Attachment 2
Regional Council Attachment

York Region News Group
Articles on Growth

Growing HOME

NAVIGATION

HOME
PLANNING FOR GROWTH
ECONOMICS OF GROWTH
GROWING GREEN
GETTING AROUND
LIVABLE SLFESTYLES
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

INTERSECTIONS
YOUR MEMORIES

STORY

Change just beginning

Thursday March 16th 2006
By Caroline Grech, Staff Writer

Look to your left.
Look to your right.
What you see around you will dramatically change by 2031.
This is especially true if you live in Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill or Newmarket as these cor been designated by the province as areas in which growth will be intensified during the next 25 ye
The province passed the Places to Grow Act last June. It's designed to serve as a blueprint for gro Golden Horseshoe, which, according to the province, stretches from Peterborough to Niagara and Barrie.
The act aims to control proposed growth by creating more livable communities in which people are shops, parks and jobs, revitalizing downtown areas and to curb sprawl to minimize pressure on far natural areas.
The plan has designated 25 urban growth centres, all larger towns or central business districts wh populations are targeted to grow by at least 40 per cent. In York, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Mark Vaughan have been designated.
According to the plan, these areas will see a minimum of 200 people and jobs combined per hecta of the size of two Canadian football fields.
With the population in York Region expected to grow from 920,000 to 1.5 million by 2031, 600,000 will need homes and jobs.
In an ideal situation, regional planners want York to provide one job for every two people living her
While the region is no stranger to growth, with 10,000 new housing units a year being developed, t target has hastened the process.
The new targets have the region growing by 70,000 units more than what planners had initially ant Bryan Tuckey, the region's planning and development commissioner.
"The new growth targets have made us manage our resources in a very different way," Mr. Tuckey
While burgeoning growth in the past may have meant simply finding empty land on which to drop r region planners want to create livable communities and avoid negative factors usually associated v such as sprawl.
Taking a different approach means planners aren't simply widening roads to accommodate more c reducing the demand for road space by not only creating more transit options but also getting peop differently.
By providing more employment opportunities in the region, more people will choose to live closer t making the option of cycling or walking to work viable.
It's a matter of making residents feel that a long commute to work is unacceptable.
In Vision 2026, the region's blueprint for how the region should evolve during the next two decade: explore all facets of people's lives, from the environment to building strong communities; concepts many definitions of sustainable development.
In York Region, building a sustainable community has three facets:
• providing clean and efficient transportation and infrastructure, securing green lands and promotin water efficiency so the natural environment is protected;
• keeping local businesses and acquiring new ones so the region remains economically viable; anc
• providing adequate food and shelter, health care support, social and emotional well-being and re cultural and faith diversity.
Putting all three together and working on how they interconnect is the way regional planners belie\ can grow successfully.
The region has already undertaken several initiatives to move toward a more sustainable commun the Viva rapid transit system, Oak Ridges Moraine legislation, waste diversion programs and a cer corridors strategy.
'The new growth targets
have made us manage
our resources in a very
different way.'
While urban sprawl is a term sometimes associated with rapid growth, it's a word planners at the r even like to utter.
"Urban sprawl is unplanned leap-frog growth that you would see in a city like Phoenix or Houston,' Waller, York's director of long-range planning.
Pointing to a map designed for a 2005 environmental report, Mr. Waller stressed growth will contin Hwy. 7 and Yonge Street corridors, where transportation initiatives such as Viva have been conce
But providing sustainable communities has presented its fair share of challenges.
First and foremost, planners have to figure out where 600,000 new residents will live.
A recent report to regional council shows there is a 12.2-year supply for single detached homes, a supply for semi-detached units and a 12.8-year supply for row house units.
This has caused regional planners to consider other areas of the region for development, such as

set aside for agricultural use.
The type of dwellings being built in areas deemed urban growth zones might also be a source of c
with more and more high-rise condominiums going up in areas where only detached homes once
Demographics are already showing a decrease in single-family dwellings.
In 1980, 80 per cent of the homes in the region were single-family dwellings. Today, the figure has
per cent with the percentage of apartment units on the increase, Mr. Tuckey explained.
The region is also seeking your input on how the community should grow.
"One of our problems is to give as much information as possible about our challenges," Mr. Waller
To engage people in the process, regional representatives are hosting a series of meetings around
March and April.

STORY Archive

- Change just beginning Look to your left.
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Economy will be as diverse as population

BY PATRICK MANGION
Staff Writer

Flash forward 25 years to 2031 and picture a region that has become the envy of its neighbours.

Imagine a York Region where a job for every working age resident means you no longer have to sit on car-choked highways commuting to work in downtown Toronto or North York.

What may sound like the manifestation of starry-eyed optimism from regional bureaucrats charged with shaping York's future may be closer to reality.

That vision would translate into nearly 800,000 jobs for the 1.5 million people expected to call York Region home then.

'Business can't continue to say there's a shortage of talent without exploring deeper into a changing environment.'

Retail, administrative and manufacturing sectors will remain the lifeblood of York's suburban landscape, however, an evolving knowledge-based economy that includes pharmaceutical research and development mixed with information technology-related vocations, should result in shorter commutes for workers.

Currently, there are more than 399,000 jobs in 27,000 York Region businesses.

