

Ward 1 2020 Capital Projects

Markham is a well-managed city with great staff and services. In addition to providing efficient day-to-day operations, I think it is important for residents and local businesses to know that in 2020 the city **invested \$30.3M in Thornhill** through a host of capital project improvements.

Here's the Top 15:

Project Name	Amount
1 West Thornhill Flood Control Implementation: Phase 3A Construction & Watermain Replacement between Yonge and Johnson Streets south of Clark Avenue and north of Glen Cameron Road and Proctor Avenue, and surrounding Laureleaf Road bordered by Steeles and Bayview Avenues	\$22,496,100
2 Grandview Park New Construction (skateboard zone, splash pad, playground with improved accessibility features, a pavilion building with washrooms, and other related landscape improvements)	\$1,843,000
3 Grandview & Dudley Avenues Sidewalk Program Design & Construction (deferred to 2021)	\$1,500,000
4 Willowbrook Road, Carnegie Crescent & Henderson Avenue (Grandview to Steeles) Asphalt Resurfacing/Concrete Restoration	\$1,382,800
5 German Mills Meadow Environmental Monitoring Program	\$330,400
6 Tributary to East Don River Downstream Improvements Program Design for 3 Thornhill locations east of Henderson bounded by Steeles and Proctor Avenues	\$319,100
7 Storm Sewer Pipes - Rehabilitation: Langstaff Road, Cricklewood Park, Henderson Avenue, easement beside 56 Almond Avenue, Baywood Court	\$297,738
8 Court Resurfacing at Duncan Park, Johnsvie Village and Thornlea	\$252,790
9 Block Pruning of city trees across Thornhill	\$237,175
10 German Mills Settlers Park Watercourse Erosion Protection	\$223,900
11 Pomona Mills Park Replacement of Stairs	\$207,295
12 New Floodlight Poles & Cross Arms for Huntington Park	\$176,500
13 Stairway Repairs connecting Romfield Circuit and Knotty Pine Trail	\$157,000
14 Pomona Mills Park Bridge Rehabilitation	\$121,440
15 German Mills Meadow Equipment Maintenance	\$110,100

Proposed New Development: Shouldice Hospital Lands



7750 Bayview Conceptual Rendering (Subject to Change)

The city is now in receipt of complete Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications, submitted by 7750 Bayview Avenue Limited Partnership, for the 9.07 hectares (22.4 acres) of Shouldice Hospital lands at 7750 Bayview Avenue. The land was purchased in March 2019 by Liberty Development for an estimated \$85M. With the hospital continuing to operate under a leased arrangement for 16 more years, the development proposal outlines a long-term approach with four directional (north, south, east and west) phases.

The North Block (Phase I) application before us now proposes:

- The development of 1,287 residential units shared between 3 buildings (5 towers) ranging between 18 and 35 storeys
- Gross Floor Area* of 11,712 m2 (1,202,457 ft2), and
- A total of 858 below ground parking spaces, located within three parking levels, and 12 surface parking spaces

Redevelopment of the South Block (where Shouldice Hospital is located) and the East Block (bordering Bayview Avenue) will be the subject of future development applications. Details of what is planned are not known at this time. The original house built for Toronto financier C. George McCullagh in 1937 which now forms part of Shouldice Hospital is a heritage asset listed on the Markham Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The West Block is proposed to remain undeveloped greenspace.

We are at the very beginning of a lengthy planning process and far from making a decision on this application. There will be opportunities for all Ward 1 residents to comment on what is being proposed at a future Statutory Public Meeting and a Community Information Meeting (hosted by me). Dates and venues (in-person and/or virtual) for both are still to be determined.

*GFA: The total property square footage of the buildings including all inside finished areas.



FALL 2020/WINTER 2021

WARD 1 NEWS



UPDATE FROM KEITH IRISH, YOUR MARKHAM WARD 1 COUNCILLOR

Dear Residents,

When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit, I immediately turned to a book I read seven years ago called *The Defining Moment* by Jonathan Alter.

