

## Community Corner

**Thornhill & Area Women's Club:** A not-for-profit social group celebrating its 51st year providing inclusive, non-denominational and supportive community connections for women of all ages. If you're interested in learning more, please contact [tawc.community@gmail.com](mailto:tawc.community@gmail.com).

**Richmond Hill Community Food Bank:** An independently run, non-profit, non-government agency providing emergency food assistance to those in need. Did you know that 30% of this food bank's clients are from **Thornhill** and that the overall number of people served has increased 56% since March 2022 to 2800 people per month? To learn how you can help, including making a financial donation, please visit: [richmondhillcommunityfoodbank.ca](http://richmondhillcommunityfoodbank.ca)

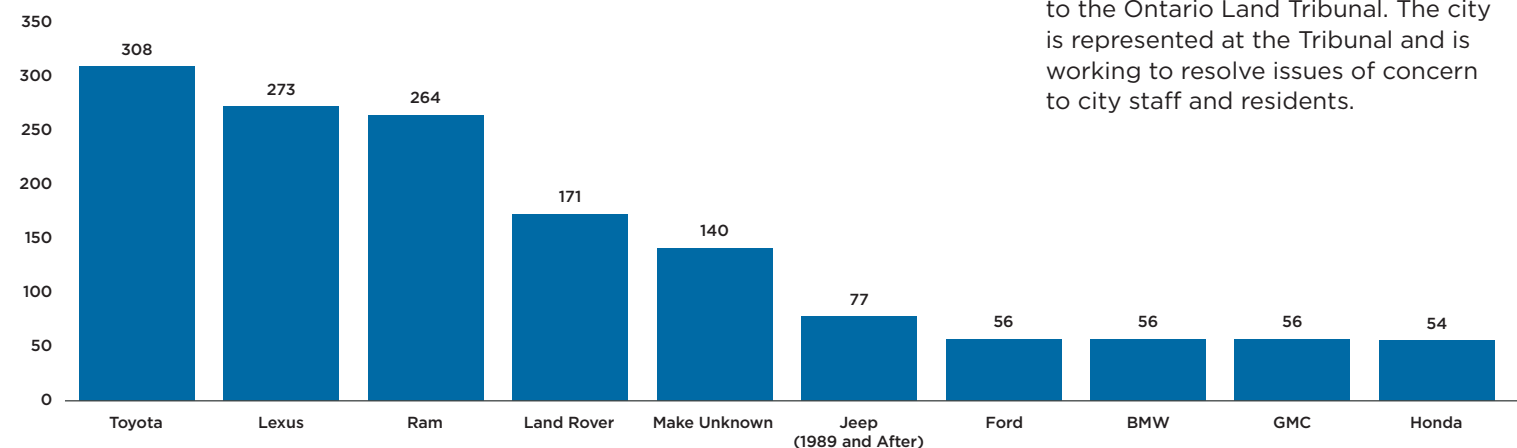
## Preventing Vehicle Thefts

I met with Senior Command Officers of York Regional Police District #2 in February to discuss issues of concern for Thornhill residents and vehicle thefts in particular. According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada a vehicle is stolen every six minutes in Canada.

Here are **tips from YRP** to help avoid having your vehicle stolen:

- Use an anti-theft device such as a steering lock or a Faraday car key signal protector
- Park in your garage or well-lit areas when away from home
- Consider installing an after-market GPS tracker
- If you have security cameras at your home, consider registering online with YRP's Security Camera Registry, and
- Don't forget to roll up your vehicle windows and lock your doors...always!

## Vehicle Thefts Year to Date - Top Ten Vehicle Makes



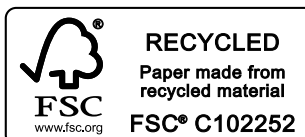
Source: YRP Vehicle Theft Dashboard Year-to-Date 2023 (all of York Region).

For more information, please visit [www.yrp.ca](http://www.yrp.ca)



## 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](mailto:customerservice@markham.ca).



[@KeithIrish1](https://twitter.com/KeithIrish1)

[@keith.irish](https://www.instagram.com/keith.irish)

## Keeping you Informed & Connected: MarkhamWard1.ca

This website, [markhamward1.ca](http://markhamward1.ca), brings Ward 1 Thornhill residents a wealth of local information and news. Visit often and keep up-to-date!