It means businesses will look to York's foreign-trained immigrants more than ever for that figure to nearly double over 25 years.

York's economy will become as diverse as its demographics, said Bryan Tuckey, planning and development services commissioner.

After arriving with his wife and two young daughters in Richmond Hill from Singapore last year, it's something Derek Zhang, 41, is banking on.

Opportunities abound, he won't even entertain thoughts of returning to his homeland.

Part 2 — Economics

Last week: Planning for growth
TODAY: Economics of growth
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For now, Mr. Zhang is the reluctant spokesperson for a disturbing trend in immigrant-rich York Region.

That is, highly educated, highly skilled immigrants forced to work "survival jobs".

Co-operation among the region, province and Ottawa will be needed if York intends to effectively tap into its immigration population to reach its lofty goals, said Rahul Bhardwaj, CEO of the United Way of York Region.

Programs such as the mentoring partnership — where immigrants are matched with professionals in their chosen field to help integrate them into the Canadian workforce — are a step in the right direction, but more is needed, Mr. Bhardwaj said.

Part of that shift must come from the business community.

"Business can't continue to say there's a shortage of talent without exploring deeper into a changing environment," he said.

As Mr. Bhardwaj is quick to point out and regional planners are readily aware, because there's an insufficient number of Cana-

See LOT, page A3.

FAST FACTS

- **PAST:** By the end of 2004, 27,000 York Region businesses provided 440,000 jobs;
- **FUTURE:** 100,000 new jobs are expected to be added in the region between 2005 and 2011;
- **MORE JOBS:** For the same six-year period from 1998 to 2004, there were 84,000 new jobs;
- **EVEN MORE JOBS:** In 25 years, there is expected to be 780,000 jobs for a projected 1.5 million people;
- **9 TO 5:** A 2004 survey of 13,348 companies revealed 79 per cent of employment is full time;
- **GOOD SERVICE:** Service-oriented jobs account for about 67 per cent of total employment in York Region;
- **MAKING WORK:** Manufacturing remains the largest employment sector, accounting for 25 per cent of total employment and;
- **SMALL BUSINESS:** 83 per cent of companies have fewer than 20 employees.

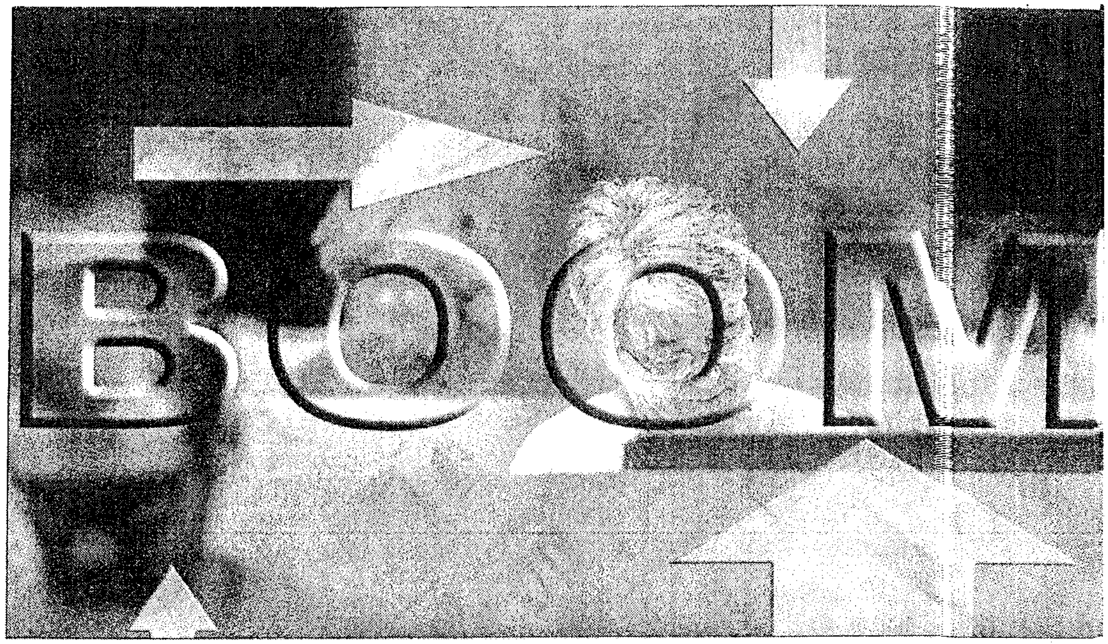


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/MIKE BARRETT

Lots of land means lots of employment

From page A1.

dian workers, immigrants will be needed to fill jobs created in Canada by 2011.

After earning upward of $100,000 a year in Singapore, Mr. Zhang has spent the past three months working full time as a commission-based sales associate for a national furniture chain.

For now, Mr. Zhang, an MBA graduate with senior management experience in Asia, said he is committed to gaining Canadian experience before finding his way back to the boardroom, even if that means travelling long distances along southern Ontario's car-choked highways.

He'll stay, Mr. Zhang insisted, because he wants a future for his children — a future that will have to include meaningful local jobs for his 13 and seven-year-old children once they join the workforce.

