

Sorbara leads neophyte Liberal MPPs

BY LISA QUEEN
Staff Writer

Hope you've got broad shoulders, Greg Sorbara. Because York Region leaders from many sectors — health care, education, local government to name a few — are already lining up to load their agendas on you.

Of course, three York Liberals claimed seats in the new provincial government — Mr. Sorbara in Vaughan-King-Aurora, plus Mario Racco in Thornhill and Tony Wong in Markham.

But York leaders are well aware Mr. Racco and Mr. Wong are neophytes in the arena of provincial politics.

Mr. Sorbara, on the other hand, is a veteran, first elected in 1985.

He is party president, chaired the Liberals' overwhelmingly successful election campaign and, although he won't discuss it, is in line for a plum cabinet post.

"I think there have always been a range of options for hospital expansion."

"Greg Sorbara" was the name repeatedly mentioned by York decision-makers when they discussed taking their concerns to the new government at Queen's Park.

"Greg is by far the most senior of politicians around (Premier-elect) Dalton McGuinty," said Markham



JIM MACLEAN: Hospital president concerned about expansion plans

Mayor Don Cousens, a former Tory cabinet minister.

"I know he will be fighting for York Region. He will be in cabinet."

Mr. Cousens, who anticipates no problem for municipalities in working with the new government, is aware the Liberals rode to victory by promising better health care and education.

But he's hoping those "warm and fuzzy" services won't overshadow hard infrastructure needs, such as roads and public transit, especially in fast-growing communities like York.

"We can't pay for roads and infrastructure without provincial and federal help. I don't think that comes easily to the Liberals," Mr. Cousens said.

"But we can't grow our economy without an investment in roads. You can do the other things (like health care and education), but not at the expense of roads and infrastructure. My biggest



GREG SORBARA: Vaughan-based MPP only veteran on York's Liberal team.

worry is, don't let us hang out to dry on transit and roads."

York chairperson Bill Fisch is hoping the Liberals remain committed to the region's new transit system.

He also is pleased to see Mr. McGuinty has vowed to increase provincial contributions to social housing.

However, he said the region will pressure the Liberals to reverse the Tories' controversial pooling program, in which York taxpayers contributing about \$80 million annually to Toronto social programs with no control over how the money is spent.

Health care and education were the two big-ticket items during the campaign.

And York officials in those sectors said they are looking for results from Mr. McGuinty's government.

Dr. Jim MacLean, president

of Ontario where the Tories planned extensive private sector involvement.

While hospitals in Brampton and Ottawa are new facilities, Markham Stouffville would mix the existing public hospital with a new private sector expansion.

Dr. MacLean insisted hospital officials will be able to bring forward a new expansion plan to the Liberals, who vowed to stop further privatization of the health care system.

"We certainly understand, from their position, the expansion plans will likely have to change to accommodate their decision not to go forward with the public-private partnership model approved by the former government," he said.

"We think we can propose very quickly an alternative model. I think there have always been a range of options for hospital expansion."

Mr. Carriere believes it will take some months for the Liberals to settle into office before health policies are brought forward.

But he's looking forward to more hospital beds and nurses, two major planks of the Liberal platform.

"You can't do that without bringing more money to the table, so I'm all for that. The system now has great difficulty in taking a hit, like with SARS."

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The Regional Municipality of York

NOTICE OF STUDY COMMENCEMENT

Class Environmental Assessment
York/Durham Line (Y.R. 30)
Steeles Avenue to Highway 7

The Regional Municipality of York is planning to undertake a Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for the boundary road known as York/Durham Line (Y.R. 30) from Steeles Avenue to Highway 7 between the Town of Markham, in the Regional Municipality of York, and the City of Pickering, in the Regional Municipality of Durham.

York Region is initiating the assessment to identify any potential roadway improvements required for York/Durham Line.

The project is being planned under **Schedule 'C' of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment**. Public and review agencies are invited to provide input for incorporation into the overall planning of any improvements to the York/Durham Line between Steeles Avenue and Highway 7.

The assessment is currently scheduled to be completed by the end of May 2004. Consultation with the public and government review agencies will be a vital component of this process.

As part of the consultation process, a mailing list for notification is now being compiled. If you wish to receive information or submit comment, please contact York Region or Consult Limited, who have been retained to assist the Region in undertaking the EA.

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Bill Fisch Regional Chair
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Jack Heath for Regional Council

Join Jack, his friends and supporters at his campaign kick-off.

Light refreshments served.
7-8:30 pm Monday, Oct. 6
In the cafeteria at Markham District High (89 Church St., between Main St. & Wootton Way, 3 blocks north of Hwy #7)

905-472-4403 jackheath@rogers.com

Jack gets things done!