

Sun-Tribune

905-640-2612
Fax 905-640-8778

EDITORIAL
ADVERTISING
905-640-2612
Classified 1-800-743-3353
Fax 905-640-8778

DISTRIBUTION
905-640-2612

EDITORIAL
Editor
Jim Mason
jmason@yrmg.com

ADVERTISING
Advertising Manager
Stephen Mathieu
smathieu@yrmg.com

Marketing Manager
Mike Banville
mbanville@yrmg.com

DISTRIBUTION
Circulation Manager
Carrie MacFarlane
cmacfarlane@yrmg.com

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LETTERS POLICY

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

Letters to the Editor,
The Sun-Tribune
6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON
L4A 1G7
jmason@yrmg.com



OPINION

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON, L4A 1G7
www.yorkregion.com

PUBLISHER Ian Proudfoot

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Debora Kelly

BUSINESS
MANAGER
Robert Lazaruko

DIRECTOR,
PRODUCTION
Jackie Smart

DIRECTOR,
OPERATIONS
Barry Black

DIRECTOR,
ADVERTISING,
DISTRIBUTION
Nicole Fletcher

Editorial Growth must pay for itself

Can't afford to buy a new home in York Region because of out-of-reach prices, which continue to rise?

Blame your municipality, the construction industry says.

Homebuilder associations are hammering at local governments across the GTA over development fees, which, they say, are escalating unfairly and driving potential homeowners out of the market.

Building industry reports released last week contend a stagnated housing market will start to affect municipal economics and, since buyers can't afford to pay 30-per-cent higher fees for a home, development will be reduced in the coming years.

It's a fact the fees have risen an average of 30 per cent over the past several years. In York Region, the fee for a single family home has climbed to \$32,503 from the \$24,181 since 2007, when the region last assessed its development charge rates.

The province says the region must grow by 95,000 people and provide 32,000 more jobs in the next several decades. The projected cost of providing infrastructure to meet those demands by 2031 has more than doubled to almost \$1.8 billion.

The cost of doing business in one of Ontario's fastest growing regions is high. So be it. Municipalities collect development fees from builders to provide and improve the infrastructure, such as roads and sewers, needed to support new growth.

Builders have enjoyed years of record profits, while infrastructure has deteriorated and transit is overloaded, simply unable to accommodate the demands of thousands of new homeowners pouring into our communities.

Something has to give.

Property and business owners should not be expected to ante up even more tax dollars to continue to fund an industry that is seeing a chill for the first time in 20 years.

Municipalities — you, the taxpayers — had to begin contributing 10 per cent of the capital costs of transit projects, libraries and community centres in 1997. Fees could no longer be collected for hospitals, municipal administrative buildings or cultural facilities.

Last year, the region renewed a health tax that will collect \$12 million annually until 2031 for hospital expansions.

There needs to be a new reality, too, for developers. Taxpayers can't be expected to continue to effectively subsidize an industry that has made millions of dollars in profit in York Region.

Growth must pay for growth and it's time developers paid their fair share.



Letters to the Editor

Changes to park, community aren't helping downtown

Re: Why can't town officials work with business people?, letter to the editor by Bill Bell, March 3.

March 1 was a special day for our family. Thirty years ago, my now wife and I moved from the Big Smoke to Stouffville.

We rented the old Brownsberger farmhouse on Hwy. 48 in Ringwood. It was a wonderful three years, and our daughter's first six months of life were spent in this house.

We eventually bought a place on the east side of Stouffville in 1983, but the memories of that place will live on forever. It was haunted, you know. Today, I suppose the place will be known as the Brownsberger Auto Mall.

Our family has seen a number of changes in town during these 30 years. We managed to attend a few events in the old Quonset building in the town park before it was demolished.

We played ball in the park and attended fireworks displays on the sports fields, before they were torn up and replaced by a road that no one wanted or needed. We swam in the outdoor pool and now wonder if it's staying or going.

We visited the flea market every Saturday, now also slated for the wrecking ball. We saw the lone traffic light move to Market Street, followed by 11 others installed during the next few years.

We now have big box stores, many new residents, more pizza places than I can count, a radio station, toboggan hill nobody can find and skateboard facility, I think.

In his letter, Mr. Bell said he was looking for politicians without tunnel vision, to improve on our downtown core, something that has been talked

HAVE YOUR SAY, STOUFFVILLE

► What do you think of these issues or others? E-mail letters to the editor to jmason@yrmg.com

about since I moved here and before that, I'm sure.

Tearing down facilities close to the downtown core and moving them kilometres away to Bethesda Road is not the way to attract people to the core of the town, either is making it next to impossible to sign a business, so our residents know it exists.

We had our chance to vote in change in the last municipal election. I know I voted for change. I hope Mr. Bell and I were not the only two in town who did, but it sure seems that way.

DAVE BROOKS
STOUFFVILLE

Make-believe slogan fits

Re: Big name, small town, Jan. 22.

So, Whitchurch-Stouffville needs a new slogan? Its old one, Country Close to the City, is dead and does not tell people who we really are.

Here is a suggestion: Check out the treasury department's 2011 operating and capital budgets and its 10-year capital forecast.

After that, a new slogan springs to mind: Land of Make-Believe.

It begs the question, how is the treasury department going to find the money to pay the bills?

MARGARET L. MAY
STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

What are you going to do about it?

The weather is here, I wish you were beautiful.

— Jimmy Buffett

Most of us spend far too much talking about climate.

Beauty, we can alter. Jimmy Buffett, with a haircut, facelift or big honking pair of sunglasses.

Weather? Not so much, unless you've got the coin to go where the weather suits your clothes, as another songwriter once promoted.

We can adapt to the weather, by trading winter tires and snowshoes for ragtops and flip-flops, at least for a few weeks a year up here.

We can complain about it from November through April and then neglect to thank God when it turns around.

That's us.

It's a lot like community. We whine about town council decisions and moves by local retailers, organizations and sports teams at the hockey rink or Tim Hortons, often without all the facts or any thought of doing anything about it.

That's also us.

Kudos to those of you who did your homework and went to the town recently over issues, including the closure of the outdoor pool, a rural cellphone tower plan and safety concerns for pedestrians exiting trains at the Stouffville Station.

Same goes for residents who take the time and have the courage to write letters to the editor. That would be me.

Residents who see a problem and do something about it are local heroes, in my book. They're the pioneers who have made this a wonderful place to live in or move to.

Those who disrupt council meetings, send anonymous letters, spread unfounded gossip and spend their lives disturbing are more zeroes than heroes.

I see snow in the weekend forecast. Who cares?

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.