Wedged between restricting legislation, including the Places to Grow and Oak Ridges Moraine acts and greenbelt legislation, regional brass will be charged with the delicate task of designating diminishing land for future employment. All the while, meeting the housing needs of a projected 40,000 newcomers fanning out across York's nine municipalities each year.

"There's not a lot of strategically located land for industry left," Mr. Tuckey said.

Exposure and access has drawn many corporate offices and manufacturing facilities to the areas abutting hwys. 404, 7, 400 and 427 across the region.

Expanding urban boundaries in areas such as Markham, Vaughan and Aurora will be needed to include employment lands in the future, Mr. Tuckey said.

Protected green areas on the east side of Hwy. 404 in the middle of the region is a natural choice for future employment lands, but any development would rest with the province willing to lift building restrictions in the area.

Still, surplus land, proximity to Toronto and its major highways will likely continue to attract more industry to York Region, said Frank Clayton, president of Toronto's Clayton Research, urban and real estate economists.

"As long as there's land brought on stream in the right places, there will be lots of employment growth (in York Region)," he said.

While York has an advantage over Durham — with its lack of infrastructure and the high costs endemic to Toronto — it will continue to grapple with an overly mobile workforce.

"The basic problem is that you have a lot of people leaving York Region to work in Toronto and a lot of people in Toronto coming to work in York Region. There's a strong base of jobs, but there's also a huge outflow in York Region and you'll never stop that. It's the nature of a metropolitan area," Mr. Clayton said.

EMPLOYMENT GIANTS

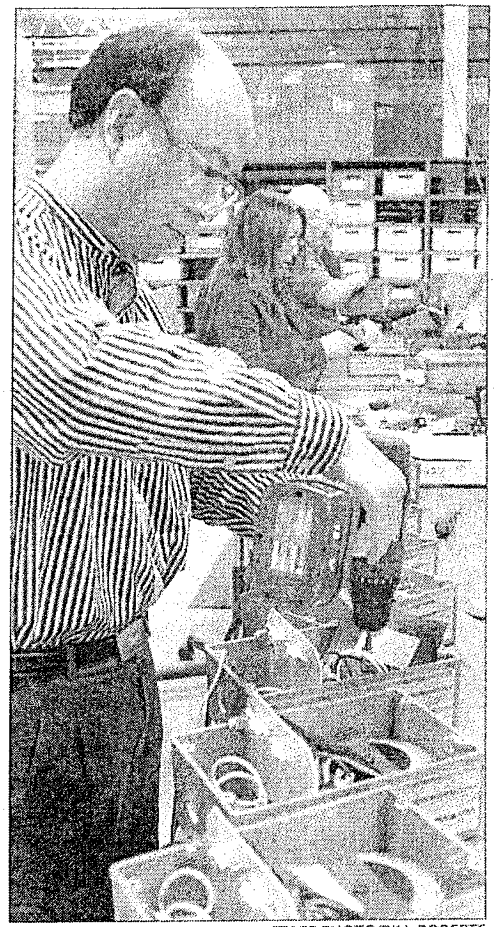
Some of the region's largest employers include:

- Magna International
- IBM Canada
- Apotex
- Paramount Canada's Wonderland
- Amex Canada
- Miller Paving Ltd.
- ATI Technologies Inc.

Constant attention key to growth

March 23/0

BY PATRICK MANGION
Staff Writer



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Yi Xu assembles lighting controllers at Alutron Modules in Aurora. Alutron boasts $5 million in annual sales, a workforce of 30 and industry-leading customers such as Hoover and Eureka.

After nearly 18 years in business, Vern Cunningham has seen his share of highs and lows.

Like any successful company, Aurora's Alutron Modules, which makes motor controls for the central vacuuming industry, has weathered a number of storms along the way, the local entrepreneur said.

Today, the company boasts $5 million in annual sales, a workforce of 30 and industry-leading customers such as Hoover and Eureka.

So when dark clouds hover, like the manufacturing slump that has affected Ontario for more than a year now, Mr. Cunningham can't help but think back to his company's modest beginnings.

"It was the same old story. I worked out of the garage. When it got too cold, I moved into the basement," he said.

When business started picking up, he moved the company into a 5,000-square-foot unit, which quickly doubled to 10,000 square feet as he began adding staff to keep up with demand from customers in the United States and Europe.

With his third move, Mr. Cunningham purchased a 26,000-square-foot building in an industrial area in Aurora's south end.

But Alutron's history is not one that begins with the addition of one or two lucrative contracts.

Rather, it unfolded uneventfully over years, as a result of constant attention, Mr. Cunningham said.

"A business is like a building. It goes up block by block. It's been steady growth."

But with exporting to the United States representing 70 per cent of his business, he has felt the negative impact of a strong Canadian dollar and an ultra-competitive Chinese market.

Maintaining the 10-per-cent annual growth the company has enjoyed since its inception required some creativity. To do otherwise isn't an option, he said.

"Fifteen years ago, no one would have predicted China would become a manufacturing powerhouse.

"If you can't compete with your currency anymore, you have to compete with your intellect," he said.

With that in mind, he has been investing heavily in research and development the past two years.

He has filed dozens of patents all with the same goal in mind; delivering a better product to customers for the same price.

That, along with low employee turnover, has brought a level of stability to the business.

