road we lived on in Sandford who did such things.

GARY REID
STOUFFVILLE

Columnist should do homework

Re: Four-year-olds need less time in kindergarten, not more, column by Bernie O'Neill, June 20.

Do you do any research into topics before you write about them or do you just spew out ideas regardless of how ignorant or ridiculous they are? I'm just wondering because I'm not a writer of columns; I'm a teacher of Grade 1.

My colleagues and I usually spend a considerable amount of time researching how children learn.

You may be surprised to know that there is an entire body of research on this topic because some people think that offering children the best education possible is really important.

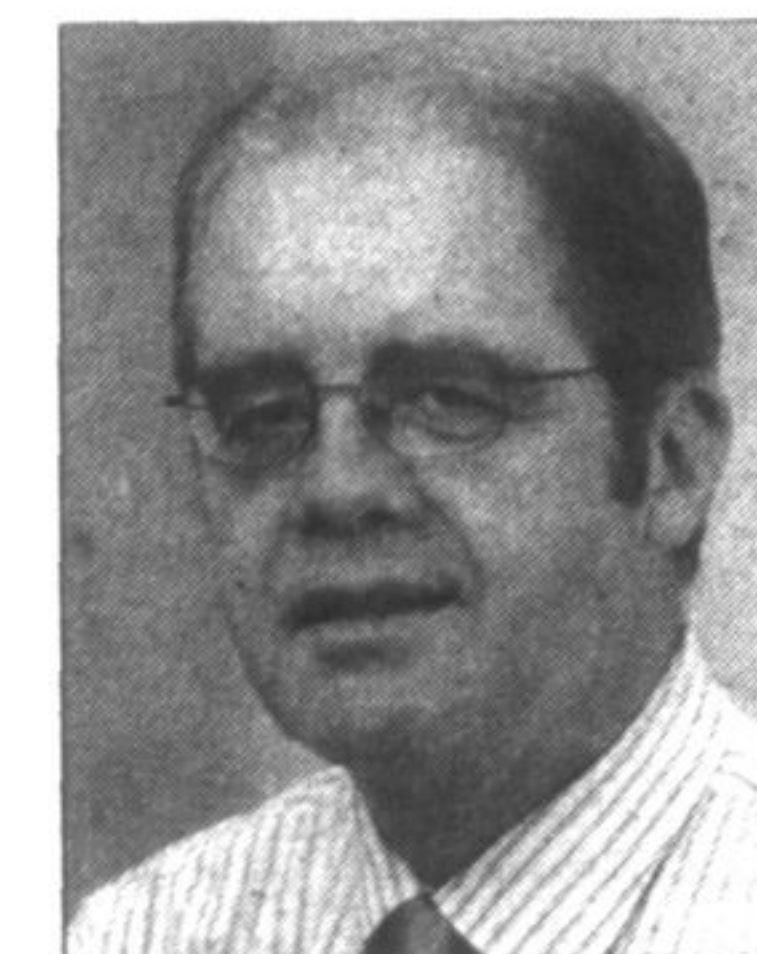
They found that the human brain is developing and growing at a more profound rate in younger children than it is in older teenagers. So adding an extra year of public education for a four-year-old would make a lot more sense than adding an extra year for an 18-year-old.

This is the year 2009. It's a lot different from 1959 when parents and grandparents could stay home and go to the park to look at bugs, and whatever other fairytale ideas you mention about childhood in your column.

In 2009, mom and/or dad have to work not because of taxes, but because the cost of living has gone up while their incomes have not.

I understand you're very busy. You insinuate that being employed in the private sector is so much more incredibly demanding than any government job could ever be. But since you are writing in a public forum you may want to try a bit of research so that you could appear informed instead of just angry at everyone from Dalton McGuinty to government employees.

KELLY DHARAMSHI
MARKHAM



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Bumper crop of nominees for top citizen

They are my favourite calls of the year.

Every June, I get to phone two Whitchurch-Stouffville residents on behalf of The Sun-Tribune and inform them they have been selected as citizen of the year or sports person of the year.

The response is pretty predictable. Choose from:

- "What, weren't there any other nominees this year?"
- "What kind of judging panel do you have down there?"
- "Picking from the bottom of the barrel this year, eh Mason? Everyone else declined, right?"

The recipient then gets a little teary (as best as I can imagine, without a video phone). We talk about the presentation ceremony. They ask about their colleagues who nominated them. We talk about what a great place this is to live and to get involved.

I wait another 365 days to make the same calls.

The truth is, this may have been the toughest year to select the citizen of the year in my time here. We asked for detailed resumes and letters of support.

We got them. Big time. My inbox and file folder runneth over with amazing stories of our neighbours doing extraordinary things to help. Not to benefit their family or business, but to help others and make Whitchurch-Stouffville a better place.

And not to win awards. But citizen of the year Diane Ward and 2009 sports person Mike Humphreys will be on the receiving end Wednesday at the opening ceremonies of the Strawberry Festival.

Drop by. Extend a hand and give them a hug.

Say thanks. On behalf of a community. Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.