Check out "Keith's Notebook" on [markhamward1.ca](http://markhamward1.ca) for even more information on topics of interest to Ward 1 Thornhill residents.



## Around the Ward in 80...Words

Updates on previous Ward 1 News items...

### Jesus the King Melkite Catholic Church, 1 Lyndhurst Drive

The church leadership has submitted plans to demolish the old church and rebuild. Details: [www.markhamward1.ca](http://www.markhamward1.ca) > Developments

### Greenpark Development at 10 Royal Orchard Blvd. & 8051 Yonge Street

We are awaiting a revised submission from the developer in response to technical comments from city Planning staff and concerns from residents.

### Bishops Cross Plaza, 2300 John Street

City Planning staff are awaiting a response to issues they shared with the developer in September 2022.

### 16 Kirk Drive: Thornheights Homes Inc.

Markham Council approved a revised proposal to construct 5 single-detached homes, instead of 8 three-storey townhouses, in January 2023.

### Thornhill Square Redevelopment:

The developer appealed their application to the Ontario Land Tribunal. The city is represented at the Tribunal and is working to resolve issues of concern to city staff and residents.

SPRING / SUMMER 2023

# WARD 1 NEWS



## UPDATE FROM KEITH IRISH, YOUR MARKHAM WARD 1 COUNCILLOR

Dear Residents,

Welcome to Spring and my first newsletter of the 2022-26 term of office. I want to thank you for your overwhelming support in the October 2022 municipal election. It is my pleasure to serve you and the community I have been proud to call home for 35 years and we all love.

With a new term of office comes new committee assignments made by Mayor Scarpitti and endorsed by Markham Council. The Mayor appointed me Chair of the city's General Committee, one of two Standing Committees of Council, Board Chair of Markham District Energy Inc., and to the Development Services Policy Sub-Committee. All city matters, except for development applications, must first pass General Committee before coming to Markham Council for a final decision. I have also been reappointed to the city's Development Services committee, Land, Building & Parks committee, and to the Budget committee. I am honoured by the continued trust and confidence placed in me by the Mayor and my colleagues.

### Markham's Ward 1 is facing new development/ redevelopment pressure unlike any other area of our city.

The reasons are many. In addition to being a safe and desirable community with great schools and public amenities, the construction of the Yonge North Subway Extension - with five stations to serve our Thornhill neighbourhoods in Markham and Vaughan - is the major reason why.

Both the Region of York through the designation of Major Transit Station Areas and the Province of Ontario through its Transit Oriented Communities, are determined to build higher density mixed-use communities near transit stations. In doing so they hope to increase the supply of housing and jobs with access to public transit while reducing the dependency on cars. It is consistent with the provincial priority of building homes faster.

We do not have to look far to see evidence of this already. The Yonge corridor from Cummer Avenue south to Highway 401 has been building out in this way for decades. The same will and is already occurring north from Cummer to Highway 407 and beyond.

I appreciate that this may come as unwelcome news to many, especially long-term Thornhill residents. However, I want to brace you for this impact and remind you of something I wrote in my Spring/Summer 2021 newsletter:

*"...the Provincial Planning Act permits owners of land to entertain any changes, regardless of current zoning, by submitting an amendment to the Official Plan and/or a Zoning By-law amendment application. All municipalities, by law, must consider them."*

As I make decisions in the best interests of our community and city I seek information from a number of sources, consider all the options, look at the potential good and then do what I think is right for today and tomorrow. However, with new provincial housing legislation passed in 2022 - namely Bills 109, 23 and 39 - and the potential too of a Minister's Zoning Order being issued, municipal councils have less influence than ever before.

To keep up-to-date, I encourage you to visit the "Developments" tab on my website [www.markhamward1.ca](http://www.markhamward1.ca).

If you have an issue of concern, please contact me at [kirish@markham.ca](mailto:kirish@markham.ca) / **905-948-5101** or my Executive Assistant Lauren Patton at [lpatton@markham.ca](mailto:lpatton@markham.ca) / **905-415-7512**.