Tapping into new markets, seeking out more customers and constantly improving products is a long-standing business dictum: evolve or perish.

"Don't give up. There's going to be good days and bad days. One of the biggest mistakes business owners make is having a good year and then spending it all. You have to be prudent and run your business intelligently," Mr. Cunningham said.

When asked to peer into the future, he offered the expected measured response: he hopes to top up year-over-year sales to the U.S. and Europe.

"I don't have to be one of the biggest companies in York Region. I got into business to build a good solid business for myself, for my employees and for my family."

Mar 23/06

York trailblazer builds niche

BY PATRICK MANGION
Staff Writer

Willie Pelzer has never been one to follow the crowd.

The founder and president of Markham's Sunny Crunch Foods Inc. decided to enter the granola and fibre cereal business 35 years ago, long before Canadian consumers had embraced a bent for all things healthy.

So, where would a company, marching to the sound of its own drum in the early 1970s, establish itself?

For Mr. Pelzer, the answer was simple: York Region.

Mr. Pelzer looked north of Steeles Avenue and saw swaths of open land, more favourable lease and tax rates and a burgeoning community being settled by waves of immigrants.

With major transportation routes, customers and suppliers within reach and a growing pool of local labour, Thornhill became the company's first

home.

As demand steadily grew, operations were shifted east to Markham, where the company remains today.

Sunny Crunch has grown from a $5-million company five years ago to $25 million today.

The company manufactures about 200 products, including granola cereal, nutrition bars, sports nutrition bars and powders, energy and snack bars, protein powders and herbal capsules.

About 70 per cent of the company's products are sold in Canada, including major supermarket chains such as Sobey's and A&P.

However, Sunny Crunch products are also exported to the United States, England and Japan.

Mr. Pelzer knew growth into a national and international marketplace would set the foundation for the company's success.

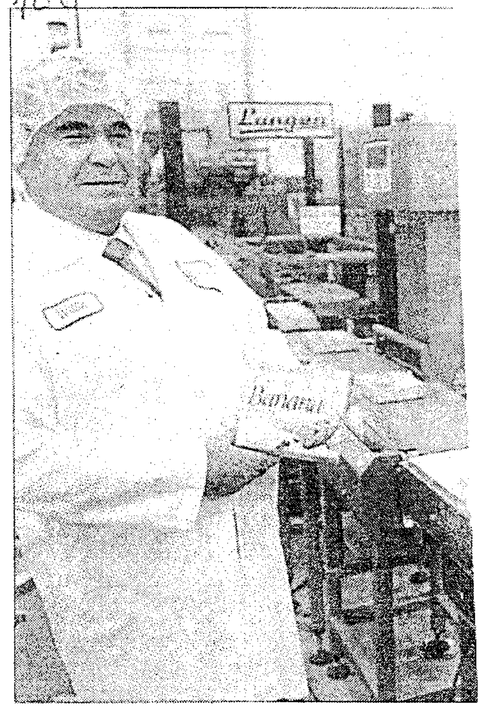
"When you make a product, you want it to be in retail stores," Mr. Pelzer said.

Little competition and a shift in Canadians' nutritional conscience stoked the company's early success.

However, continued success will rely on continued expansion in Canada and abroad and drawing on York's talent pool for more workers, Mr. Pelzer said.

But the company's future remains firmly entrenched in York Region.

"I happened to be in the market when Canadians demanded nutrition,"



Willie Pelzer, founder and president of Sun[...]
es as Susan Li packs product.

LL FARMING BE AFFORDABLE IN 2031?

STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

n Holtrop is angry and frustrated that despite farmers' week-long protest at Queen's Park, the provin- millions of dollars of government assistance to help his industry survive. Growth and government land atening their livelihood, they say.

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

Instead of the farm dog nipping at John Holtrop's heels, he's got houses and industry, not to mention traffic.

It takes Mr. Holtrop about 15 minutes to get out of the driveway of his Woodbine Avenue farm, where he grows corn soybeans, wheat, canola, hay, turnip and carrots on 4,000 acres of owned and rented land.

His operation stretches from Sutton to Aurora.

Even though the industry has a $95-billion impact on Canada, the farm's in serious trouble.

During peak times, about 1,600 cars an hour go past Mr. Holtrop's driveway. When he's not counting cars, he's looking at the land across the road.

"It's zoned for industrial development," he said.

When Mr. Holtrop started farming in Keswick in 1964, urban sprawl was not in his vocabulary.

There was no need for buzz words. His was a farmer's life.

In keeping with tradition, Mr. Holtrop planned to spend his old age where he spent his youth — on the farm.

Now approaching 60, Mr. Holtrop has good reason to re-think his plan.

Within the next 25 years, York

Last week: Economics of growth

TODAY: Growing green

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April 13: Livable lifestyles

April 20: Getting around

Visit **www.yorkregion.com** for more information

Today's key agricultural questions are: will farm lands be sacrificed to accommodate people and will anyone be able to afford to farm in 2031?

Does it make any sense to build up the nutrient values and humus content of the soil when, in a decade or two, it might be stripped of top soil because of development?

Crop rotation today is often corn, wheat and then houses.

"That third rotation is permanent," Mr. Holtrop pointed out.