The book examines Franklin Roosevelt's first 100 days as president in 1932 during the depths of the Great Depression. I chose to reacquaint myself with it knowing that upon assuming office in 2009, during the greatest economic crisis of our time until now, President Obama insisted his team read it and absorb its lessons.

It's the story of how at one of the darkest moments in history, FDR demonstrated the power of versatile thinking and brilliant instincts for leadership to rescue his country and its form of government from impending doom.

This year, more than most, has taught us the real costs and consequences of feckless leadership. Sadly, we do not have to look too far - within and outside Canada - to see evidence of it. Crises have a way of magnifying errors in judgment and also bringing out the best in people including our political, business, healthcare and philanthropic leaders. Solid political talent has always been a central part of good leadership.

I have been fortunate to be a participant in shaping how our city has responded to this public health crisis. I've drawn upon my 20-plus years as a business owner and consultant to organizations experiencing change to help guide me. That experience has included working with companies just starting

up, managing mergers/acquisitions, coping with corporate turnarounds and those fortunate enough to be meeting the challenges of high-growth.

As your Ward Councillor I've also had a front row seat to observe how the city's senior leadership have supported and helped guide Council through these last several months. While I have not always agreed with the direction, emphasis and timing of some of what we have done, I hope you agree that as citizens of Markham you have been well-served.

I also echo what **Mayor Scarpitti** has said many times and continues to: *"We must guard against any false sense of security. The pandemic is not over. I'm proud of our collective efforts so far and ask that we keep up the good work while being ever vigilant and moving cautiously."*

To keep up-to-date please visit my Councillor web page at www.markham.ca > "About The City of Markham" > "City Council" > "Regional & Ward Councillors" > "Ward 1 Councillor Keith Irish". You can sign-up for my electronic newsletter there and even follow me on Twitter for more frequent updates. You **do not need** a Twitter account to do so.

If you have an issue of concern please contact me at kirish@markham.ca / 905-948-5101 or my Executive Assistant Lauren Patton at lpatton@markham.ca / 905-415-7512.

I wish you, your family and friends continued good health and a better New Year.

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Speeding, Dangerous Driving, Loud Mufflers

Lauren and I receive plenty of complaints of dangerous driving and cars with loud exhaust systems especially since the onset of the pandemic.

When this happens, I encourage you to do one or all of the following:

- Call the York Regional Police (YRP) non-emergency line: **1-866-876-5423**
- File a "Community Concern" report online with YRP at: www.yrp.ca/en/online-reporting/Report-a-Community-Concern.asp
- File a "Road Watch Complaint" report online with YRP at: www.yrp.ca/en/online-reporting/Road-Watch.asp

This newsletter is distributed using Canada Post walks; a small number of Ward 8 residents may also receive this.



Contact Centre

If you have an issue regarding municipal services, programs and general inquiries (by-law complaints, garbage pick-up, graffiti, illegal dumping, property standards, park maintenance) please contact the city at **905-477-5530** or customerservice@markham.ca.



Check out "Ward 1 Talk" on YouTube to see me talk about issues important to you while promoting local businesses and places of interest.



New 2020 Videos!



Improving Pedestrian Safety

I am very pleased to announce that new traffic control signals at Steeles Avenue East and Waggoners Wells Lane (in Thornhill) were approved by Toronto City Council in June.

This comes as welcomed news by those Thornhill residents in the **German Mills community** having to cross five lanes of Steeles Avenue traffic at this location to catch public transit. I worked closely with my Toronto counterpart Councillor Shelley Carroll, her staff and Toronto Transportation Services over several months to convince them of the need.

Steeles Avenue, including the northside boulevard, is under the jurisdiction of Toronto and any changes require support of the local councillor, approval first by the North York Community Council, and then City Council. This is a great example of cross-border cooperation that will improve pedestrian safety for the benefit of both Markham and Toronto residents.

I continue to work on improvements, including a dedicated eastbound left turn signal, a little further west at Fairway Heights Drive and Steeles Avenue.

Let There Be Light



Welcome to Grandview

It's the little things in our community that while they may sometimes go unnoticed contribute to the unique character, attractiveness and welcoming nature of our neighbourhoods.

