

VIEW FROM QUEEN'S PARK: Affordable Housing, Funding, Electric Cars and more

By Chris Ballard, MPP
Newmarket-Aurora

York Region Housing Funding

This past week, I was honoured to announce that York Region will be receiving an additional \$23 million in funding for affordable housing. This new funding is under the Canada-Ontario Investment in Affordable Housing Program to help build and repair affordable housing for families, individuals and seniors.

A place to call home is the first step out of poverty. It is the first step to realizing new opportunities and it is the first step to a better quality of life. As Ontario's new Minister of Housing, I will do all I can to get Ontario closer to that important goal.

York Region's original allocation was \$45 million over four years. This additional funding will bring that total to \$68 million in funding for the Region. We have common priorities with York Region, and by working together we can realize our vision that every person should have an affordable, suitable, and adequate home to provide the foundation to secure employment, raise a family, and build strong communities.

York Region now has the flexibility to select how the funds will be distributed across the community based on local housing needs. Options include new rental construction, home repair, housing allowances, rent supplements or affordable home ownership.

Southlake Regional Health Centre Funding

Last week I attended an announcement at the number one cancer centre in Ontario--the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre at Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket. Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, announced the government of Ontario is investing \$3.6 million for a new radiation treatment unit.

Radiation is an effective and powerful treatment that makes cancer cells unable to grow and repair themselves. The therapy can be localized to the part of the body being treated. Southlake Regional Cancer Centre is a state-of-the-art facility that provides exceptional patient services and support. This additional funding means an additional 400 cancer patients from York Region and south Simcoe County will now have access to advanced radiation therapy every year as a result of the new radiation treatment unit, the fourth such machine at Southlake.

The addition of this suite will also allow for more treatment options closer to home for York Region and Simcoe County residents. No longer will patients have to commute to Toronto, which often was more stressful than the treatment.

Electric Car Charging Stations

York Region will soon see more electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

Nineteen stations will be added to the current network and will all be in service by March 2017. The province's investment in Ontario's Green Investment Fund will help address the anxiety some drivers feel regarding the distance their electric vehicles can travel compared to traditional vehicles. Building this network of 500 EV charging stations across 250 locations in Ontario will make planning a trip easier.

The goal is to have charging stations as readily available as gas stations. Thanks to the Electric Vehicle Chargers Ontario network of stations, drivers will be able to travel from Windsor to Ottawa, or from Toronto to North Bay, as well as within major urban centres.

Partner Facility Renewal Funding

The Yellow Brick House here in Aurora is receiving \$36,500 from the government of Ontario for its Partner Facility Renewal program. Yellow Brick House will be using the funding for much needed updates and repairs.

They will be installing emergency generators, paving and re-painting interior walls. Yellow Brick House has helped countless women and children in Newmarket-Aurora and across York Region by providing emergency shelter and community.

The province is investing \$16 million for upgrades and repairs at more than 170 community agencies across Ontario. These investments help developmental services, community services, Violence Against Women agencies, and Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy agencies to better serve clients.

Beat the Heat

July has got off to record highs. We're only a few weeks in and have already had too many heat alerts to count.

Extreme temperatures and humidity can cause health problems for Ontarians, specifically those people who are at a higher risk. The individuals that may be more vulnerable than others include infants and young children, people with chronic medical conditions, seniors, homeless people and people who work outdoors or in places that emit heat through industrial processes. Remember to check on family and friends that might fall into these areas. Newmarket and Aurora both opened cooling centres and have splash pads to help keep you and your loved ones cool in the heat. Lastly, don't forget your pets; if it's hot for you, it's hot for them. They need shade and lots of water.

I invite you to contact me on any issue. Please call my community office at 905-750-0019, or visit my website at www.ChrisBallardMPP.ca. My email is: cballard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org.

I look forward to hearing from you.