

What the heck is Pickleball?

I'll admit I really had no idea what Pickleball was until a Thornhill resident and die-hard enthusiast reached out to me last year asking for my help. For those as ignorant as I once was, Pickleball is a paddleball sport that combines the best elements of badminton, table tennis and tennis. Two or four players, of all ages and ability, use solid paddles to hit a ball over a net.

The popularity of the sport is spreading so fast that players now compete politely for space with those playing tennis on our courts across Thornhill. To help address the shortage of suitable and safe places to play, I had the city's Operations team create **two additional community pickleball courts on otherwise unused space behind Clatworthy Arena at 2400 John Street.** Be sure to check them out.

Update: Bayview/John Development Applications

At time of writing the city is in discussions with Liberty Development, the owners of 7750 Bayview Avenue (the Shouldice Hospital lands), with regards to **significant changes to their development application** most of which were announced by the developer at my October 6 Community Information Meeting.

In addition, Hazelview Investments, formerly Timbercreek Quadrant Four GP INC., has revised their original development application for what is currently the Thornhill Square Shopping Centre and is in the process of resubmitting it. Information is available on my website: markhamward1.ca

These are very active files that by necessity include consideration of current and future land use policies for this area of Thornhill. I will share information as it becomes available. In the meantime, if you have not already, I encourage you to sign-up to receive email communications from me by visiting markhamward1.ca.

Update: Yonge North Subway Extension

At time of writing the Royal Orchard community anxiously awaits an announcement from the Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx on a possible change in the proposed subway alignment that will "minimize impacts to the communities it will serve."

We all want a subway to serve the residents of Thornhill. We just don't want one that will tunnel under a mature and well-established community when there is a perfectly viable alternative north along Yonge Street that is already approved.

In the meantime, despite rejections of the proposed Option 3 alignment by both Markham and Vaughan Councils, Metrolinx continues to conduct disruptive geotechnical testing at drill sites on streets throughout the neighbourhood.

I am proud of how the Royal Orchard community has sustained its level-headed opposition to Metrolinx's Option 3 subway alignment these past eight months through letter writing, presentations at meetings, public rallies and holding Metrolinx to account by asking the tough questions we all deserve answers to.

If you'd like to help in our efforts, I encourage you to visit www.subwayatro.com. By the strength of our common endeavor we achieve more together than we can alone.

You can direct questions and comments directly to Metrolinx at: YongeSubwayExt@metrolinx.com or **416-202-7000**.

Ward 1 2021 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 2021 the city **invested \$39.6M in Thornhill** through a host of capital project improvements.

Here's the Top 10:

| Project Name | Amount |
|---|--------------|
| 1 West Thornhill Flood Control Implementation: Phase 4A Construction & Watermain Replacement west of Bayview Avenue and south of the CNR track | \$15,655,900 |
| 2 Cast Iron Watermain Replacement West Thornhill Phase 3B east of Henderson Avenue and south of John Street | \$4,036,300 |
| 3 West Thornhill Flood Control Implementation: Phase 3B Construction east of Henderson Avenue and south of John Street | \$4,029,600 |
| 4 West Thornhill: Phase 4A Royal Orchard Sanitary Upgrades west of Bayview Avenue and south of CNR track | \$3,471,000 |
| 5 Cast Iron Watermain Rehabilitation / CIPP Lining Construction & Administration John Street between CNR track and Leslie Street | \$2,649,320 |
| 6 Thornlea Pool Restoration | \$2,307,412 |
| 7 Asphalt Resurfacing: Livingstone Road, Whittington Court, Lambert Road, Northumberland Terrace, Brookshire Circle, Limcombe Drive, Seinecliffe Road, Lafayette Place, Tamarack Drive, West Borough Street, Parklawn Crescent, Wildrose Crescent, Simonston Boulevard East Loop, Almond Avenue, Brewsland Crescent, Willowbrook speed humps / raised intersections | \$1,635,000 |
| 8 New Park Design and Construction: Yonge Street and Grandview Avenue | \$637,900 |
| 9 Secondary Plan Transportation Studies for Langstaff Gateway | \$576,300 |
| 10 Secondary Plan Transportation Studies for Yonge Corridor | \$576,300 |



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.

@KeithIrish1

Keith Irish

@keith.irish

Keeping you Informed & Connected: MarkhamWard1.ca

This website, www.markhamward1.ca, brings Ward 1 Thornhill residents a wealth of local information and news. Visit often and keep up-to-date!

KEITH IRISH
COUNCILLOR WARD 1

FALL 2021 / WINTER 2022

WARD 1 NEWS



UPDATE FROM KEITH IRISH, YOUR MARKHAM WARD 1 COUNCILLOR

Dear Residents,

"Don't believe everything you hear."

Those were words I remember my mother saying to me as a child. They used to catch me off-guard. Like most of us, as a kid, I was naïve and really had no reason to doubt what people said, what I saw on television, or heard on the radio to be anything but the truth.

