

should pay more

Re: 2-zone rider system riles riders, Jan. 25.

A two-zone fare system is more than reasonable and, if anything, the premium should be higher than \$1.

A trip from Major Mackenzie Drive to the Finch Avenue subway station is 10 kilometres and costs \$2.75. The income YRT receives from this trip is, therefore, 27.5 cents/km for each passenger.

A trip from Davis Drive to the Finch station is 30 km and costs \$3.75. The income YRT receives from this trip is 12.5 cents/km per passenger.

Even though commuters in the north end of York Region pay a higher fare, their bus ride is actually a substantially higher burden on the system than those who live closer to Steeles Avenue.

If YRT charged a flat rate of 27.5 cents/km, the trip to Finch from Newmarket would cost \$8.25. So, you see, \$3.75 is quite a bargain.

Residents in the north end of the region should be grateful they only pay an extra dollar to ride the bus. If the fare structure changes, they are almost guaranteed to pay a higher fare.

If anything, those in zone 1 should be furious they, effectively, pay twice as much to ride YRT as those up north.

JONATHAN WARD
RICHMOND HILL

\$1 transit premium not fair

Re: 2-zone rider system riles riders, Jan. 25.

By no means do I think the \$1 premium is fair.

People are crossing an imaginary line that, apparently, opens up a two-tiered bus system.

Most of us are up in arms over the possibility of a two-tier health care system and this is little different, of course, in scale.

Instead of a \$2.75/\$3.75 fare differential, why not make it \$3.25 for everyone? Because people in Oak Ridges and south would be outraged at paying such a high fare.

If I were on the TTC, I could travel from one end of Toronto to the other, say from Steeles West to Union Station, all for one fare.

It may not be exactly as far as Newmarket to Finch, but it's definitely farther than Newmarket to Oak Ridges.

No extra fare has to be paid there. Viva needs to get its priorities in order and stop taking us for a ride.

ANDREW GADSBY

for innovation

Re: Son's \$150 fine ludicrous, mother says, Jan. 11.

Viva Rapid Transit is recognized internationally for its innovation and service.

Viva operates using a proof-of-payment fare system where passengers obtain/validate tickets at curb-side fare machines before boarding our vehicles. It is the passenger's responsibility to purchase the necessary ticket for their trip.

Viva's fare enforcement teams are a crucial part of our system, inspecting vehicles and educating passengers 20 hours a day, seven days a week.

They ensure passengers taking Viva have rightfully paid for a ticket and are not abusing the system.

Enforcement teams also ensure your security, providing assistance to passengers and ensuring riders are being respectful of fellow travellers.

Contrary to comments in previous letters, we pride ourselves on our excellent customer service and encourage customer comment on all aspects of our service.

Unfortunately, though, once a charge is issued, we do not have the authority to reverse it.

To attack our integrity and customer service is in poor taste and irresponsible.

Over the past several years, the region has taken giant leaps forward to make our transit system an industry leader.

Viva has been in existence for only 16 months. More than 69,000 individuals depend on YRT/Viva daily, a number growing every week.

For more information, go to www.yrt.ca or call us at 1-866-668-3978, TTY 1-866-276-7478.

BRUCE MACGREGOR
COMMISSIONER OF
TRANSPORTATION AND WORKS
YORK REGION

We need to be aware of dangers in society

Re: Mosque welcome, extremist not, neighbour says, Jan. 25.

Mosque leader Zafar Bangash is a detriment to Canadian society and its values. How is it this man is even allowed to be in Canada?

Anyone who supports the evil president of Iran and is anti-American and anti-Jewish does not deserve Canada's hospitable environment.

How do we know he won't try to brainwash young local men into becoming Islamic terrorists?

We need to be aware of the dangers to our communities of having any Islamic church leader

eties and the values our society cherishes.

R.GEE
AURORA

Why not build mosque?

Re: Mosque welcome, extremist not, neighbour says, Jan. 25.

How sad to see such blatant discrimination and narrow-mindedness here in Newmarket.

The context "a mosque is welcome" appears several times, but is contradicted throughout the article by the inability of George Cunningham to separate religion from politics.

This seems more like a case of "not in my back yard", especially since Mr. Cunningham seems to complain as much about the mosque as the imam. "Why is he building a mosque in Newmarket? Where are the Muslim families?"

Why should Muslim families be punished for Mr. Bangash's political leanings?

Church and politics have nothing to do with each other, as reaffirmed in the closing statement by Mr. Bangash.

Why build a mosque in Newmarket? Why not?

Newmarket is becoming a regional hub and has many other religions represented, so why not Muslims, too?

PHIL PARSONS
NEWMARKET

Mosque article one-sided

Re: Mosque welcome, extremist not, neighbour says, Jan. 25.

I found this article disturbingly one-sided because it relies almost completely on the lopsided opinion of George Cunningham.

Although it notes Zafar Bangash did not return calls, that is no excuse for presenting one side.

Political views are no reason to restrict religious freedom. The article takes a simplistic view of any critique of Israeli or American actions in the Middle East as anti-Semitic and anti-American.

It's certainly good to note local laws protect the right of individuals, but disturbing neighbours such as Mr. Cunningham are so judgmental and close-minded.

There is not an ounce of evidence to suggest Mr. Bangash supports violent or illegal actions.

Mr. Bangash may be lopsided in his own views, but he does seem very much against violence.

Holding public hearings shows this area has a great deal of work ahead to combat racist, fearful views from unfairly impacting the enjoyment of freedoms by individuals.

STEVE JESSOP