

## Q&amp;A

## Oak Ridges-Markham



HELENA JACZEK



FARID WASSEF



EMILIA MELARA



KARL BOELLING

**Congestion in York Region has cost residents and businesses time and money for years and it's getting worse. What's your measurable plan to tackle this issue and how, specifically, will it be funded?**

The Kathleen Wynne Liberals are proposing:

- \$15 billion, in the next 10 years for the GTHA, to continue expansion towards two-way, all-day GO train service and expand the subway, north on Yonge to Richmond Hill.
- Phasing in GO Regional Express Rail (RER), electric train service every 15 minutes on all GO lines.
- \$10 million over three years to help municipalities improve cycling infrastructure.
- Extension of Hwy. 427.

Gridlock costs Ontario \$6 billion a year in lost productivity. The Ontario PCs plan, beyond building subways in the GTA, is to expand current highway infrastructure and build new routes, as well as use modern technology to assist traffic flow. Unlike the Liberals and the NDP, we will do this with no new taxes, while putting the province in charge to make sure decisions are made.

We at the Green Party know how frustrating it can be to get around, not only because of traffic and congestion, but also because promised projects are just never completed. The Green Party's plan is to establish a dedicated transit fund in order to build and operate transit in communities across Ontario. Through revenue tools, such as congestion charges, gas taxes and parking fees, we can raise enough annually to operate a better transit system in York.

Get the government, and its politicians with their need to take a cut out of everything, out of the way of people with ideas. Right now there's no point even starting with a good idea. Just the thought of selling your idea to the point of being able to get permission to go ahead with it, especially with something on a scale such as tackling congestion, is enough to turn anyone away. The solution requires ideas and a desire to make it work, with that comes investment.

**What immediate plans do you have to boost the economy in your riding, taking into account its specific needs?**

Since the recessionary low, Ontario has created 459,500 new jobs. Over the last 10 years, the Ontario Liberals have doubled the number of apprenticeships in the skilled trades and cut fees for college and university by 30 per cent. The Kathleen Wynne Liberals are also proposing to create the Jobs and Prosperity Plan, a new 10-year, \$2.5-billion fund that will improve Ontario's ability to attract business investment and support the province's future.

It is all about jobs and job creation. The Ontario PCs, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, have a solid and do-able plan to create a million jobs over eight years, with a primary focus on getting young people filling the persistent demand in the skilled trades, ending the costly and time-consuming red-tape runaround and by replacing corporate welfare handouts by cutting taxes on job creators by 30 per cent.

Small businesses create more jobs than any other part of the economy. We really should be giving them much more support. By doubling the Employer Health Tax exemption for businesses with payrolls of less than \$5 million, we could keep and re-invest a large amount back in our communities. This would be paid for by reversing the Liberals' Bay Street corporate tax cut by 1 per cent and setting the rate at 12.5 per cent.

Actually the economy in Oak Ridges-Markham is quite good. People who live here make a lot of money. There's no way I can afford any new house being built here and there's a lot of houses being built. I would start making it simpler for the residents of this riding to never have to leave its borders. With less government control and regulations, the possibilities for how to go about this are almost endless.

**Other than congestion and the economy, what is the most pressing issue in your riding and how will you address it?**

As our population ages, we face many challenges in preserving our publicly funded health care system. In Oak-Ridges-Markham, our government has made and will continue to make major investments. We've expanded Markham Stouffville Hospital to double its size, established six Family Health Teams and added nearly 300 new doctors in Markham, Richmond Hill and Stouffville. We are increasing funding for services like home care by 6 per cent.

**Affordable Energy:** Next to jobs and the debt, the biggest complaint I hear at the door is the high cost of electricity. The Ontario PCs will end the expensive feed-in tariff to wind and solar corporations to provide energy that is not even needed. These tariffs have already seen the average family's hydro bill rise by \$630.

**Our children's education.** It is absurd that Ontario continues to fund the Catholic school board despite questions about human rights and discrimination. Local schools continue to close, we aren't providing kids with special needs with the services they need and teachers and students are turned away from publically-funded schools because they are not Catholic. We need to merge the school boards and invest the resultant savings in our children's futures.

The people of this riding are forced to pay a lot in taxes. I would work to make sure they get the best value for what they have to give up, or, better yet, see that they're forced to give up a lot less.

**What's your favourite movie of all time? What is your favourite meal? Hero? Last book you read? Biggest pet peeve?**

· *The Sound of Music*

· Breakfast

· My father- who survived World War II and went on to build a great life for his family.

· *Tragedy in the Commons*

· People who litter

· *The Incredibles*

· Greek salad with lots of feta, cucumber, and tomatoes, stir fry vegetables with noodles

· My father

· *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman

· People who do not vote

· *Black Swan*

· Vegetarian sushi

· My dad

· *The Summons* by John Grisham

· Distractions

· *Unforgiven*

· I have no idea what my favorite meal is ... as long as it's simple I'm happy.

· My hero is Dick Proenneke...If you don't know look him up ... worthwhile.

· *Breakfast at Tiffany's*

· I don't really have a pet peeve

No bad blood  
between returnees in  
Oak Ridges-Markham

BY SANDRA BOLAN  
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It's Farid Wassef's second go-around as the Conservative candidate for Oak Ridges-Markham and people are finally identifying him as a politician, not as a pharmacist.

"I'm encouraged," he said.

The Whitchurch-Stouffville resident has been a pharmacist 25 years. His parents owned and operated a pharmacy on Main Street from 1974 to 2006.

This is also the second time he will take on incumbent and Liberal Helena Jaczek.

"I'm not running against her. I'm running for Oak Ridges-Markham," he said.

On election night 2011, there appeared to be some bad blood between the two as Wassef and his entourage were refused entry into Jaczek's celebration to congratulate her.

The two ended up meeting in the parking lot to shake hands.

"That's entirely up to her, how she conducts herself ... That's long behind me," Wassef said.

"I don't think there's any hard feelings between the two of us individually," Jaczek said.

In 2011, the election platforms did not appear to be as different as they are now, according to Wassef, which he said, bodes well for him.

"You're going to see a very straightforward, down-to-earth person who's going to be the best for its people," Jaczek said.

While the Liberals and Conservatives are the main parties battling for Oak Ridges-Markham, Jaczek is quick not to discount the NDP.

**SIX CANDIDATES**

"I'm certainly very conscious of the NDP, who presumably felt going into this election they could make some seat gains. I don't think that's too likely in Oak Ridges-Markham, but it is an election and anything is possible," she said.

Representing the NDP in Oak Ridges-Markham is Miles Krauter.

The 26-year-old Markham resident was recently awarded a fellowship for graduate studies in political economy at Carleton University.

His election focus is lower tuition and job creation, especially within the small to medium-sized business sector.

Also vying for the seat are Karl Boelling (Libertarian), Emilia Melara (Green) and Gennady Vilen-sky (Trillium).

The provincial election takes place June 12.

*An all-candidates meeting will be held next Thursday. See story on page 4 for more information.*

\* The NDP candidate did not respond to our questions and we were unable to reach the Trillium Party candidate.