Most farmers are torn. Depressed pricing has knocked the wind out of the industry nationwide, resulting in many farm bankruptcies.

Even though the industry has a $95-billion impact on Canada, the farm's in serious trouble.

While many farmers predict the industry's problems will eventually threaten the availability and quality of our food, governments don't seem to be listening.

"If the agriculture problem can't be fixed, development could be an option for us," Mr. Holtrop said.

"But, with the Greenbelt (legislation) in place, why should I, as a farmer, have to take the hit on value? It's basically

wildlife, why can't they, at least, pay me for what I'm producing? We, as a society, have to learn how to value our land and our food wildlife, why can't they, at least, pay me for what I'm producing? We, as a society, have to learn how to value our land and our food production and be prepared to pay for it. We're not asking for mega-bucks. Just let us make a living."

Of course, every level of government has its hand in the pie: many of York Region's 1,000 farms, making up about 175,000 acres, are now protected under both the Greenbelt Act and the Oak Ridges Moraine Act.

Meanwhile, the provincial Places to Grow Act targets Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Newmarket as areas where growth will be intensified during the next 25 years, Bryan Tuckey, the region's planning and development commissioner, said.

"The more we intensify, the less countryside and farmland will be used for housing," Mr. Tuckey stressed. "Development will be in compact, higher growth areas where there is existing development."

Still, neither Mr. Tuckey nor John Waller, the region's director of long-range planning, can guarantee farms, including those in Keswick, will not eventually be lost to development.

Farm numbers are going down already.

In 1991, there were 1,210 farms in York Region, while in 2001, the figure dropped to 1,020.

Agriculture continues to be a critical part of York Region's economy, government officials maintain.

"Look at our horse industry alone," Mr. Waller said. "With about 20,000 horses on 1,500 (equestrian) farms, York Region has the highest concentration of horses in Ontario."

Part 4 — Healthy communities

Want a doctor? Order pizza

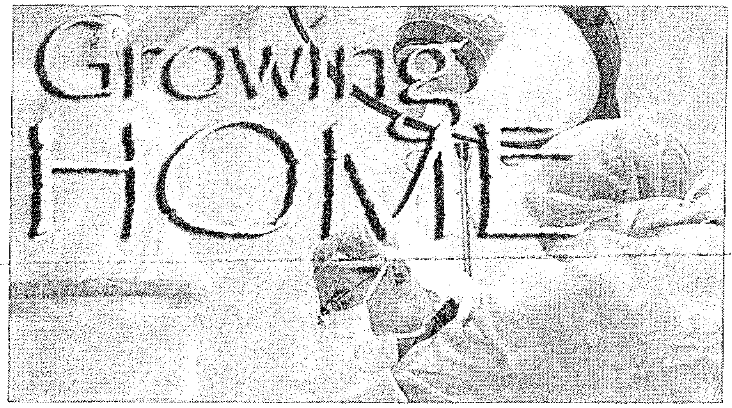
Foreign doctors not allowed to practise, Tory MP Klees says

BY MICHAEL POWER
Staff Writer

A warning for those contemplating a move to York Region: if you think the area will offer a healthier lifestyle than Toronto in the coming decades, think twice.

With the region's population expected to hit 1.5 million people by 2031, expect more pressure on health services, including the ratio of doctors to patients.

You might also see longer commutes and worsening air and water quality, as well as less



In this comprehensive series discus the region's burgeoning growth and how best to manage it, we will disc the following topics:

March 16: Planning for growth

March 23: Economics of growth

March 30: Growing green

TODAY: Healthy communities

April 13: Livable lifestyles

April 20: Getting around

If you missed an earlier topic, check out at www.yorkregion.com

luck finding recreational area where you can exercise such as parks.

Landing more doctors will help service the region's expanding population. But finding those doctors will take a better effort on the part of the province, Georgina Mayor Rob Grossi said.

"I think they are doing things that need to be done (to employ more doctors)," Mr. Grossi said. "But they are things that should have been done 10 or 12 yea ago. So now we're playing cat up – these kinds of things do happen overnight."

That includes ensuring do tors who come here from ove seas can get accredited Ontario and start practisin here as soon as possible.

The province has alread dubbed Georgina an undersc viced area for doctors and pr vided the municipality wi funds to help fix the problem.

That has put the town in th unique position of being able actively scout for health ca workers, Mayor Grossi said. F example, two nurse practition ers have recently started work ing at the Georgina Medic Centre and another is sched uled to start soon.

"There's a lot of work bein done in the Town of Georgina t attract doctors," he said. "We'v been very proactive over the las few years and even more so i the last few months."

But advertising for new doc tors – and attracting them to rural areas – remains a work i

See NEIGHBOURHOODS, page A3.

Growing HOME

INTERSECTIONS

Key intersections harbingers of change

Mar 16, 2006
By Chris Traber, Staff Writer

The northeast corner of Hwy. 7 and Mair as it looked 50 years ago.

Crossroads is an apt term for York Region's intersections; they tend to make a lot of people cross.

And sad.

Whether it's ire resulting from the increased traffic or melancholy for places and spaces long gone, longtime residents all have somber recollections of what was.

Lorne Smith, 69, was born, raised and continues to live in the rural environs north of Markham. As the town's official historian, his interest in growth is both personal and scholarly.

