

ENERGY: Stouffville Rd. pumping station goes solar

Region using sun's power

BY AMANDA PERSICO
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While roof or ground-mounted solar panels are popular among residents seeking to sell energy back to the province's power grid, York Region has found other uses for solar power.

Aside from the region's panel projects, including two ground-mounted solar tracking systems, totalling 4.8 kilowatts, at its Whitchurch-Stouffville pumping station, at Stouffville and McCowan roads, and a 10-kilowatt, ground-mounted array at the new emergency medical services centre in East Gwillimbury, the sun is used to power signs and lights and heat buildings.

You might have seen one of the 12 solar-powered portable traffic signs used to notify drivers of lane and road closures.

Each LED sign is powered by one solar panel with 36 solar cells that produce up to 300 watts of energy.

Each sign's battery can run 20 days without the sun.

"This is a feasible use for solar power," region traffic engineering manager Paul Nause said.

"It's self-contained. The battery

charges while on site. We put it there and it does its job, all day."

The region uses the signs at capital project sites where road closures are planned for extended periods.

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Prior to the solar-powered message signs, the region used stationary, printed traffic signs.

The solar-powered signs allow the region to display more dynamic messages that can be updated remotely as construction schedules change, Mr. Nause said.

Other municipalities made the jump from printed signs to diesel-powered signs, the first generation of portable signs, Mr. Nause said.

With the diesel signs, you have the emissions, not to mention the noise, Mr. Nause said, not-

ing the solar-powered signs use renewable energy and there isn't the maintenance associated with diesel.

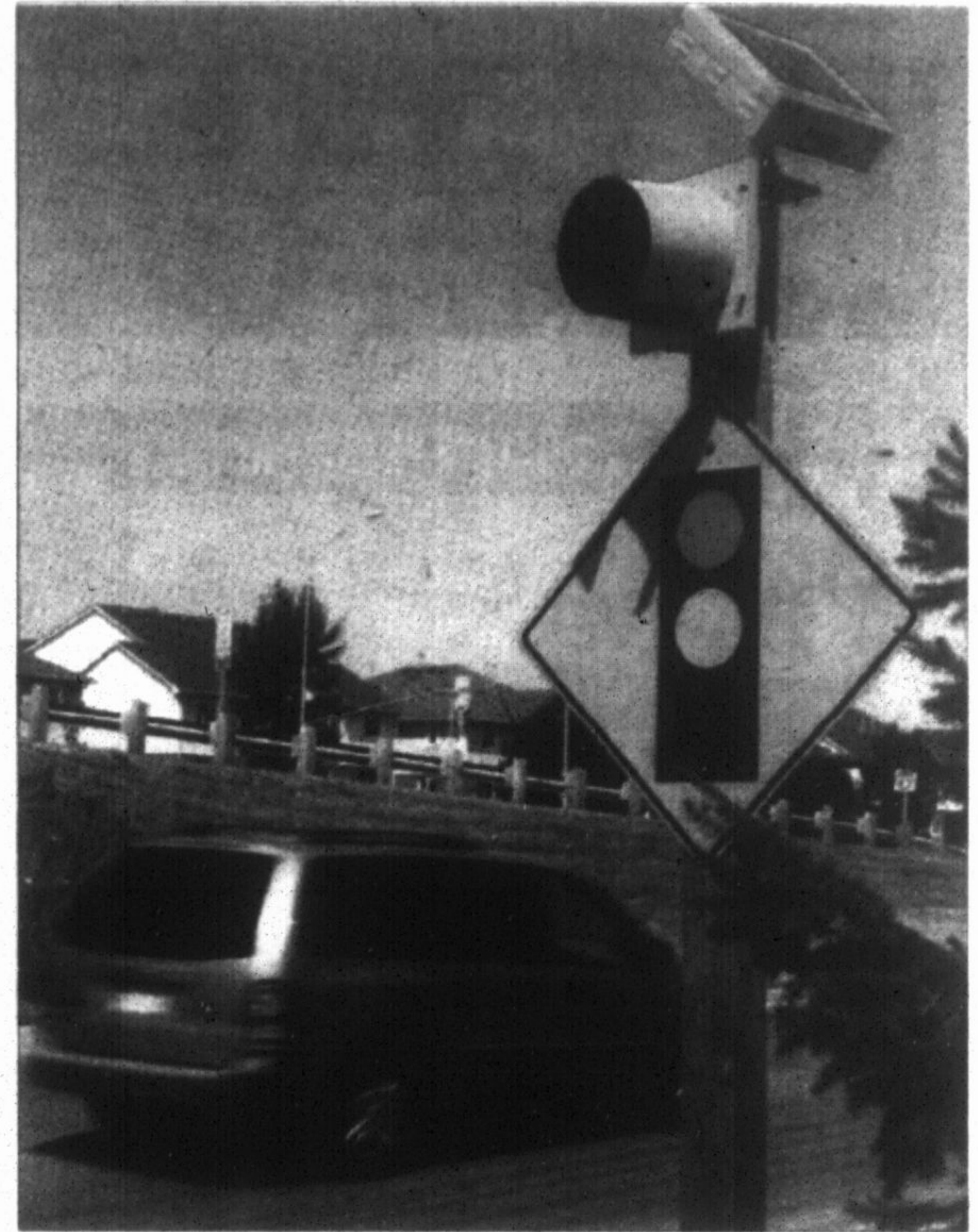
The region also lights 42 bus shelters with solar power and uses the sun to heat water at several Housing York Inc. properties and for the bus washing station in Vaughan.

To reduce utility costs, the region installed a solar wall of dark metal cladding and ventilation holes to heat air in the wastewater pollution control centre in East Gwillimbury, corporate energy services manager Michael Lithgow said.

"It was a little bit of serendipity," Mr. Lithgow said. "This type of system won't work everywhere. This system lends itself nicely to the building and fits with the region's commitment to use renewable energy."

"We're offsetting the use of utilities," he said. "The air is heated and, as a bonus, there are no moving parts, so it's a low-maintenance system."

The region is also examining establishing solar panel projects more than 100 kilowatts in size at several locations.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Flashing lights, such as the one on this road sign, are among the many things York Region powers using the sun.

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Community Development and Investment Fund (CDIF) Purchase of Service Request – Coming Soon

The York Region CDIF Purchase of Service Request for 2012 funding opens on August 4, 2011 and closes on September 8, 2011.

CDIF gives funding to eligible non-profit community agencies that provide services to low income and vulnerable residents under three priority areas:

- Employment Supports
- Family and Children's Services
- Homelessness Prevention and Programs

Eligible agencies can submit proposals for either one year of funding or apply for renewable project funding if applicable.

The Purchase of Service Request package provides guidelines and application information and will be available at noon on **Thursday, August 4, 2011**.

You can get the Purchase of Service Request package by:

- Visiting www.york.ca/CDIF to register and download the package

OR

- Picking up a copy from the Supplies and Services Branch, York Region Administrative Centre, First Floor, 17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket

Join us at an **Information Meeting** on:

Thursday, August 18, 2011

2:00 p.m.

Committee Room B

York Region Administrative Centre

17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket

Pre-registration is not required.

For more information visit www.york.ca/CDIF

York Region