

Oak Ridges-Markham hopefuls weigh in



HELENA JACZEK
Liberal Party



FARID WASSEF
Progressive Conservative Party



JOE WHITFELD
New Democratic Party



TRIFON HAITAS
Green Party



RUIDA LU
Independent

WE ASKED: WHAT ARE THE TWO MOST PRESSING ISSUES FACING OAK RIDGES-MARKHAM AND WHAT ARE YOUR SOLUTIONS?

I often hear about traffic congestion from my constituents.

Gridlock is not only happening on the highways that commuters use, but also on our local municipal roads.

My riding now contains five GO train stations – more than any other electoral district in Ontario – and we will be adding another extending the Richmond Hill line to Gormley by 2013. We've made major improvements to Highways 400 and 27 in King and Hwy. 404 is currently being repaved between Stouffville Rd and Bloomington.

With the riding's rapid growth in population it is essential that I continue to work with our government and the various transit agencies to ensure that Oak Ridges-Markham is a priority when it comes to transit and infrastructure funding, in turn helping to reduce commute times and improve overall quality of life for my constituents.

The two most pressing issues facing Oak Ridges-Markham are increased cost of living expenses and the need for business and infrastructure development in this riding.

In the past eight years under Dalton McGuinty, the government has nearly quadrupled in size, which has increased administrative costs. There are now more than 80,000 bureaucrats who are paid more than \$100,000 per year.

There have been a number of tax increases, the introduction of new taxes and soaring hydro rates because of failed energy experiments.

We will lower income tax on the first \$75,000 of income and allow greater income sharing, which will amount to a savings of nearly \$1,500. We will double the family caregiver tax credit for those families who incur expenses looking after a chronically sick child, spouse or parent.

1. Providing support for our seniors and retiring baby boomers. Today, many of our seniors are stranded.

They are being placed on waiting lists for up to two years. For those that have the opportunity to find a placement, our seniors are having to fork out thousands of dollars monthly to long-term care facilities. The maximum amount a senior citizen can collect from the Canadian Pension Plan is \$11,000 per year.

2. Improved Transportation
People are concerned about how our under-developed transportation system will accommodate our growing population. Oak Ridges-Markham is the fastest-growing riding in Canada. Our roads are jammed and public transportation routes are limited. We must build a sustainable transportation system that is based on three tiers: economic, social and environmental sustainability.

As Green MPP in Oak Ridges-Markham, Trifon Haitas will:

1. Fight for good jobs and a fiscally responsible government and suggest ways to lower income taxes on families and local businesses to stimulate job creation.

2. Call for and suggest ways in which we may balance our provincial budget by 2015, saving billions in debt and ensuring our tax dollars are spent on public services instead of interest payments.

3. Support entrepreneurs, innovation and a strong local economy.

a. Fight to reduce red tape for small and medium-sized businesses so they continue to create jobs that support our community.

b. Support research and development in jobs that will power our economy in the coming decades, including clean technology and knowledge-based services.

One of the major issues facing our riding is transportation.

York Region is one of most car-dependent regions in Canada. Residents are spending long hours on the road.

It diminishes quality of life and the loss of productivity is significant.

I am committed to creating good jobs in the riding, so that residents do not need to go far for work. I will stop new housing development where transportation infrastructure is inadequate, in order to make sure no new gridlock problems are created.

Another major issue is affordability. Firstly, we used to pay only 5-per-cent GST on everyday items such as gasoline and Internet and now we have to pay 13 per cent HST.

I propose to roll back sales tax rates to 5 per cent on all items that were not PST payable.

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KARL BOELLING, Libertarian Party

In Oak Ridges-Markham, there are quite a variety of issues.

The moraine (soon to be gone), the massive urban sprawl (always spreading but people need their houses) and, for me, the puzzling fact that when I leave the house it is always to go do things away from the riding (except to go to the library) – to name a few.

Education is a problem that could be quite easily solved at no cost to the taxpayer because if it's done smart it could fund itself.

I would like to see some sort of projects started that could connect children with their community so as they develop they can have a better understanding of how and why this world works. There are a lot of possibilities.

I'm sure everyone could contribute ideas for this. Furthermore this particular riding has quite a lot excellent people in it so it would be possible to make this work

The second issue for me, and it is similar for a lot of other people is the depletion of

the moraine.

If in the off chance I'm actually elected, I would actually be able to dedicate some time to actually walk it myself to actually see what is left of it.

I would ask the people who have lived there long enough to see how the cycles actually are in this system and I would ask the opinion of people who actually live there and I would use whatever human resources I could find in my department to bind up the important parts in so much ... whatever

(red tape?) that it would be preserved as long as possible.

That probably sounds naive, but I've seen how things happen a stone's throw from my door and while I see the appeal of progress I do believe that there should be some sort of moderation as well. Again, this could be where our young people can help

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