Using a map he co-produced, he illustrates how concession roads running north and south first carved by new arrivals remain the main transport arteries today. All major roadways were exactly a mile and quarter apart in both directions to border 1,000-acre land parcels.

In the early 1800s five families worked the parcels. In the 1900s, 10 families farmed 100 acres each. Today, the same acreage supports between 2,000 and 5,000 homes.

Urban sprawl makes intersections once familiar and convenient virtually ghost roads, Mr. Smith said, adding he attended school at Colty's Corners, now Kennedy Road and Major Mackenzie Drive.

"There were stores and merchants there, people gathered, shopped and talked," he said. "With more people, the shopping areas moved to Markham and Unionville beginning in the 1950s. Stores closed. Only the school is still there."

The commercial shift to Hwy. 7 and intersections at McCowan Road and Hwy. 48 spelled the end for most country corner stores and gathering places.

"It saddens me," Mr. Smith said. "There was a tremendous sense of community around these intersections. It's almost impossible to know your neighbours nowadays."

Craig Benson and wife, Iris, have raised four children in Markham since arriving in 1987.

An expanse of unspoiled countryside started at 16th Line and Kennedy and there was a farm at the southwest corner of Kennedy and Carleton, Mr. Benson recalled.

"Those intersections were like an oasis in what was a small town beginning to grow," he said. "We'd walk and bike in and around there. Now it's a plaza and homes. Development in Markham doesn't anger me. It does bother me."

Longtime Unionville resident Rafik Bechbache has observed the changes from his medical practice at Main Street south and Unionville Gate.

"It's getting busier," he said of the traffic. "The morning line-up is just packed on Main coming from (Hwy.) 7. McCowan, Kennedy and Warden is bumper to bumper. Brutal."

The changes around the intersection just north of at Hwy. 7 are indicative of how growth has gentrified what was a rural setting. Gone is the corner gas station. The bank is closed. Nearby Unionville Fairways, an 18-hole golf facility where Dr. Bechbache's children learned to play, is gone.

"I've been here since 1985," the physician said. "We've lost the old, small town feel."

Markham Museum curatorial services supervisor Marie Jones resides in nearby Heritage Estates, a collection of rejuvenated century homes.

"Everywhere you look, four corners always had a connection with the villages and hamlets around them," she said. "They've almost all disappeared. The speed of today's traffic is too fast and these intersections are no longer a place to stop and do business. Growth has benefits but it's also affecting our cultural landscape."

The intersection of Hwy. 7 and Markham Road, once a peaceful corner bordering the former fairgrounds and a church, was a jog in the road during the 1950s, Ms Jones said. Hwy. 7 was straightened to accommodate traffic flow and is now mostly populated by vehicles and few pedestrians.

Thornhill wireless media executive producer Renata Richardson and her family have been residents for 22 years. Bayview Avenue and John Street is a key crossroad for shopping, recreation and travel.

"When we first moved here it was a relatively quiet intersection," she said. "It was quaint and we'd often walk there. Now, it's a busy hub and not conducive for a stroll."

Richmond Hill resident Cora Donnelly recounts weekend jaunts to Maple where Rutherford Road and Keele Street meet. The corner and its amenities appealed to her European culture.

"It was an eclectic mix of small town Ontario and Old World shops," she said. "It was leisurely and peaceful. You could park, walk in any direction and enjoy the shops and sights. Today it's built up and hectic and the concentration of cafes and stores are gone."

INTERSECTIONS Archive

- Key intersections harbingers of change Crossroads is an apt term for York Region's inte tend to make a lot of people cross. And sad. Whether it's ire resulting from...

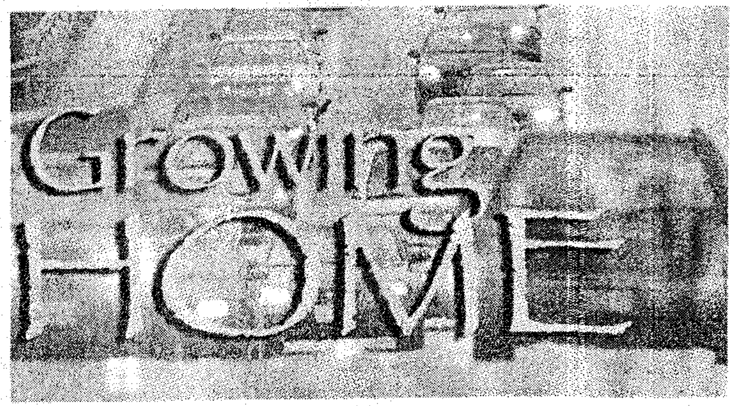
- Past often gets lost on road to future For some, it's the memory of King Road being lined For others, it's the memory of being able to cross Yonge Street...

A 6-PART SERIES DELVING INTO YORK REGION'S PLANS TO TACKLE GROWTH

Part 6 — Getting around

Suburban traffic design doesn't work: planners

BY CAROLINE GRECH
Staff Writer



Traffic.

Just mention it in York Region these days and watch the reaction.

With traffic at intersections such as Yonge Street and Wellington Road in Aurora or anywhere along Hwy. 7 crawling along, commuters are frustrated.

