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EVERY CHILD MATTERS – National Day for Truth & Reconciliation took place across Canada on Tuesday, September 30, and local observances began with a special flag raising ceremony at Town Hall at which Mayor Tom Mrakas, Councillors Ron Weese and John Gallo, and Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Costas Menegakis were joined by municipal staff. Further observances included a community gathering at Aurora Town Square led by Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley, Elder Pat Floody, and storyteller Raiden Levesque. Full coverage of the evening ceremony will feature in next week's edition of The Auroran.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Region pushes for reimbursement after Province cancels speed camera program

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Region of York is calling for reimbursement from the Province after Queen's Park moved to cancel speed camera programs Ontario-wide – but Aurora's Regional rep, Mayor Tom Mrakas, suggests

such a move might be premature. Premier Doug Ford announced Thursday morning the government intends to introduce legislation that would ban the use of municipal automated speed enforcement (ASE) cameras across the Province, arguing they were being used as a form of revenue rather than as a means to improve road safety.

Instead, the Province will introduce a new fund to help municipalities “implement alternative safety measures, including proactive traffic-calming initiatives like speed bumps, roundabouts, raised crosswalks and curb extensions,” as well as public education and improved signage to slow down drivers.

“At a time when governments at all levels

Continued on page 8



THE FUTURE OF FIRE FIGHTING – It was a fall of family fun at the Ian Laing Headquarters as the Central York Fire Services held their annual community open house, which included activities, education, and even a chance to see how you'd fare wielding a fire hose. For more, see Page 13.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Neighbourhood Network winds down, transitions to Magna In Action

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Neighbourhood Network, a division of Magna International which has provided local volunteer opportunities, organized community events, and facilitated charitable giving in York Region's northern six municipalities, will soon transition into Magna in Action.

Magna says Magna in Action will be

Continued on page 19

OPEN HOUSE OCTOBER 18



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Aurora's Mary Liu, a Grade 12 student at Pickering College, is pictured outside the Newmarket independent school last week. **Photo courtesy of Pickering College**

Aurora student, team helping students ease into learning English

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

An Aurora student is working hard to ensure her peers learn English with ease after moving to Canada.

Mary Liu, a Grade 12 student at Newmarket's Pickering College, founded LinguaPeer Education Group Inc., in 2023 as an online platform pairing students from Asia with Canadian peers – or tutors – to help students struggling to learn English overcome these hurdles in a conversational setting.

Liu has been building the company and its platform diligently since its founding and last year it was a finalist in the Diamond Challenge, a prestigious international high school entrepreneurship competition among 940 international competitors.

"I started this in the summer of Grade 9 because my brother and many of my friends...when they first came [to Canada] they all had trouble speaking English – they didn't feel really confident speaking in English," Liu tells The Auroran. "Culture-wise, it's hard to imagine how their life would be abroad, especially coming from Asia, so I started LinguaPeer.

"We connect local North American high schoolers with students from Asia and they have conversations online, sharing about their life in North America and stuff like that to prepare these students with a cultural understanding and also English conversational abilities."

As a student, Liu developed LinguaPeer as part of Pickering College's Global Leadership Program, which encourages students to identify real-world problems locally and globally and develop real-world solutions to address them.

"This helped me dive deeper into the general problem," she explains.

Since its inception, LinguaPeer has reached more than 50 students with 35 tutors across Canada and has delivered

800 classes.

"From helping each student, I get feedback from the parent that their child has improved their English grade in school or they just feel more confident speaking in English," she says. "Comments like that are really motivational because I feel like it's having a real impact on these students and it's really useful for them."

The program – and Liu's efforts – have also extended beyond the platform.

This past August, while visiting her hometown in China, she used profits from LinguaPeer to donate more than 2,500 sets of stationery to underprivileged children in the area, supported by the Microlight Charity Foundation, which encourages students to pursue their education in the face of financial challenges.

"We take great pride in cultivating students who embody compassion, leadership, and a sense of responsibility to make the world greater, better, and more beautiful," says Joshua Armstrong, Director of Teaching and Learning at Pickering College. "Mary's act of generosity so clearly reflects these values and reminds us of the positive impact young people can have when given the opportunity to lead with empathy and purpose."

As she navigates her final year of her secondary education, Liu hopes to pursue a business degree at either the University of Western Ontario, the University of British Columbia, or the University of Waterloo. Looking forward to her post-secondary education, she says she's keen to take LinguaPeer to the next level at the same time.

"I'm going to continue to get more students in as well as more tutors so we can reach out to more students in need," she says. "And hopefully in the future I could [have] a more meaningful impact for more underprivileged students – not only in China, but maybe even in Canada and in Aurora."

Region confirms Karachiwalla as York's Medical Officer of Health

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Dr. Fareen Karachiwalla was formally confirmed as York Region's Medical Officer of Health last week.

The appointment was confirmed by Regional Council last week following approval from Ontario's Minister of Health on August 12.

Dr. Karachiwalla, who was a leading voice for the Region during the Global Pandemic, joined the Region of York in 2018 as Associate Medical Officer of Health.

She came to the Region with a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Western Ontario, with specialty training at the University of Toronto. She also holds a Master's Degree in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University. She also maintains a part-time clinical practice focusing on patients with complex mental health and addiction and

those experiencing homelessness.

"Public Health plays a critical role in keeping our communities safe and healthy," said York Region Chairman and CEO Eric Jolliffe in a statement following the September 25 Regional Council meeting. "On behalf of Regional Council, I extend my appreciation for the ongoing expertise of Dr. Karachiwalla, who continues to help advance public policies and programs that help prevent disease, promote wellness, respond to public health emergencies and improve access to services."

Added Regional CAO Erin Mahoney: "I look forward to continuing to work with Dr. Karachiwalla. She has demonstrated unwavering dedication and expertise in safeguarding the health and well-being of York Region residents

"Her leadership is instrumental in guiding our communities to a healthy, thriving and connected future."



TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PLANNING MEETING

AURORA TOWN COUNCIL will hold a Public Meeting to receive input on proposed Community Planning Permit By-law and Official Plan Amendment applications:

Wednesday, October 29, 2025 at 7 p.m.

