

# New deal's \$2M for York will reach \$53M by '09

*Prime minister announces gas tax plan in Richmond Hill*

BY ROY GREEN  
Staff Writer

With gasoline prices rising above 90 cents a litre in Richmond Hill Friday, Prime Minister Paul Martin came to town to share a portion of the gas tax with Ontario's municipalities.

Mr. Martin joined provincial and municipal officials in formally signing his "new deal for cities and communities", which will provide \$1.9 billion for Ontario transit and infrastructure projects over the next five years.

The formula, based on population, will eventually provide federal

gas tax revenues of more than \$746 million a year to Ontario municipalities and, according to Infrastructure Minister John Godfrey, funding will continue beyond the five-year period.

The regional government will get half the \$2.3 million earmarked for York this year and the nine area municipalities will share the rest.

The \$1.9 billion is Ontario's share of the \$5 billion, five-year funding announced in February's federal budget. The rules stipulate the money must be used for environmentally sustainable projects.

A second agreement signed Friday stems from the Liberal-NDP budget deal and commits up to \$310 million for Ontario transit projects over two years, about two-thirds of that for the TTC.

The region's share of the federal

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Paul Martin  
Prime Minister

gasoline tax rises to \$9.2 million in 2006 and will total \$53.5 million by 2009, according to regional chairperson Bill Fisch.

"It begins to add up in only a few years," Mr. Fisch said. "The money can be used for transit, transportation, water or waste water and other green-type projects. We'll likely be spending it on transit; that's a major thrust for us."

Friday's announcement, in front of scores of federal, provincial and municipal politicians and bureaucrats, complements provincial legislation directing \$680 million in gas taxes over the next three years for transit projects.

In 2007, the region's share of gas money from the two senior levels of government will top \$21 million.

The deal highlights a new relationship between the three levels of government, Mr. Martin said.

"This is a national project for our time," he said. "For far too long, municipalities have been working off a 19th century blueprint. This agreement recognizes our municipalities for what they are: mature, accountable governments that can be trusted to use gas tax revenues to improve the quality of life in their communities."

Bringing Canada, Ontario, the Association of Municipalities and the City of Toronto to the same table shows the new deal for cities is about more than money, federal Infrastructure Minister John Godfrey said.

But opposition MP Peter Van Loan said Friday's other agreement, providing up to \$310 million in transit funding, doesn't go far enough.

"That money basically runs out in 18 months," Mr. Van Loan, the York Simcoe Tory MP, said following the announcement. "Municipalities need a longer-term deal. Two of every three of our tax dollars go to the federal government, but we still get an overwhelming amount of our services from the province. We need to see more effort to address this fiscal imbalance."

## Mission Green Community Meetings

Town-wide Green Bin collection begins week of July 4, 2005

Members of Markham Council invite you to a Community Information Meeting detailing Markham's new Mission Green Recycling Program. Unanimously supported by Markham Council, the new collection program is the key to Markham's plan to divert 70% of our waste from Michigan landfills.

Green Bins will be distributed to all Markham households, west of Highway 48, between June 13 and 24. Every Green Bin delivered will contain important program information and a new collection schedule.

Green Bin collection starts the week of July 4, 2005. The expanded Blue Box and Green Bin organic material will be collected weekly. What's left over - residue waste - will be collected every two weeks.

Learn more about your new collection program at the Mission Green Community Meetings. For more information call 905-415-7535.

Date	Councillor	Ward	Location	Time
June 20	Dan Horchik	6	Markham Civic Centre 101 Town Centre Boulevard	7:00 p.m.
June 22	Erin Shapero	2	Thornhill Community Centre 7755 Bayview Avenue	7:00 p.m.
June 23	Stan Daurio	1	Heintzman House Bay Thorn & Royal Orchard	7:00 p.m.
June 23	Joseph Virgilio	3	Markham Civic Centre 101 Town Centre Boulevard	7:00 p.m.
June 30	John Webster	5	St. Andrew's United Church 32 Main Street, Markham	7:00 p.m.



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STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Prime Minister Paul Martin reacts after Richmond Hill MP Bryon Wilfert introduces him as Jean Chretien at the announcement of new federal support for municipalities at the Elgin West Community Centre in Richmond Hill Friday. Ontario Municipal Affairs Minister John Gerretsen (left) and federal Infrastructure Minister John Godfrey also find the bloopster amusing.

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