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From: Joseph.Jimenez@ca.ey.com [mailto:Joseph.Jimenez@ca.ey.com]

Sent: Wednesday, June 09, 2004 2:07 PM

To: dbarrow@richmondhill.ca

Cc: lynnkfoster@rogers.com; Transitinfo

Subject: A transit user's views regarding a petition that will be presented to you

Dear Mr. Barrow,

I would like to say "thank you" and applaud the actions of the Transit Committee for recent initiatives that will undoubtedly improve the York Region Transit system. It gives me great pride knowing that our elected representatives are committed to making public transportation both accessible and practical for the residents of Richmond Hill.

Recent changes to the "Mill Pond" bus service, now known as the "Route 240 - Mill Pond GO Shuttle," have made the route even more accessible to residents who need to use either the "Yonge Street" service to Finch, or the GO-Train to Union Station. As a passenger of this route, not having to drive and park at the Richmond Hill GO-Train station makes the hour-long commute to Union Station and the hour-long return home easier. Given time, more and more residents will find this service practical and will give up the use of their cars to get to the GO-Train station.

It has come to my attention that a resident will be submitting a petition with the intent of either stopping this service, or as a concession, proposing a re-route of the service.

When you receive this petition, please consider that there are a number of passengers whom this proposal will affect. Also, please consider that the residents who have signed this petition were probably not given all the details-- I would even argue that given the following 'facts,' they would change their position.

Why a petition has been created:

The resident who has started this petition lives on Ellery Drive. Prior to the creation of "Route 240", the route used to be known as "Route 1A" or "Route 81 Mill Pond." Early last month, the route was modified to include Ellery Drive, Regent St., and Elgin Mills -- prior to this, the bus used Bathurst Street (which is quite a long walk for passengers that live further down Regent).

Myths that might be presented in the Petition

Myth: The bus will create traffic congestion for residents on Ellery Drive

Fact: The bus only travels in one direction and only during rush hour periods. This means 4 buses in the morning (every 1/2 hour), and 5 extra buses in the evening. I have observed no change in traffic patterns nor an increase in the levels of congestion on Ellery Drive. Also consider that the bus doesn't run on weekends or holidays.

Myth: These buses generate excessive pollution

Fact: These buses would run regardless if they use Ellery Drive, so the fact they generate excessive pollution can be dismissed.

Also consider the reduction in the number of cars that drive to the GO-Train. Again, given time, as more residents use this service, the pollution generated would be less.

Myth: The bus is loud

Fact: If sound is such an issue, why only stop the York Region Transit buses? As I wait for the bus on Ellery & Regent St., I count 3 School Buses (within my 5 minute waiting period) that pass by. These School Buses generate the same levels of noise as does a York Region Transit Bus, so how is this different? When you add in the sound of garbage trucks, modified sports cars, and lawn mowers, the noise from a York Region Transit Bus is no different.

Myth: Only 2 people take this bus.

Fact: I estimate 35-45 passengers (one-way) take the "Route 240." You can confirm this number by looking at the fare box. Currently, 5-7 riders disembark on Ellery Drive. Two of these riders have never used the bus before, and started taking the bus after the route changes were announced. Given additional time, more residents who drive to the GO-Train will find the shuttle service more convenient.

Why I, and the passengers of "Route 240" do not support this Petition

Everyone has an opinion, and I'm sure the resident who has started this petition will present some valid arguments. As our representative on this transit committee, it is your duty to ensure that the current and future Public Transit needs of our community is satisfied.

When you look at the big picture, the benefit from providing this service to the community should outweigh the complaints from a single resident. The modifications to the Shuttle Service, that allow the bus to travel along Ellery / Regent / Elgin Mills, satisfy the needs of the community -- It gives transit access to parts of the community that would not have had any service at all. The resident who has started the petition hasn't put into consideration the members of our community who actually use and depend on this service. How can a person who does not use the Transit system adequately assess both the need for transit, and the impact of transit on our community? Additionally, the route as it stands to-date, is the most practical -- this is common sense, re-routing to Bathurst would alienate a number of residents & future passengers from a service that is paid for with our Tax dollars.

Mr. Barrow, all I am really asking from you is that when you receive the petition, that you consider the views of the residents who use this service. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter in greater detail. Also, if you could please forward this message to any of your colleagues who will be looking into this matter, it would be greatly appreciated.

Thank You,

(signed)

Joseph Jimenez

Resident of Richmond Hill