Aurora Town Hall, Council Chambers, 100 John West Way, Aurora

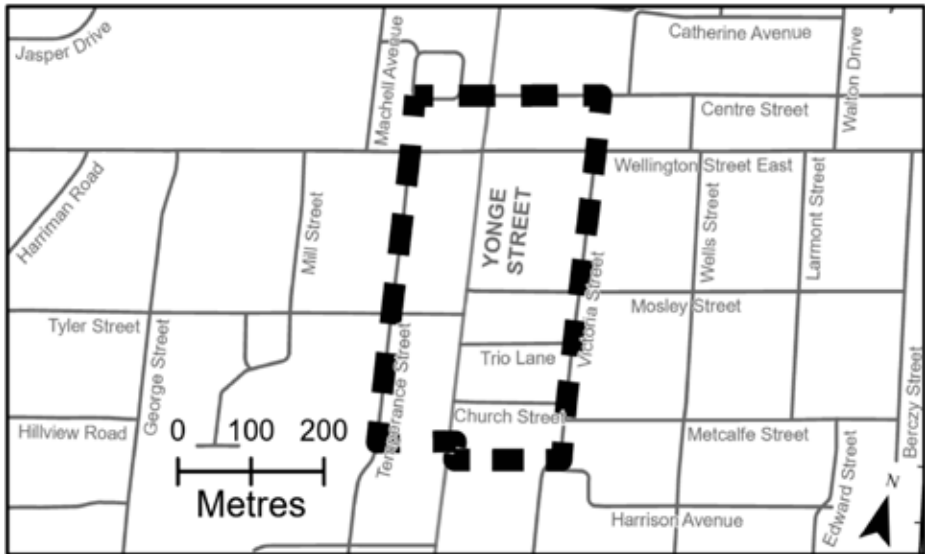
APPLICATION: Downtown Community Planning Permit System and Official Plan Amendment - the proposed Community Planning Permit System and Official Plan Amendment are to permit the Downtown Community Planning Permit By-law in the Promenade area.

PROPERTY: The downtown area and corridor of Yonge Street generally bound by Temperance Street to the west, Victoria Street to the east, just north of Wellington Street to the north, and just south of Church Street to the south.

APPLICANT: Town of Aurora

FILE NUMBER: OPA-2025-08

WARDS: 1 and 2



PROCEDURAL INFORMATION:

Parties interested in speaking during the public portion of the meeting may attend in person or electronically. To participate electronically, pre-registration is required. For more information, visit: aurora.ca/participation

The meeting will be live streamed at: youtube.com/TownofAurora

The Planning Report will be made available before the Public Planning Meeting date on the Town's website, by visiting the Agendas and Minutes section, located at: aurora.ca/agendas

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Any questions regarding the proposed application can be directed to Dania Asahi Ogie, Policy Planner, at 365-500-3099, or by email at daogie@aurora.ca.

Comments may also be mailed to the Planning and Development Services Department at 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON. L4G 6J1, faxed to 905-726-4736, or emailed to planning@aurora.ca prior to the meeting. Please quote the File Name and Number.

If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora on the proposed applications, you must make a written request to the Town to the attention of the Director of Planning and Development Services.

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora to the Ontario Land Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora before the approval authority gives or refuses approval of the subject applications, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora before the approval authority gives or refuses approval of the subject applications, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

PERSONAL INFORMATION COLLECTION NOTICE:

The Town of Aurora collects personal information in communications or presentations made to Town Council and/or its Committees under the legal authority of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter c.P.13, as amended. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act. If you are submitting letters, faxes, emails, presentations or other communications to the Town, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the Town will become part of the public record and will appear on the Town's website. The Town will also make your communication and any personal information in it, such as your address and postal code or email address available to the public unless you expressly request the Town to remove it. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Town Clerk, Town of Aurora, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 905-727-3123.

AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

The Town audio and/or video records Public Planning Meetings. If you make a presentation to Town Council or its Committees, you may be audio or video recorded. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be a public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act.

DATED at the Town of Aurora, this 2nd day of October, 2025

aurora.ca/publicnotices

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No place for partisan politics, says reader

As a concerned resident of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, I wish to highlight the misuse of taxpayer-funded resources by our new Member of Parliament (MP) for political messaging. The mailer we received from the MP earlier this month and the MP’s column in the Auroran newspaper appear to heavily promote partisan views and fearmongering rather than inform constituents about parliamentary activities and the members’ work.

An MP should represent all residents impartially. Government-provided tools like mailing privileges and local media columns provided as a public service should communicate official matters and keep the public informed. Using these resources for partisan messaging undermines trust and alienates constituents.

Recently, a taxpayer-funded mailer sent by the MP, used inflammatory language and misinformation to convince the reader of the conservative position on the electric vehicle mandate. A balanced discussion of the pros and cons of this legislation with accurate information is warranted. In fact, the government did reconsider this policy and paused the mandate – however, there is no mention of this in The Auroran column. Given the importance of the EV mandate, a follow up on action taken would have been useful information for readers.

Instead, the MP’s column in The Auroran is once again rife with partisan talking points, misinformation and fearmongering. While crime is clearly an important issue in our riding and more action must be taken by all levels of government to address this issue, the column simply repeats partisan narratives that stoke fear. Discussion of the proposed Conservative Bill is useful, but there is much more to report on regarding this issue.

As a resident, I want to know how our MP is engaging with stakeholders, advancing local priorities, and collaborating across party lines. What has the MP been doing as our elected representative not as a political pundit? The absence of such information in publicly funded communications is disappointing. I expect him to inform us of what is happening in Ottawa – not just deliver conservative talking points.

I urge our MP and The Auroran newspaper to prioritize non-partisan messaging with balanced and accurate information and the responsible use of public resources. Let’s ensure public communications from our MP inform and unite, rather than persuade and divide. Costas’ Corner should not only be for those in his corner. Our democracy is strongest when officials and the media prioritize the public good over partisan interests.

Thank you for your attention.

Marie Ellen
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

Reader concerned with “reckless government spending”

P.M. Mark Carney just announced another \$27 million in international assistance at the UN General Assembly.