## From @Future Model Toronto (www.stephenvelasco.com):

*"There are approximately 2,500 storeys proposed within a 700m radius of the Yonge and Steeles intersection. Existing strip malls and auto dealerships are set to be replaced by high-density development in one of the most dramatic urban transformations in all of Toronto."*



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



## Thornhill's Newest Public Park: 7750 Bayview Avenue

In the event you were not already aware, I am very pleased to share news that Markham Council accepted a plan put forward by me and Mayor Scarpitti in June 2022 that saw ownership of the Shouldice Hospital lands at 7750 Bayview Avenue, in their entirety, transferred to the City of Markham.

This preserves the unique and historic nature of this beautiful 9.1-hectare (22.4-acre) site while opening it up as additional parkland for generations of Thornhill residents to enjoy. The hospital will continue to operate under a lease arrangement.

To learn more about the history of this property I encourage you to visit "Keith's Notebook" at [www.markhamward1.ca](http://www.markhamward1.ca)

## New Left Turn Lanes

Although technically just outside the eastern boundary of Ward 1, I am proud to have championed the construction of dedicated left turn lanes on John Street at Steelcase Road. This will improve the flow of east and westbound traffic in and out of Thornhill and help reduce gridlock for those travelling this route by car and public transit.



The new lanes

## The Shops on Steeles and 404

The 70-store community mall at 2900 Steeles Ave E. has been sold to SoS LP which is a partnership of Alan Greenberg of Streamliner Developments and Jeffrey Kerbel, Principal of Kerbel Group Inc., and President and CEO of Brampton Brick Limited.

At time of writing, the city has not received an application to redevelop this site. I will continue to monitor this closely and share information with the community should things

change. In the meantime, I encourage everyone to visit my website [www.markhamward1.ca](http://www.markhamward1.ca) for the latest news on active applications in Ward 1.

## Markham's 2023 Budget

Markham Council approved the city's 2023 Budget of \$669M on April 5, 2023, including a 3 per cent property tax rate increase.

This fiscally responsible budget supports the continued delivery of the high-quality city services that residents have come to expect, while also making sure it supports key capital investments in facilities, infrastructure and amenities that support Markham's strategic goals.

The 3 per cent property tax rate increase is below the rate of inflation and will mean an increase of approximately \$39 in property taxes for the average residential household in Markham.

The increase includes 2.4 per cent for day-to-day operating costs and an additional 0.6 per cent infrastructure investment to ensure there are sufficient funds in the city's lifecycle reserves to repair and replace assets for the next 25 years.

For more information please visit [markham.ca/Budget](http://markham.ca/Budget)

## Keeping Markham Beautiful

Markham By-law 2017-27 stipulates that the grass on your private property and on the boulevard at the front and/or side of your home must be cut and maintained to 15 centimetres (6 inches) or lower. Hedges and bushes must be kept from being overgrown, the exterior of homes in good repair, painted and maintained, and garbage and recycling containers placed for pick-up no earlier than 7:00 p.m. the day prior to collection.

If you see a property in chronic violation of the By-law, please report it to the city's Customer Service team at **905-477-5530** or [customerservice@markham.ca](mailto:customerservice@markham.ca). Those that do not comply are likely to receive a visit from a By-law Enforcement Officer. A minimum fee of \$475 may be charged if the city is forced to cut your grass.

## My trip to Mongolia... Markham

One morning in early March, after a 30-cm snowfall, I was honoured to represent Mayor Scarpitti and our city at an event in Mongolia, Markham to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations between Canada and Mongolia. I even enjoyed shovelling snow with Ambassador Yadmaa so we could access the commemorative site!



With the Ambassador and his delegation

## Thornhill 2023-24 Flood Control Projects: Romfield Circuit Area

On August 19, 2005, the West Thornhill community was impacted by a severe rainstorm during which stormwater run-off exceeded the capacity of drainage systems and caused extensive flooding of private property and roadways.

The West Thornhill Stormwater Flood Remediation Class Environmental Assessment Study identified system improvements to increase capacity and reduce the risk of flooding. An implementation strategy was adopted by Markham Council in October 2011 based on flood risk priorities. All Markham residential taxpayers pay an annual \$53 fee and non-residential property owners pay a variable fee of \$29.50/\$100,000 of current value assessment, to fund this work city-wide. This fee is applied to the final tax bill for each property owner.