However, nowadays they seem especially prophetic. We live in a deep and sometimes angry sea of differing viewpoints and easy criticality shared and broadcast through social media. Thankfully differing views are not new; they are a healthy and important part of our democracy. It is the abundance and speed with which they are amplified that is.

Mark Twain said: "A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on." What he didn't say, and could not possibly have known, is how difficult it has become to tell the difference.

No one needs to look far to see charges of bias directed at mainstream media. Challenges to the veracity of science. Doubts about the motives of those in authority. Arguments that seem to turn what most would consider common sense, on its head.

This year, my summer reading list included former British Prime Minister Tony Blair's biography, *A Journey - My Political Life*. In it he wrote something I have long believed:

Winter Maintenance Snow Clearing

With winter soon upon 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 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

"I have a somewhat weirdly optimistic view of the power of reason, of the ability to persuade if an argument is persuasive. To begin with, I thought that the sheer force of a reasonable position, reasonably argued, would win the day. Over time you learn that this is not so; change brings opposition, and opposition is much easier to advocate than change."

Like many of us I was once quick to doubt the choices our leaders made on our behalf. I am less inclined to do so now. Whether you're the prime minister, premier, mayor, city councillor, chief medical officer, or a front-line worker...I believe all want the best outcomes for the people they serve.

That is why the decisions we make as citizens matter and why I am reminded of the Cherokee legend about two fighting wolves: one is good and one evil. Which one wins? The one we feed.

So, the next time someone professes to know better, please stop to consider the source. Search for the facts as best as you can and reach out to those making the decisions even if you disagree. We will all benefit from a better-informed, and dare I say, reasonable public discourse.

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

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 (like the one I live on) 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.

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

Windrow Removal

The City of Markham offers a Windrow Removal Service for qualified residents who are over 60 years of age or have a disability. A windrow is the pile of snow left at the bottom of a driveway after the snow plow has cleared the road.

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." Qualifying residents will have a windrow (one car width only) cleared within eight hours of the street being plowed.

New this Winter

I was pleased to have spearheaded the city's efforts last year to keep nine asphalt tennis courts (including nets) and 23 park parking lots across Markham plowed of snow and open for year-round use. The pandemic taught us many lessons, not the least of which was an increased need for your city to provide even more opportunities to get outdoors and exercise safely.

That's why I am happy to share that beginning this winter pathways in 95 parks across Markham will be cleared of snow for the first time ever. They will be maintained within 24-48 hours after the end of a snowfall when accumulations reach 5 centimetres (2 inches) or more.

In Ward 1 that includes the following*:

- Royal Orchard Park (Royal Orchard to Kirk and Bay Thorn to Thorny Brae)
- Windy Hill Park (Innisbrook to Breckonwood)
- Cricklewood Park (Inverloch to Yonge)
- Simonston Park (German Mills to Simonston)
- Johnsvie Park (Porterfield to Bayview)
- Cakebread Park (Lunau Lane to Ravencliffe)
- Felix Opatowski Park (Braeburn to Tamarack)
- Franklin Carmichael Park (Littlebrook to Green Lane)
- Glencrest Park (Ladyslipper to Laureleaf)
- Grandview Park (Doncaster to Meadowview)

...and that's not all...

Thornhill's **Huntington Park** will host for the first time a city constructed and maintained outdoor ice surface this winter. This is in addition to the great citizen-volunteer outdoor

rinks in Franklin Carmichael Park at 277 Green Lane, Bayview Lane Park (behind Stornoway Public School) at 32 Baymark Road, and Grandview Park at 135 Doncaster Avenue.

**Please note that pathways of mixed material - asphalt, gravel, grass, dirt - are not on the list since they will be damaged by the plow. Park pathways that intersect with those owned by the school boards are also excluded for issues of liability.*

New Huntington Park Pathway Bridge

I am excited to announce that the City of Markham will embark upon a project to remove the damaged culverts, rehabilitate the embankment of German Mills Creek (in accordance with Toronto Region Conservation Authority guidelines) and then construct a new bridge in Huntington Park.

This will come as welcomed news to the 14K-plus pedestrians and cyclists who use the pathway and bridge each year. It is an important asset in the city's Active Transportation Network and will restore this connection between Thornhill neighbourhoods for everyone to enjoy.

In addition to dealing with the structure itself, the water course has been identified as being host to Red Side Dace which is an endangered aquatic species requiring the habitat to be protected through the Ministry of the Environment. In order to respect the natural environment and this at-risk species, construction can only take place at a certain time of year and with the Ministry's strict approval. This, quite frankly, has contributed to the long delay.

I am grateful to all Thornhill residents for their patience and understanding.