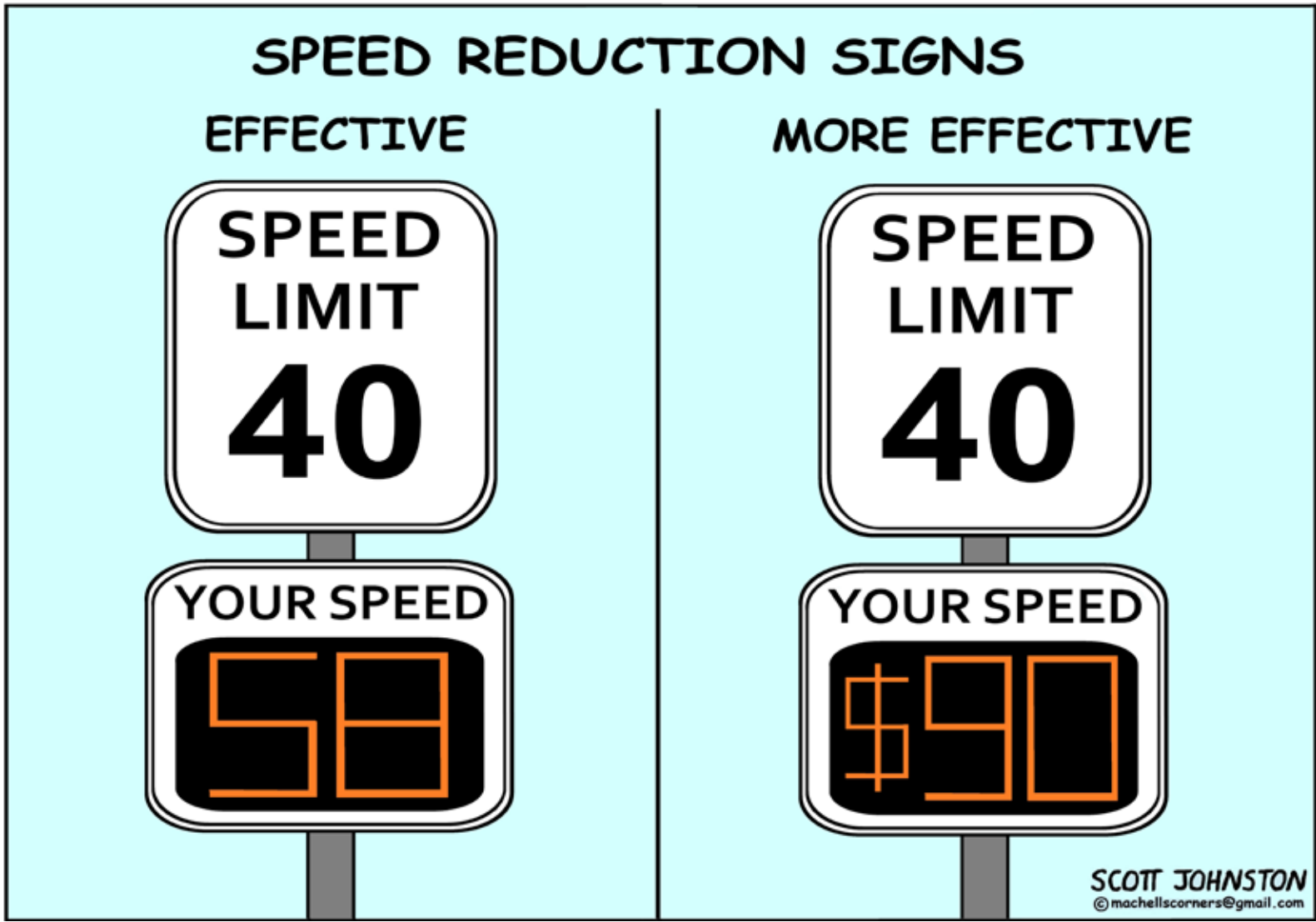
He announced \$60 million in support for Haiti which includes \$20 million to address transnational organized crime while ignoring our own transnational organized crime in Canada.

He has announced \$47 million in new funding for the West Bank and Gaza bringing Canada’s total funding to \$400 million.

The federal government also put taxpayers on the hook for \$30 billion to multinational corporations to build EV battery factories which are now laying

Continued on page 5

Machell’s Corners



Automated eyes on the road



BROCK’S BANTER

Brock Weir

Ford’s announcement that automated speed enforcement (ASE) cameras would be banned across the Province.

The ASE network, of course, was an imperfect system where some cameras were, perhaps, a little bit too sensitive in certain cases and places, and in need of adjustment. That said, removing a traffic calming mechanism that actually caused drivers to be conscious of their behaviours and the role they play behind the wheel is not, by my estimation, a cause for relief.

“At a time when governments at all levels should be doing everything they can to lower costs and make life more affordable, too many municipalities are using speed cameras as a cash grab,” said Premier Ford in a statement last week. “Enough is enough. Instead of making life more expensive by sending speeding tickets to drivers weeks after the fact, we’re supporting road safety measures that will prevent speeding in the first place, keep costs down, and keep our streets safe.”

Minister of Transportation Pabmeet Sarkaria doubled down on the Premier’s cost-savings argument, adding: “Municipal speed cameras have become nothing more than a tool for raising revenue. Our government is focused on measures that truly protect the safety of all Ontarians and we will continue working with municipalities to ensure Ontario maintains its position as one of the safest jurisdictions in North America.

Alternative road safety measures the Province will support municipalities on our roads?

“Large signs to slow down drivers by mid-November,” permanent “large signs with flashing lights” by next September, and encouraging towns and cities to “implement alternative traffic-calming measures such as speed bumps, speed cushions, raised crosswalks, curb extensions and roundabouts.”

Oh, and more signs: “enhance signage and education and awareness campaigns.”

Now, maybe it’s just me, but none of these

suggestions, if you can pardon the pun, are re-inventing the wheel. Our communities are rife with speed bumps, speed cushions, roundabouts, maybe a raised sidewalk or two, and signs of every imaginable size, shape, and light configurations line our roads. The results of these measures have – well, each of us has our own view on how effective these measures have been.

York Region’s monthly Council meeting last week coincided with the Province’s announcement and many members of Regional Council, although they were waiting for the finer details to be announced, identified a number of issues with the alternatives – not the least of which was the practicality of installing speed bumps, humps, and cushions on busy Regional roads and how doing so might impact emergency services trying to get to a call.

There is clearly much more work to be done on this file, so the question I have is: were the cameras simply too successful?

Granted, getting a speeding ticket weeks after the fact if you were clocked going only one or two kilometres per hour over the posted speed limit is probably an overreach, and hence the aforementioned tweaks that were clearly necessary before the program was scrapped altogether. But did it cause the persons on the receiving end of those tickets to be a little more mindful of how they used the road? Unless, they were received solely by the individuals who took matters into their own hands and violently disabled various cameras in Vaughan, I’d wager this was certainly the case.

Both the Premier and his Minister characterised the program as a “cash grab” – but, really, the only persons whose cash was getting grabbed were those who were flouting the long-established rules of our roads. One would think this would be decidedly in the wheelhouse of a government that likes to tout itself on being tough on crime and light a fire under other levels of government they don’t believe are holding up their end of the bargain.

“ASE is proven to reduce speeding, change driver behaviour, and make our roads safer for everyone – drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and especially children and other vulnerable road users,” said the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police in a statement a few days prior to the Government’s announcement. “The use of these tools is controlled by municipalities and deployed in areas of the community, such as school zones and community safety zones, where slowing down saves lives and prevents serious injuries.”

Let’s believe the experts.

ASE cameras, sadly, would not have made a difference for the Neville-Lake family, but effective ways of changing driver behaviour will undoubtedly go a long way in avoiding future tragedies.