Here are details of the storm sewer upgrades in the **Phase 4B (2023-24) work**:

- Kindale Way (*Western leg*)
- Romfield Circuit (*from Stornoway to Kindale Way*)
- Stornoway Crescent (*from Romfield to 30 Stornoway*)
- Baymark Road (*from Romfield to Hester*)
- Rothsay Road (*from Baymark to 20-metres east*)

- Fleance Drive (*from Baymark to 160-metres east*)
- Dunsinane Drive (*from Baymark to 42-metres east*)

The work is scheduled to begin in May 2023 and be completed in Fall 2024. **Phase 4C** work west of Royal Orchard Park in the Royal Orchard neighbourhood is scheduled for 2024-25.

A video and the staff presentation from my Community Information Meeting held March 20, 2023, is available at [www.markhamward1.ca](http://www.markhamward1.ca)

## New Huntington Park Bridge

The City of Markham has awarded a contract for fabrication of a 22-metre span bridge to be installed over German Mills Creek in Huntington Park in the next few months.

The bridge will be installed with consideration to the spawning period of the Redside dace (*Clinostomus elongatus*), an endangered species of fish found here, and with permission of the Toronto Region Conservation Authority and Fisheries & Oceans Canada.

I appreciate the community's patience for what is a multi-jurisdictional project and time-consuming process. The land is owned by Infrastructure Ontario and leased by the City of Markham.

## Thornlea Pool: What is old will soon be new again

If you've ever embarked upon a home renovation project, then you will undoubtedly know that things do not always go according to plan. Those that have can easily identify with the sentiment: hope for the best, but plan for the worst.

In March 2021, Markham Council approved a \$2.3M capital project to replace Thornlea Pool's failed 51-year-old industrial-style dehumidification unit and repair the concrete soffit ceiling. The latter showed signs of cracking and pieces were falling into the pool while it was closed during the pandemic. The scope of work also included a new roof, exterior wall repairs, and repairs in the basement below the pool tank.

Repairing the ceiling required draining the pool, covering it with plywood and erecting scaffolding to reach it. Cracks in the pool floor tile, unrelated to the ceiling repairs, and a rusted drainage pipe at risk of failure were discovered once the ceiling work had been completed.

I visited the pool in March to see the work firsthand. In April I was pleased to have Markham Council approve an additional \$700K expenditure to replace the cast iron piping, remove all deck tiles, install a new waterproof membrane throughout, and then retile. All this work will extend the life of this important Thornhill community asset for decades.

I have many fond memories of the pool. It is where my sons learned to swim, and where I would occasionally swim with them during March Break.

At time of writing this additional work is well underway and the pool on track to reopen in time for the Fall 2023 schedule of recreation programs and lessons.

*I encourage all those with the necessary qualifications to supervise aquatic programs to contact the city's Recreation Services department for employment opportunities. Please visit: [www.markham.ca/WorkHere](http://www.markham.ca/WorkHere)*



The pool pictured in March

## Proposed New Development: Bahá'í National Centre

The city has received an application submitted on behalf of the Bahá'í National Centre by Malone Given Parsons Limited to permit the redevelopment of their site at 7200 and 7290 Leslie Street to include, among other things, construction of a Bahá'í Temple, new administrative offices, conference centre, lodging rooms and courtyard.

I want members of the Thornhill community to know that one of

the currently permitted uses of this land, privately owned by the Bahá'í National Centre since the 1960s, is for residential accomodation. I believe redevelopment by the Bahá'í National Centre for their continued use is preferred.

In addition, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority requires an alternative access to the site and nearby homes and businesses for emergency vehicles in the event of a 100-year storm that could restrict access to Markham Fire & Emergency Services in the event Leslie Street is impassable. Access through the German Mills Meadow & Natural Habitat (from John Street) along the existing path, which is already wide enough to accommodate a fire truck, is an option being considered. City staff continue to look at others. In any event, use will be restricted for this purpose only and it would not be a road for regular vehicle traffic.

At time of writing a Statutory Public Meeting to review the application and give residents their first formal opportunity to comment was held May 23. I will also hold a Community Information Meeting with the date still to be determined. In the meantime, I encourage everyone to visit my website ([www.markhamward1.ca](http://www.markhamward1.ca)) and the calendar of events on the home page. Please also visit the Developments tab for information on this application and others in Ward 1.

## Thornhill Community Centre Marquee

I initiated plans to remove the dated - 1980s era - non-functioning display on the northeast corner of Bayview Avenue and John Street. The city already owns and operates two more energy efficient digital community messaging boards that serve this location.



It's gone...