That is why I am especially pleased to announce that the underground cables servicing the two decorative lights at the gates to our **Grandview neighbourhood** at Henderson and Steeles Avenues have, after many years, been repaired and the lights once again shine brightly.

Special thanks go to members of the executive of the Grandview Area Residents Association (GARA) for bringing the issue to my attention. If you live in the Grandview area, bordered from Yonge to Bayview and

Steeles to the CN Railway line, and are interested in working to improve the community please consider joining GARA. Membership is just \$10/ household a year. Information can be found on their website: www.thornhillgara.com.

Winter Maintenance Snow Clearing

With winter soon upon us and the end of another year approaching fast (none too fast for most of us!), I want to remind everyone of the city's snow clearing protocols.

Arterial roads (like Yonge Street, Bayview Avenue and Leslie Street) that carry large volumes of traffic are salted and/or plowed until pavement is bare 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the winter season. Primary roads (like John Street, Green Lane, Royal Orchard Blvd., Henderson Avenue, Romfield Circuit, Willowbrook Road, Laureleaf Road, Huntington Park Drive, Summerdale Drive, Simonston Blvd. etc.) distribute traffic to both city and York Region arterial roads. They provide access to schools, churches, community centres and industrial/commercial areas and are maintained in the same way.

Secondary roads distribute traffic onto primary roads. They include roads with extreme hills, curves and access points and are salted and/or plowed as required until the centre width of the pavement is bare 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., 7 days per week throughout the winter season.

Local roads generally carry very low volumes of traffic and are plowed when snow accumulations reach or exceed 7.5 centimetres. If the snowfall is continuing, plowing will begin once snowfall ceases or accumulations exceed 12 centimetres. Normal plowing operations may take approximately 16 hours. Snow plowing will continue until all local roads are completed.

During snowstorms, Markham's Winter Maintenance App - available on the city's website - shows the progress of road and sidewalk plows across the city as we work hard and fast to keep Markham moving.

Windrow Removal

A windrow is the pile of snow left at the bottom of a driveway after the snow plow has cleared the road. I grew up in Mayor Mel Lastman's North York where everyone's windrow was cleared by the city and didn't know

the meaning of the word until I moved to Markham! As a kid responsible for shovelling snow I certainly appreciated this service.

The City of Markham offers a Windrow Removal Service for qualified residents who are over 60 years of age or have a disability. To qualify for the program you must first apply for it by completing an application form available on Markham's website under "Winter Road Services."

In Markham, windrows (one car width only) are cleared within eight hours of the street being plowed. I personally think that is too long to wait which is why I've argued for shrinking what I call the "windrow window" by 50 percent from eight hours to four. When was the last time your local government cut anything other than grass? The city's Road Operations team is exploring the possibility from the perspective of equipment/resource availability, contractual obligations and cost. A report to Council is still pending.

Huntington Park Pathway Bridge

The pedestrian bridge over German Mills Creek, originally built in the 1940s by the farmer who owned the land, and part of the Huntington Park trail needs significant repair or replacement in order to be made safe. It has been closed for a year.

The land is owned by the provincial government through Infrastructure Ontario and leased for \$33K per year to the City of Markham who in turn is responsible for maintaining it. Regrettably, the \$40K bridge repair made in 2016 proved insufficient for long-term use. Based on a user survey conducted in July 2019, we estimate 14,235 pedestrian trips across the bridge each year.

Markham and Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) staff have prepared replacement options in the \$800K to \$1.2M range. I've asked staff to explore more cost-effective solutions and I'm optimistic one can be found that will make the bridge safe so it can be reopened for the community to enjoy.

In the meantime, a staff report outlining the current options can be viewed under the "Proposed New Development & Reference Material" section of my city web page.

Illegal Dumping Redux

I wrote extensively in my Spring 2020 newsletter about maintaining property standards and the pervasiveness of illegal dumping in Thornhill, across our city and the GTA.