THE AURORAN

Aurora’s Community Newspaper

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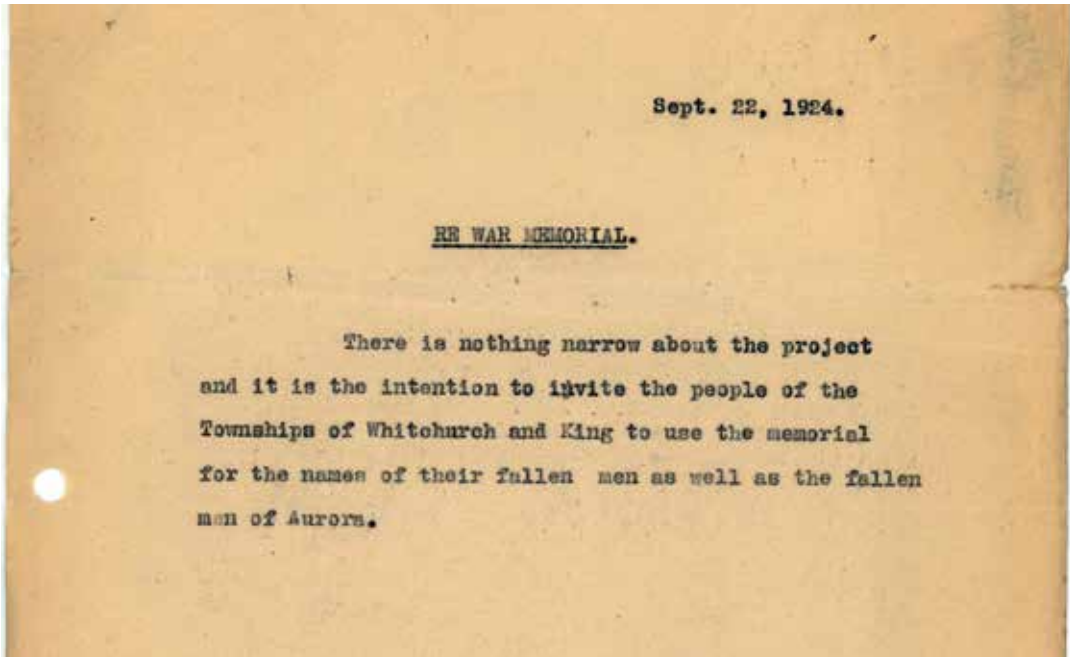
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The Aurora Museum & Archives is commemorating... The 100th anniversary of the Aurora War Memorial

Inter-committee memo inviting the Townships of King and Whitchurch to place the names of their war dead on the memorial. Inter-committee memo inviting the Townships of King and Whitchurch to place the names of their war dead on the memorial.



After the First World War, grief weighed heavily on Aurora, King, and Whitchurch. With many soldiers buried overseas, families mourned without closure. In 1920, Herbert Fleury visited the battlefields of Flanders, returning with a quiet resolve to honour the fallen. In 1924, he and Sir William Mulock sparked a community-wide effort to build a memorial. Mulock pledged \$10,000 (over \$180,000 in today's money!) if citizens could match it. Fleury contributed \$1,000 and chaired the newly formed Aurora War Memorial Association, which led grassroots fundraising across the three communities. United in memory, they canvassed door-to-door and published appeals in local papers. Their efforts culminated in a towering monument that still stands today.

Join us at the Aurora War Memorial on Friday, October 3 at 5:30 p.m. for the 100th Anniversary Ceremony and Re-dedication, followed by a reception at the Aurora Legion

Note: As we near the 100th Anniversary of the Aurora War Memorial and Remembrance Day, we'll be regularly sharing excerpts from our exhibition In Their Memory: The Story of the Aurora-Whitchurch-King War Memorial, now on view at Peace Park.



PARSA'S PERSPECTIVE

Michael Parsa, MPP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

As we welcome the month of October, I want to take a moment to reflect on the season ahead. The celebration of Thanksgiving during this time of the year brings families and friends together, encourages everyone to pause from their busy schedules, and serves as a reminder to be grateful for the many blessings in our lives.

It's also a moment to think about the importance of kindness, generosity, and supporting one another. Here in our community, I've seen so many examples of people living out these values, whether through volunteering, lending a hand to a neighbour, or supporting local organizations that make a difference every day. These acts of care strengthen the bonds that bring us together.

At the same time, not everyone experiences this season with ease. Some of our neighbours may be facing challenges, and a small gesture can go a long way in brightening their day. Whether it's contributing to a food drive, reaching out to someone who may be alone, or simply sharing a meal, we all have the power to make the season more meaningful for others.

As your representative, I am deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in me and for the opportunity to continue serving such a vibrant and caring community. I wish you and your loved ones a joyful and memorable Thanksgiving.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

Canadian workers off.

P.M. Carney, ex-Governor of the Bank of Canada and Bank of England, has yet to provide a budget, while promising billions in new spending.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) recently reported that we have a rising debt to GDP ratio at the same time as a dropping GDP. He reported that the government has broken past even Trudeau's fiscal guardrails, with the deficit increasing to \$68.5 billion this year.

The PBO stated that this current path is "unsustainable." Also, The International Monetary Fund is warning countries including Canada to reduce spending and seriously cut debt.

P.M. Carney says that he will spend less to invest more. Do not be fooled. When you can't expect a return on your investment, it is actually spending. One example was our P.M. investing half a billion dollars to make military equipment not more lethal, but more "green," which is "spending."

When our government increases our debt, it fuels inflation and our cost of living rises. For example, the Food Banks Canada's report, just released, reveals that over 25% of Canadians are struggling to afford food, which is worsening.

P.M. Carney is making large spending commitments without a budget and without engaging all the Members of Parliament to give input on his choices nor allow a vote. This should be of serious concern to every Canadian taxpayer.

Shelley Wister
Aurora

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to brock@lpcmedia.ca
Deadline for submissions
is Sunday at 1 p.m.*



Time Travellers Diary

By Jacqueline Stuart

And One More is Lost

The upcoming re-dedication of the Aurora War Memorial prompted thoughts about the personal histories of those individuals commemorated on the memorial.

Thousands of members of the Canadian armed forces during the First World War died as the result of illness or accidents or other causes not related to gunfire. Several men named on our war memorial are within this category.

One of them is Henry Harold "Harry" Allen.

Harry Allen (born in 1878) came to Aurora in 1912 to serve as minister of the Presbyterian church. He was accompanied by his wife, Hannah, and their daughter, Helen.

The First World War began in August of 1914. In September of 1915, Mr. Allen enlisted.

He would not be a chaplain or padre within the Chaplain Service. Harry Allen felt that he could be of greater help and comfort to his fellow soldiers if he served beside them and shared their whole range of experiences.

The Presbyterian congregation held a farewell gathering at the church on the evening before Harry departed for his training camp. Perhaps not the most thoughtful of timings?

On October 1, Private Allen left for the 81st Battalion camp at the Exhibition grounds in Toronto. In the Poultry Building, to be precise — well scrubbed out, we hope. The battalion would be there for the next seven months, close enough for Harry to nip home when he had some leave.