An Environics survey in 2004 showed 32 per cent of York residents said traffic and insufficient roadways were their biggest concerns related to growth, followed by 21 per cent who answered transportation and public transit.

But that doesn't necessarily mean they plan on riding a bus anytime soon.

Alan Eisenstat has a 45-minute drive to work every day and is unimpressed with the traffic situation.

"It's horrendous all over the GTA," Mr. Eisenstat said, adding he hasn't taken public transit in years and probably never will despite traffic headaches.

"It's inconvenient because of the distance between places. When I lived in Waterloo, I took (public transit) all the time because it was smaller," Mr. Eisenstat said.

The fact York Region's population is going to grow by 600,000 to 1.5 million people by 2031 is no secret.

But if those 600,000 people bring an equal amount of cars with them, it can only get worse.

Much worse.

The original design of suburban life was built around residents driving cars, but that design is no longer feasible, planners say.

"It's been a fine model for a long time until congestion caught up with it. It's not sustainable. We have to have a different model than having a three-car family," said Mary-Frances Turner, vice-president of York Region Rapid Transit corporation.

To help create that new model, York Region planners are taking a different approach to transit by promoting a more feasible alternative to the car.

See **TRANSIT**, *page A5.*

Transit users on rise: York

From **page A1.**

To help create that new model, York Region planners are taking a different approach to transit by promoting a more feasible alternative to the car.

In September 2005, the region launched Viva transit, a state-of-the-art rapid bus system, complete with 85 buses with five more to be added by completion.

By building better service, the region is hoping residents will rely more heavily on transit and make it a part of their daily routine.

If you want to point blame for York's transit woes, Ms Turner says the finger should be pointed at a lack of capital investments rather than the lack of planning that allowed York Region to fall into congestion.

"Our transit investments have not kept pace with growth here," Ms Turner admitted, adding 10 years ago, the federal and provincial governments weren't even on the map when it came to investing in transit.

But getting people to take public transit may be a bigger challenge than regional planners think.

"How are you going to get me out of my car?" Richmond Hill resident William Litterst, 27, asked, adding the convenience of owning a car isn't something he wants to give up.

Mr. Litterst works in Aurora, puts about 50,000 kilometres a year on his car traveling for business and said because he is comfortable with a nice car, he isn't getting on public transit anytime soon.

As for the region's plans for rapid transit, Mr. Litterst thinks the region is heading in the right direction to combat growth and believes a rail system will go a long way to helping people get out of their cars.

Long waits and jams aren't the only impact increased traffic and congestion has on neighbourhoods, according to Aurora resident Jacquie Chepurnyj.

Ms Chepurnyj grew up here and resents transit as an interruption to once quiet neighbourhoods.

"It's bottlenecked on Yonge, which is unfortunate because people are taking the side streets and it's affecting residential neighbourhoods," Ms Chepurnyj said.

For some, the situation in Toronto and the GTA has reached a point where, during peak hours, traffic lineups mirror gridlock in larger American cities.

Jeff Pi who has lived in American urban centres such as Los Angeles and

Seattle sees similarities between the two countries.

"It (traffic congestion) may stretch for more miles in the U.S., but the congestion is the same, just for a smaller distance."

While some will stick to their cars, the numbers look good for those taking transit.

'How are you going to get me out of my car?'

Additional Viva buses expected by the end of the year are being added to cope with extra people taking Viva in the first year.

Viva's ridership numbers have increased more than 20 per cent from 4.4 million riders to 5.3 million, according to the region.

There are 100 kilometres in the four major urban centres within the region and the goal is to have 67 kilometres of that within designated bus lanes, Ms Turner explained.

Ottawa — the first city in Canada to adopt a model of rapid transit — has set the tone for how to create better transportation, learning what works well and incorporating it, Ms Turner said.

Learning what doesn't work well is also what the Ottawa system taught planners at York Regio and that is why York planners want to take buses off thighwa and streets and into designated b lanes, Ms Turner added.

Rapid bus service, however, isn't the only way regional planners want to ht congestion.