Construction Debris

Imagine waking up to this. Between 6:20 and 6:50 a.m. June 16 a dump truck emptied its load of construction debris at the end of a quiet Thornhill street and fled. Can any reasonable person imagine doing that? Our aggressive efforts at capturing the culprit have gone unrequited.



The Alleged Perpetrator

If you see something unusual such as this happening in your neighbourhood please do your best to gather as much information as possible: vehicle description and license plate, description of the person, and the day and time the activity occurred. Security camera footage can prove invaluable.

However, I do not recommend you approach the perpetrator; you could be putting yourself in danger. Please report what you witnessed to the city's Customer Service team at [905-477-5530](tel:905-477-5530) or customerservice@markham.ca.

Thornhill Heritage Conservation District



32 Colborne Street (Photo by Andrew Collins)

In the early morning hours of July 2, Markham's Fire Department responded to a house fire at 32 Colborne Street in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District.

A neighbour's dog was the first to sense something was wrong and thanks to the quick action of York Regional Police, who were first on the scene, and Markham Fire everyone was rescued.

Unfortunately, the home, a ranch-style bungalow dating from 1956 with 1980s renovations and known as "The Doris Fitzgerald House," has been deemed unsafe and will be demolished. The property has been turned over to the owner and they intend to rebuild.

Landlords Beware

You may recall the 1990 movie "Pacific Heights" a psychological thriller about a landlord with the ultimate problem tenant.

Unfortunately, Thornhill and other parts of Markham and the GTA have their own versions of "Pacific Heights." I am aware of at least three Thornhill homes and 10 more across Markham where homeowners, and their agents, have been duped by someone using fraudulent identification and stories to rent their homes.

The result is less Pacific Heights and more "Nightmare on Elm Street" for the homeowner, their neighbours and the broader community.

How does it unfold?

Typically, a man and a woman posing as a married couple with young children succeed at renting a home. The home is then quickly advertised on-line and illegally sub-leased as a rooming house. Tenants pay rent to the "married couple," not the homeowner. The suspects occasionally reappear to collect their proceeds from a designated "house manager."

The homeowners?

Things appear normal in the beginning and then the "couple" stops paying rent. Cars come and go all the time, fill the driveway and park on the road illegally overnight. Grass grows tall. Garbage is set out days in advance of pick-up and not tidied up afterwards. The property falls into disrepair. And, those are the more moderate and obvious impacts.

A once beautiful single-family Thornhill home becomes overrun and occupied by a number of people - in some cases more than 20 - unrelated to each other. Our community becomes less safe.

What happens next?

The city's jurisdiction is limited to pursuing charges under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, Building Code and Zoning By-law. Unfortunately, these tools do not provide it with the authority to evict tenants or anyone who is subleasing space. Only the Government of Ontario's Landlord and Tenant Board has that power.

If the property owner is cooperative,

and luckily in most cases they have been, the city's enforcement policy usually results in eviction proceedings being initiated by the property owner through the provincial Landlord and Tenant Board. Sadly, it can take several months until the problem is resolved and properties return to the normalcy everyone expects and deserves.

The problem has been further exacerbated this year when the Landlord and Tenant Board suspended all in-person hearings due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To learn more, please see my September 2020 article under the "Speeches, Remarks, Articles" section of my city web page.

Thornhill-Opoly

For those of us who love playing board games, I'm pleased to inform you that our community of Thornhill is now the subject of a local version of Monopoly. Like the original version, players move around the board buying up and developing properties with the goal of remaining solvent while forcing opponents into bankruptcy. The difference is the properties have familiar names: Pomona Mills Park, St. Robert Catholic High School, Clatworthy Arena, German Mills Settlers Park, The Historic Village, and the York Farmers Market to name just a few!



The game is available, while supplies last, from Walmart for \$29.95.

York Farmers Market

The Market, a cherished Thornhill staple for over 67 years and located at 7509 Yonge Street, is looking for vendors. This is a great opportunity for someone looking to start a small business, re-establish one or simply expand their presence to a much sought after location.

For more information contact Stuart Carroll, President of the Market at stuart@stuartcarroll.ca and visit www.yorkfarmersmarket.com.