At the end of April 1916 the 81st sailed for the United Kingdom. Their new base would be an army camp at Shorncliffe in Kent, near the English Channel. Here, Harry would work as a stretcher-bearer in the Moore Barracks hospital. In June he was given the rank of acting corporal.

It was at this point in his history that I decided to do not only some time travelling, but some geographical travelling. I set out for Shorncliffe in invisible mode.

On the morning of June 15, Harry took part in the regular drill, but he was clearly not well. He was allowed to return

to his tent, where he went to lie on his cot because he was feeling so dizzy.

Another soldier sat with him and after about an hour called for help. Harry was not dozing: he was in a coma and his skin was turning purplish. He was carried to the hospital. I wept as I watched all the efforts being made by the doctors, because I knew what the outcome was to be for this beloved husband, father, and spiritual guide.

Harry Allen died at 9:23 that evening. He was thirty-six.

Determining the cause of death was a problem. A tent-mate said Harry had taken a pill that morning, and later some veterinary tablets were found in the same pill container. In the end "acute chronic pulmonary tuberculosis," resulting in respiratory failure, was given as the cause.

Harry was buried in the military cemetery at Shorncliffe. His otherwise standard military marker is engraved, at its base, "In life Rev. H. H. Allen M.A. B.D. / Aurora Presbyterian Church."

A large memorial gathering was held in Aurora.

Hannah Allen would remarry in 1927. Helen Allen would become a journalist, especially well known for her "Today's Child" columns.



GETTING THINGS DONE

**Mayor
Tom Mrakas**

Last week, Premier Ford announced that the Provincial government will soon be introducing legislation to ban automated speed enforcement (ASE) cameras across Ontario.

As I have previously communicated, the Town of Aurora has never invested in ASE cameras — the cameras operating within Aurora are located on Regional roads and fall under the jurisdiction of York Region. With the passage of Provincial legislation, these cameras would be removed from Aurora's roads.

I want to reassure residents that the cancellation of this program will have no financial impact here in Aurora. We had not purchased equipment or implemented cameras. While many have seen ASE as a tool to help curb speeding in school zones, I want to be clear that even with their removal, our commitment to road safety remains unchanged. We will continue to use every tool available to protect drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and most importantly, children and other vulnerable road users.

I would like to thank the Province for providing clarity on this issue, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are not spent on a program that will not continue. I also welcome the establishment of a new provincial fund to help municipalities implement alternative safety measures on our roadways. I look forward to continued collaboration with the Province, York Region and York Regional Police on effective measures to keep our community safe.

I am aware that some municipalities want the Province to fully reimburse municipalities for ASE installation and implementation costs. While this perspective is understandable, it's important to recognize that ASE was

originally designed as a cost-recovery initiative, with revenues intended to offset equipment and operational expenses. It would make sense then that municipalities first use the revenues they've collected to offset their program expenses before asking for reimbursement.

Transparency is essential. Municipalities should clearly show how those revenues generated by the ASE program have been allocated, particularly in relation to their intended purpose of road and traffic safety initiatives. If the funds were not spent on these priorities but directed elsewhere, it would be difficult, in my opinion, to justify additional financial support from the Province.

Where ASE revenues are insufficient to cover program costs, it may be appropriate to request the Province to consider addressing the shortfall. However, municipalities should first demonstrate responsible use of collected revenues. Transparency and accountability are key — after all, there is only one taxpayer.

APL’s University Fair to showcase Canadian and international opportunities for students

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As Grade 12 students look ahead to their post-secondary careers, representatives from Canadian and international colleges and universities are set to descend on Aurora to meet with students and share all the possibilities.

This Monday, October 6, the Aurora Public Library will host its third annual College and University Fair, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The fair will include representatives from universities and colleges from across Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

According to Aurora Public Library CEO Jodi Marr, the event is designed to be accessible to all area teens and their parents, provide an opportunity to have all their questions answered, and be able to make an informed decision when it comes to determining the next

chapter of their lives.

“It’s our mission to support lifelong learning and help young people kind of chart their future, and this is one of the ways we can do that,” says Marr, adding that coming out to fairs like these removes some of the guesswork on what can sometimes be a daunting application process. “It’s so much more customized to what your needs are when you go and speak to a representative in person versus viewing their website. A website is a great source of information and nothing beats going and talking to a representative from that school about the specific program [you’re interested in].

“This helps you narrow things down so that you can go further. Later in the year, you might go on a school tour or things like that to really nail down what you want your final choices to be.”

The College and University Fair is being organized by APL’s Teen Librarian Virgilio Medina who says the aim of the event is to ensure the



Last year’s Fair brought a full house of students to the Aurora Public Library’s living space.
Photo courtesy of APL

community “has access to information about the programs, scholarships, admission requirements” each school is looking for.

“Sometimes preparing for a university application is very overwhelming; you have so many questions – the cost, the process, and other things you have to consider in order to get admitted,” he says. “Getting into a course that’s very competitive, you should be ready with everything you need because there’s a limited number of students that can be accepted. I think this is a great opportunity for high school students to just go to the Library and explore the options available.”

At press time this week, more than 40 post-secondary institutions had confirmed their attendance, and there will be additional representatives on site for resources related to scholarship coaching and other areas to make sure your admission applications are all they can be – all close to home.

“We’ve heard so much feedback that [students and families] are having a hard time going downtown just to be able to have this kind of fair, so we thought, why don’t we just bring them here and make it more accessible?” Medina adds. “I think there are so many misconceptions that teenagers have at the moment because they think there is only one course, a popular course like engineering and computer science, but one of the things I really want to emphasize through this event is there are more opportunities you can have. There are different career pathways, not just those surrounding engineering and medical. I would like to give students more opportunities to explore and give them a lot of choices

– that their choices are not limited to just those popular programs, but a lot of options where they can really be successful in their own journey.”

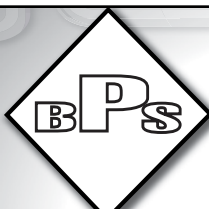
Marr adds that this upcoming Fair is just one of the many ways the APL invests in youth – and this particular initiative is an investment not only in youth, but in support of the “long-term growth and vitality of our community by making sure that the students of Aurora, our residents, get connected with the right information, so they can meet their needs and continue to grow.”

And, as students grow, APL is equipped to help them on each step of their academic journey.

“We are seeing a lot more teens using the Library,” says Marr. “Teens love using the Library; I thought maybe with moving Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School over to the other side of Town, we’d see less teens, but that hasn’t turned into that. We are a hot study spot for the youth of Aurora and we’re so happy to have them.

“It’s nice to see the Library used by teens in that way, to be seen as a place to go after school so that they can get group work done, individual study, or even just socialize. That’s been a really important part. The Library has come a long way in the last few years as with the teens using the Library, and that’s one of the reasons why our numbers are so high when we come to in-person visits.”