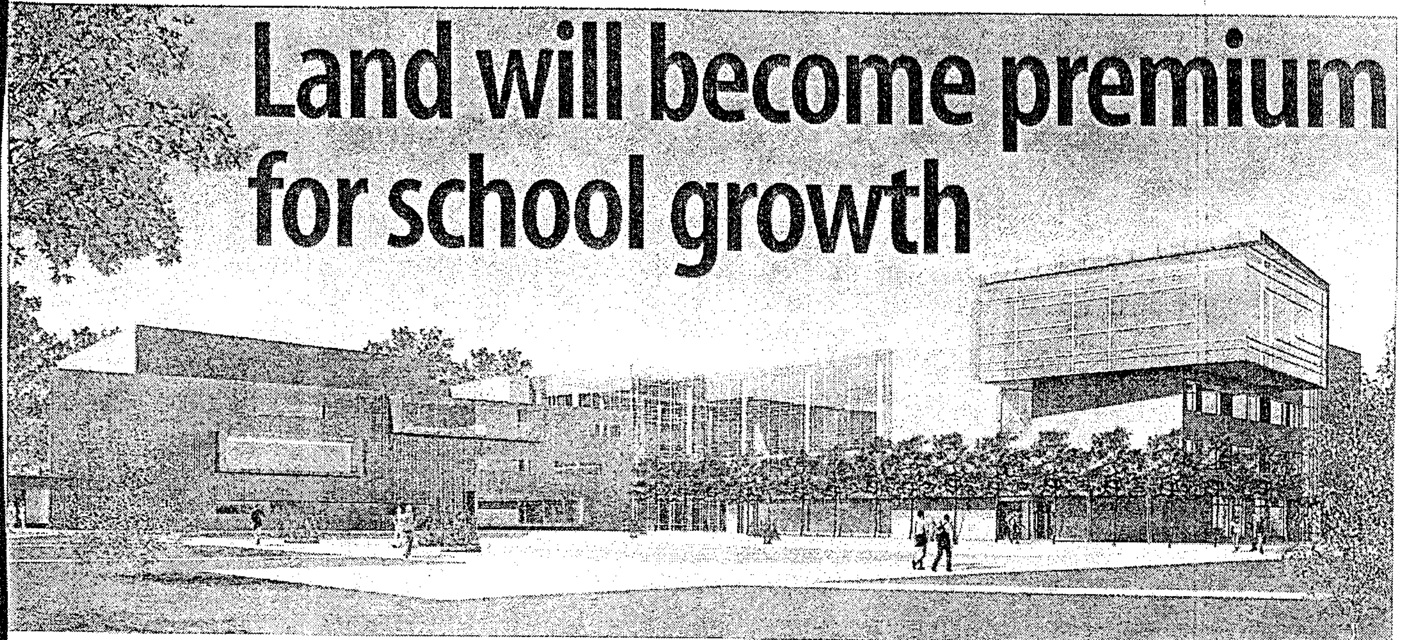
A recent funding announceme for an extension of the university sway line beyond York University and the Vaughan Corporate Centre al goes together with the region's rapi transit plans.

Regional planners are awaig funding for the region's second pl e of the rapid transit plan, which w include designated bus lanes in the c tre of the roadway.

Rapid transit lanes re always intended to take into acco t subway or light rail trains, Ms Turner plained.

Whether the region oves ahead with light rail transit de nds on how soon another announce ent will follow to announce funding f a Yonge Street subway line, Ms Tur r said, adding Yonge is the area wit the highest volume of traffic and th plan was always to look to an option ch as light rail by about 2008.

Land will become premium for school growth



Land will become an issue for any projects involving the building of schools in the future, especially if 1.5 million people are expected to move to York Region by 2031. Markham Centre will be the newest school when it opens in 2008.

BY TERESA LATCHFORD
Staff Writer

If you think your school is already crowded, how do you suppose it will cope with more students?

With the expected 600,000 population increase in the region, about one-third will be children. Those children will need an education, which a lot more schools.

Equipped with a five-year capital strategy, dealing with growth is nothing new for the board's strategic planning department or the board. It has been building four to eight new schools per year, according to Jane Ross, manager of land use and planning at the York Region District School Board.

"If there are land limitations on

Growing HOME

(areas such as) the Oak Ridges Moraine or the proposed intensification areas, we will just have to get creative and work with everyone involved to come up with a solution," she added.

An elementary school requires six acres and a secondary school needs 15 to 18 acres, she added. But if, for example, there was only four acres of land available to build an elementary school, options would be explored to make it work.

"If possible, we would share a municipal park to make up the extra two acres," Ms Ross explained. "So a portion of the public park would be doubled as a school play yard."

Finding sites should not be a problem the school board foresees, because when a developer purchases land to build a subdivision, the board has the right to buy a portion to build a school.

"To predict how many pupil places a school will need, we do extensive research and monitor demographic trends," she said.

Planners need to know who is living in these areas to know the school capacity they will need. For example, some cultures have only one or two children per family while others have five or six, she said.

In the case of the region's high-growth areas where high-rise buildings will accommodate more people with less land, building a school becomes a challenge.

"High density yields a lower number of kids, but the cumulative impact is huge," Ms Ross said.

Multi-use buildings should be a consideration to tackle the issue of education in intensified areas, according to Dan McCowell, senior manager of administrative services at the York Catholic District School Board.

"There are schools in Toronto that are part of a complex or on the ground floor of an apartment building," Mr. McCowell added.

"If this is the case, the site requi ments would need to be adjusted."

The enrolment cycle of a n school operates at capacity in the fi six to 10 years, but thenenrolme decreases, maintaining a plateau student population.

To deal with increases, portables used as temporary structures.

The planning department at t public board needs to know from wh and where houses are being built, s plan requirements and impact existing schools.

If a current facility cannot acco modate extra students, school boar adjustments, additions, overflow another school and the temporary of portables are all examined.

SCHOOL FACTS

According to the 2001 Census:

- **170,000:** Number of youth aged five to in the region;
- **220,700:** Estimated number of student by 2016;
- **248,700:** Estimated number of student by 2031;
- **19.7 per cent:** Number of York resident with a university degree. The provincial aver age was 15 per cent.

York Region at a glance.

- **Student population:** 108,000 student
- **Number of schools:** 145 elementary a 29 secondary;

York Catholic District School Board

- **Number of schools:** 80 elementary and 13 secondary;
- **Student population:** 53,628 students