Improvements Coming to Franklin Carmichael Park

Thornhill's Franklin Carmichael Park at 277 Green Lane is a 2.02 hectare (5-acre) grassed residential park serving a community of 4,103 residences and nearly 12K people all living within a one-kilometre radius of it. From the viewpoint of structured recreation and other public amenities it is deficient relative to its population. Helping address unmet needs, such as this, in our community is an important part of my role.

That's why I am pleased to share that the city's Budget Committee approved my \$250K request to construct a

multi-purpose outdoor court here that will accommodate sports including basketball, tennis and pickleball -- *spring through fall* -- with the ability to easily convert the space to a large outdoor ice rink in winter.

Construction will begin next year.

Coming Spring 2022: "Slow Down" Lawn Signs

I continue to receive complaints of speeding in our neighbourhoods. Many of the complaints are from residents living on streets where there is no through traffic. Unbelievably, it is our friends and neighbours and even school bus drivers eager to get to where they are going that are being reckless.

One way to help address the problem is through education and regular reminders. To that end, I am making available a **Ward 1 "Slow Down" lawn sign** to road-safety-conscious residents. If you'd like a free sign, please let Lauren and me know by filling out the form on markhamward1.ca and we will arrange delivery in Spring 2022.

I also encourage you to report instances of speeding and dangerous driving by doing 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: yrp.ca/en/online-reporting/Report-a-Community-Concern.asp
- File a "Road Watch Complaint" report online with YRP at: yrp.ca/en/online-reporting/Road-Watch.asp

Please slow down and watch out for children and other road users. Together, we can help avoid a tragedy.



Ward 1 Slow Down lawn sign

Proposed New Development: Steeles Avenue East and Highland Park Boulevard

The Zonix Group has revised their Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications and their second submission has been received by the city.

The **current submission** is for the west half only of the Dudley to Willowdale block, applying specifically to 36-48 Steeles Avenue East and 37-49 Highland Park Blvd. The east half of the block is not part of this application. The proposal is now for a 27-storey building with 407 units and a 6-storey building with 126 units (533 units total), no retail, and a Floor Space Index (FSI) of 5.1.

At time of writing, Planning staff anticipate a preliminary report and Statutory Public meeting before year end.

More information is available on markhamward1.ca.

Improving Pedestrian Safety: New Traffic Control Signals Update



The new traffic lights and pedestrian crossing

Further to the story in my Fall 2020 / Winter 2021 newsletter, I am pleased to share that the new traffic control signals at Steeles Avenue East and Waggoners Wells Lane (in Thornhill) have been installed and **are now operational**.

This comes as very welcomed news by those Thornhill residents in the **German Mills community** who previously had to take their lives in their hands to cross five lanes of active traffic at this location to catch public transit. It also makes it safer for drivers proceeding east on Steeles from this location. I worked closely with my Toronto counterpart Councillor Shelley Carroll over several months last year to convince her of the need.

"I am writing to thank you Councillor Irish for your tireless efforts in successfully advocating on behalf of your constituents. The installation of this traffic control signal at this intersection has made crossing much safer for all those who live in this neighbourhood, particularly the elderly and the young children attending the two schools. We appreciate your commitment to the community you represent and thank you sincerely."

- Thornhill resident Ms. Dilshad Tavawalla B.A. (Hon.), LL.M.

Alectra Electric Vehicle Charging Partnership

The City of Markham and Alectra, with support from Natural Resources Canada's ("NRCan") Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program, have entered into a 10-year agreement for the installation, operation, and maintenance of 18 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at community facilities across our city. **The Thornhill Community Centre will soon see the installation of two charging stations** located near the Thornhill Seniors Centre. Users will be required to pay market-based hourly rates set by Alectra to charge their vehicles.

Small Touches that Enhance our Neighbourhoods

In each of my newsletters I include a section that encourages residents to contact Markham's Contact Centre at **905-477-5530** or customerservice@markham.ca for issues such as by-law complaints, illegal dumping, and



Henderson north of John Before...



...and After



Laureleaf and Steeles Before...



...and After



Yonge and Highland Park Before...



...and After



Thornhill Summit Drive Before...



...and After

property standards, to name a few.

I view this approach as being consistent with the **Broken Windows Theory** of prevention.

The theory is that visible signs of crime, anti-social behaviour, neglect, and civil disorder that go unaddressed can create an urban environment that encourages more crime and disorder. The theory was conceived in 1982 by social scientists James Wilson and George Kelling and championed to much success in the 1990s by New York City's mayor and police commissioner.

As I visit our Thornhill neighbourhoods, I am always on the lookout for instances of this and opportunities for small enhancements within my sphere of influence. I pay particular attention to chronic problems and those "orphaned" and otherwise neglected common areas crying out for care and attention.

Here are some (before and after photos of) areas of our community I have addressed in the past year.

If you know of areas like this in Thornhill that need attention, please write to me at kirish@markham.ca and I will see what can be done.