For more information on Monday’s College & University Fair, including a regularly-updated list of attending universities, colleges, and like organizations, visit tinyurl.com/APLFAIR.



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Youth Volunteer Fair will connect teens with local opportunities

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Local youth looking for volunteer opportunities here in Aurora will have all their questions answered this Wednesday, October 8, as the Town of Aurora hosts a Youth Volunteer Fair.

Set for the Treasure Hill Bridge at Aurora Town Square from 4 – 7 p.m., the event is tailored to youth between the ages of 12 and 17, with local organizations offering volunteer opportunities, and much more.

Miranda Link, Youth & Community Developer for the Town of Aurora, says the event is designed to be a “one-stop-shop” at the beginning of the school year for youth and parents alike to get organized not just for the community service hours required for high school graduation, but to simply give back.

“It’s not about taking the first [volunteer] opportunity that comes along, but really to get to know the people who are going to be running the volunteers and getting a sense of what’s going to be involved in each of the opportunities – it’s kind of like shopping around for your perfect opportunity.

“We always make sure the organizations that are coming will have valuable opportunities for youth, which is obviously the most important part because we want to match youth with an organization they’re passionate about or something they see themselves doing in the future.”

One organization participating in the Fair for the first time this year is The Career Foundation, a non-profit which supports job searching, skills training and offers many resources, including training opportunities.

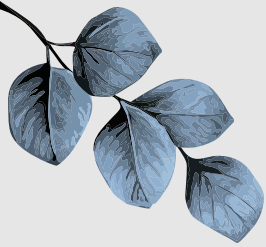
“They connect multiple youth with

We always make sure the organizations that are coming will have valuable opportunities for youth, which is obviously the most important part because we want to match youth with an organization they’re passionate about or something they see themselves doing in the future

multiple organizations and they work with them to really connect them to something that maybe they’re interested in for their future,” says Link, adding the Fair will also give youth the opportunity to weigh in on what they would like to see at The Loft, the Town’s youth drop-in at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, which is currently undergoing a “refresh.”

“We want youth to come in and tell us what they would like to see in The Loft. We want to know paint colours, we want to know what you want your experience to be, but mostly we’re looking to see what activities they would like to see in The Loft. What’s something that maybe you can’t do at home...that would give a reason for you and your friends to come out?”

For more information on Wednesday’s Youth Volunteer Fair, visit aurora.ca/youth.



AURORA’S 2025

Colours of Fall CONCERT

Thursday, October 9
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Aurora Town Park, 49 Wells Street

Fiddlestix

Fiddlestix blends the energy of a rock concert with Celtic, Country and Folk music. More than just a band, they deliver a high-voltage experience that unites generations.

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(while quantities last)
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aurora.ca/FallConcert

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Windrow clearing for seniors and people with disabilities

Program begins December 1, 2025 and runs until April 1, 2026

Applications accepted until **November 1, 2025**

What is a windrow?

A windrow is the snow left at the end of a driveway after a snowplow has cleared a road



aurora.ca/Windrow





TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PLANNING MEETING

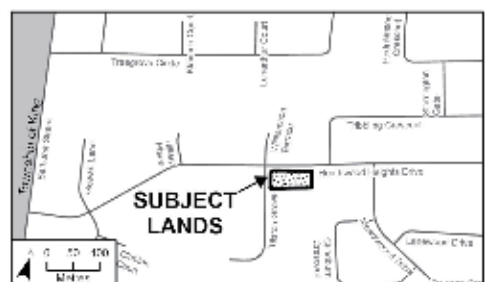
AURORA TOWN COUNCIL will hold a Public Meeting to receive input on a proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications:

Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 7 p.m.

Aurora Town Hall, Council Chambers, 100 John West Way, Aurora Ontario

APPLICATION: The purpose of the proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications is to increase the allowable diversity and establish site specific development standards to facilitate development of five (5) lots for single detached dwellings.

PROPERTY: 161 Heathwood Heights Drive
LEGAL DISCRIPTION: Plan 65M-2431, Lot 22
APPLICANT: Macaulay Shiomi Howson Ltd.
FILE NUMBERS: OPA-2025-04 and ZBA-2025-05
WARD: 1



PROCEDURAL INFORMATION:
Parties interested in speaking during the public portion of the meeting may attend in person or electronically. To participate electronically, pre-registration is required. For more information, visit: aurora.ca/participation

The meeting will be live streamed at: youtube.com/TownofAurora

The Planning Report will be made available the Tuesday before the Public Planning Meeting date on the Town's website, by visiting the Agendas and Minutes section, located at: aurora.ca/agendas

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
Any questions regarding the proposed application can be directed to Felix Chau of the Planning and Development Services Department at 365-500-3105, or by email at fchau@aurora.ca.

Comments may also be mailed to the Planning and Development Services Department at 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON. L4G 6J1, faxed to 905-726-4736, or emailed to planning@aurora.ca prior to the meeting. Please quote the File Name and Number.

If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora on the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application, you must make a written request to the Town to the attention of the Director of Planning and Development Services.

PERSONAL INFORMATION COLLECTION NOTICE:

The Town of Aurora collects personal information in communications or presentations made to Town Council and/or its Committees under the legal authority of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter c.P.13, as amended. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act. If you are submitting letters, faxes, emails, presentations or other communications to the Town, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the Town will become part of the public record and will appear on the Town's website. The Town will also make your communication and any personal information in it, such as your address and postal code or email address available to the public unless you expressly request the Town to remove it. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Town Clerk, Town of Aurora, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 905-727-3123.

AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

The Town audio and/or video records Public Planning Meetings. If you make a presentation to Town Council or its Committees, you may be audio or video recorded. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be a public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act.

DATED at the Town of Aurora, this 2nd day of October, 2025

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1
aurora.ca/publicnotices • 905-727-1375



BUSINESS & FINANCE



Region pushes for reimbursement after Province cancels speed camera program

From page 1

should be doing everything they can to lower costs and make life more affordable, too many municipalities are using speed cameras as a cash grab,” said Premier Ford in a statement. “Enough is enough. Instead of making life more expensive by sending speeding tickets to drivers weeks after the fact, we’re supporting road-safety measures that will prevent speeding in the first place,

keep costs down, and keep our streets safe.” While the Town of Aurora never installed ASE cameras on local streets, cameras in the community, such as those on Yonge Street, were installed by the Region.

The Premier’s announcement last Thursday morning coincided with a meeting of Regional Council where questions were raised around the practicality of alternative speed controls on Regional roads, how to keep roads safe, as well as how the Region might be reimbursed by the Province for the money spent on existing cameras.

“The debate’s been going on for a week or two now, a month or two now, and what I just want to say is...the experts, the Ontario Safety League, the Association of Chiefs of Police, SickKids Hospital, the people who spend their every waking hour trying to save the lives of children and adults, endorse the program, and support the program,” said Newmarket Mayor John Taylor. “They know it works, they know it saves lives.

“This program could be reduced in scope by 75 per cent, still leaving municipalities with a handful of cameras as tools to use in really important spots, spots where crises occur, or, heaven forbid, a death occurs or a child is injured.... Please don’t talk to me about flashing signs and speed humps. We’ve been there and done that for decades. We know what truly works, what truly is effective, and that’s speed cameras and safety cameras.”

Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti said it was “presumptuous” of the Province to say they will give municipalities money for other initiatives “when municipalities have paid millions and millions of dollars for equipment” for the program and these investments were made in “good faith.”

Scarpitti moved a motion, which was approved on a vote of 17 – 1, to call on the Province for reimbursement.

“Let’s put a few speed humps on Regional roads and maybe in six months’ time, we’ll see new legislation that says, ‘No, no, take those out. We were just kidding. We didn’t mean for you to put in speed humps to slow down speeders in school zones with speed humps,’” he said. “If the Province of Ontario thinks that we’re going to saddle our property taxpayers with the costs that have not been covered because they’ve now decided to change their direction of what they want municipalities to do in relation to speeding in school zones, we’re not going to pass that onto property taxpayers and the Province of Ontario... should [be] reimbursing the Region, local municipalities that have spent the money to put in place a program that was authorized by the Province of Ontario.”

Richmond Hill Mayor David West was of a similar view, who said the financial implications of cancelling the program were important – a view shared by Regional staff who said there will be implications for staff members who were hired to implement the ASE program – and speed control alternatives offered by the Province fell short of the mark.

“There’s no way that our emergency services are going to be able to navigate in an emergency, when they are in a hurry, speed bumps,” he said. “Signs with flashing lights aren’t going to be equivalent in terms of safety improvements to a program like ASE. If there’s some idea out there that will actually be equivalent to the safety improvements that we’re seeing with ASE then I’m all ears.

“What I am hearing so far about putting in flashing lights...it’s not going to work. I guess the other thing is the speed bumps on Regional roads, I mean that can’t happen. We can’t have fire trucks, police cars and ambulances who are in a hurry to get to where they need to go having to slow down over speed bumps. I think we need to inject a dose of reality into what I’ve heard so far.”

While Mayor Mrakas, Aurora’s representative at the Regional table, was not present for the vote on the motion calling on the Province for reimbursement, in a statement following the meeting he expressed some caution.

“I am aware that some governments want the Province to fully reimburse municipalities for ASE installation and implementation costs. While this perspective is understandable, it’s important to recognize that ASE was originally designed as a cost-recovery initiative, with revenues intended to offset equipment and operational expenses,” he said. “It would make sense then that municipalities first use the revenues they’ve collected to offset their program expenses before asking for reimbursement.

“Transparency is essential. Municipalities should clearly show how those revenues generated by the ASE program have been allocated, particularly in relation to their intended purpose of road and traffic safety initiatives. If the funds were not spent on these priorities but directed elsewhere, it would be difficult, in my opinion, to justify additional financial support from the Province. Where ASE revenues are insufficient to cover program costs, it may be appropriate to request the Province to consider addressing the shortfall. However, municipalities should first demonstrate responsible use of collected revenues. Transparency and accountability are key — after all, there is only one taxpayer.”



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First-time homebuyers rebate could be on ice until other levels of government pay up

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Plans to establish a Development Charge Rebate Program for first-time homebuyers in Aurora could be placed on the backburner pending further support from the Federal and Provincial Governments.

Council last week voted to proceed with the development of a First-Time Homebuyers Development Charges Equivalent Rebate Policy, pending dedicated funding “from other levels of government that fully offsets all associated costs.”

Its development is also contingent on affordability conditions put in place, along with a “clawback” provision requiring repayment if the home in question is sold within five years, and a cap on total rebates annually.

The creation of such a rebate program at the municipal level was first floated by Mayor Tom Mrakas in April as “a meaningful way to reduce upfront costs and improve affordability” for residents.

“First-time homebuyers often face significant barriers to entering the housing market, and a targeted DC rebate would provide immediate relief to those looking to purchase their first home in Aurora,” said Mayor Mrakas in his springtime motion.

Last week’s decision pins the creation of such a policy on the financial support from upper levels of government in concert with similar rebate programs put in place at the Region and that “staff engage with public and non-profit housing providers for input and provide a progress report with a cost-benefit analysis to ensure effectiveness and fiscal sustainability.”

“The financial feasibility of a development charge rebate program for first-time homebuyers is dependent upon the receipt of new, dedicated funding from other levels of government to fully offset associated costs,” said municipal staff in a report before lawmakers last week. “York Region Council has already developed and approved a policy of this nature. Should the Town proceed with its own policy, it should align with York Region’s. As the administrative requirements for this program are expected to be high, aligning these policies will allow for efficiencies administering both of these policies, as well as minimize applicant confusion. It is likely that should both of these policies proceed, synergies will be possible through combining the Town and York Region’s rebate application processes.

“York Region’s policy offers an equivalent DC rebate to eligible first-time home buyers of eligible homes. A home purchaser is eligible for this rebate should they be a recipient of Ontario’s Land Transfer Tax Refund for First-Time Homebuyers. An eligible home is considered to be any new residential construction located in York Region with a purchase price, before tax, at or below \$1 million, on the date of closing. This rebate does not apply to non-first-time buyers of a new home, resale properties, assignment sale or any non-residential properties.”

The report goes on to note that with a “slump” in the condo market, there is a shift towards more rental units coming into the community and the “proportion of new apartment units that are purpose-built rental in nature are expected to fall over time as the condo market recovers.

Continued on page 18

Windrow clearing pilot will continue with increased user cost, subsidies

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Aurora’s windrow removal pilot program will continue into this coming winter – with an increased price per household, and subsidies to help others make ends meet.

Council last week formally gave the green light to extend the pilot program another year, helping seniors and those living with disabilities to clear the ends of their driveways of pesky banks of snow left by passing street snowplows.

The upcoming winter season will see the program made available to local seniors aged 65+ at a cost of \$200 per household, with subsidies available to residents living with disabilities and seniors in the same age bracket who fall under the low-income threshold as set by the Federal government.

The decision came after recent talks which explored the possibility of providing reimbursements to qualified residents who might book a private windrow-clearing/plowing service, raising costs to ensure the program is cost-neutral for taxpayers, and even doing away with the pilot altogether.

Sara Tienkamp, Aurora’s Director of Operations, told Council that with current staffing levels and with the recommendations before Council, there would be “no impact to the budget.”

“I can perform that duty under [the Operating Budget] with minimal impact,” she said. “There might be some increased fuel, some maintenance on some vehicles, but all the other costs for staffing are already accommodated and we can fit that within the current service level that we provide. If you’re considering including individuals over 65 at a \$200 rate, that would cover the complete cost of hiring additional staff. Assuming that we would be over that \$200 threshold that we’re recommending we would need, then we would need an additional body.

Those costs would be totally covered and it would be cost-neutral then.”

As the demand for windrow removal went down over the last winter season after Council attached a \$100 fee – a 50 per cent decrease in uptake, she said – this further fee hike, she added, could result in a further reduction of applicants.

“Last year we had around 275 applicants and that was inclusive of the ones that were subsidized by the Town that were low-income,” she said.

While the program passed unanimously on a vote of 6 – 0 – with Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner absent from last week’s meeting – some lawmakers still had reservations on whether the price increase was the right way forward.

“Low-income thresholds usually identify the poverty line, and I think we’re not just talking about poverty here – what we’re talking about is the ability to pay,” said Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese. “I think many of the low-income thresholds, no matter which one you use, are really quite low.... I think it might not capture some of the people that really need it to people that are greater than [an individual income of] \$21,000.

“I am just concerned that it is going to be too difficult for some of the people to enter this program even though they’re at low income, but a little higher income than those thresholds.”

Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland also had concerns over the costs and requested a status update as the program rolls out to ensure its meeting the mark.

“I think it’s important that staff do a report back in Q2 2026 with the results of this program to monitor its progress and offer any recommendations to improve the service or budget model,” she said. “As we’ve seen...we’ve had variations in different winters and I think this is something that would be beneficial.”



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EDUCATION WITH BALANCE



Local dance instructors reflect on a decade of Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

After opening up their ballroom dance school on Industrial Parkway South, burgeoning business owners Anastasia Trutneva, Kelly Stacey, and Patrick Derry sought ways to become more involved in the Aurora community.

What began as a way to help local community leaders strut their stuff on the dance floor while making a difference for charity, has grown into a decade of giving for the principals behind Artistica Ballroom Dance Studios – and, as they put the finishing touches on the choreography behind this year’s milestone tenth anniversary edition of Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars Aurora Newmarket, they’re reflecting on a whirlwind decade that has taken them places they never expected to go.

“In our first year, we truly had no idea what to expect,” says Trutneva. “We

initially saw it as a great opportunity to showcase our up-and-coming studio; however, we quickly realized the immense impact we could make over the years. By teaming up with community stars, we learned how much of a difference we could collectively achieve by uniting an amazing community for an incredible cause.”

Derry adds it was the first experience working within the Aurora and Newmarket communities and while they thought Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars would be a good way to use their talents to “do a little bit of good for a great cause, we didn’t realize that it would introduce us to so many great leaders in the community and inspire us to want to continue.”

“Our love for this community has only grown over the years,” he says. “We have no interest in stopping and hope that we can inspire other businesses as we were once inspired to pitch in more



Artistica Ballroom Dance Studios’ Kelly Stacey (far left), Anastasia Trutneva (centre), and Patrick Derry (second from right) are pictured with 2025 Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars contestants Tracy Smith, Phil Rose, Daniela Altieri, and Phiona Durrant.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir



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and make this community a better place.”

The event has, looking back over its first decade, “evolved to be more impactful and entertaining, pushing the envelope on choreography, and what these performances could be.

“I think this event reminds us that when we band together as a community and support one another, we recognize the love and kindness we can all tap into – a small reminder of our own humanity,” she says. “Sometimes you need to lead by example and we know our efforts are seen by the community, and like a ripple effect, we see our enthusiasm being mirrored in other events and organizations.”

For Stacey, some of her favourite memories of the first ten years are of the rehearsals before the show.

“There’s always a moment when we are teaching the choreography when the stars realize what they’ve gotten themselves into, and the brief moment of, ‘Uh-oh, can I even do this?’ The fuel is knowing that they can, of course! Watching them develop confidence and the skills they never knew they had has to be one of the most rewarding things I’ve been privileged to with being a witness to.”

Similarly, Trutneva cites the moments just before the show itself as being particularly fun to look back on.

“All the hard work is done, the fundraising pushed to the maximum and all that’s left is to go out and give it your all,” she says. “The camaraderie and team energy built in that moment always means the world to me.”

Adds Derry: “What stands out the most to me are the people. I’ve made great friends and met incredible people that lead this community into a brighter future. I’ve met kids that have benefited from Easter Seals and grown into incredible people. Getting to know the people that Easter Seals helps is the biggest thing that fuels me. They are intelligent, driven adults who got the chance to grow and reach their potential because of Easter Seals. That is a really special thing and a really great cause.”

As this year’s milestone approaches, they hope fundraising efforts this year can help them go well over the threshold of \$1 million over the last 10 years.

Local celebrities set to take the floor this year on October 9 at the Royal Venetian Mansion include Tracy Smith of Kitchen Table CEOs, restaurateur Martin McQueen, Phil Rose of the Town of Aurora, lawyer Jay Willmot, entrepreneur Shabi Monzavi, Aurora Black Community Association founder Phiona Durrant, restaurant owner Samantha Buckley, and Easter Seals Ambassador Daniella Altieri.

Altieri’s participation is a particular point of pride for the dance instructors as they see it as a true full-circle moment.

“It’s everything,” says Derry. “It’s for Daniela who was given opportunities through Easter Seals that allowed her to show the world who she is. She’s smart, and funny, and driven, and can do anything she wants now – including dance, which is why it is so important for more of the kids that Easter Seals helps to see her out there, so that they can see themselves in her.”

“This is as full-circle as it comes,” adds Stacey. “We are beyond proud of Daniela to be the first to ever do it and we hope it’s the first of many more to come.”

This year’s theme is A Night at the Silver Screen and the Artistica family and the collection of celebs are working on iconic numbers set to iconic movie music.

“The movies have given us some pretty iconic songs over the years!” says Stacey. “We kicked off [picking the music] by sifting through soundtracks and doing a lot of research. Especially when it came to our opening number – we needed a song to tie it all together, kick off the show with big energy, and set the tone for the theme – I think we nailed it!”

Trutneva notes that two of the celebrities she’s paired with helped take out some of the guesswork and had their own movie music in mind – while all three promise some surprises.

“This is going to be a show to remember,” says Derry. “All of the numbers are incredible. We have a few surprises up our sleeves that I just know are going to knock people’s socks off. I won’t say much more now, but people will want to be there!”

For more information on next week’s Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars Aurora-Newmarket, including how to secure your tickets and support your favourite dancers, visit eastersealsdancing.org/newmarket.

Lip Sync Battle raises more than \$100,000 for Victim Services



On Thursday, September 25, the Performance Hall at Aurora Town Square was rocking as community leaders took the stage for Victim Services of York Region's Lip Sync Battle. Donning themed costumes, this year's performers brought to life everything from power ballads to gender-flipped tributes to popular boybands and girl groups of the past – raising \$100,000 and counting for the local organization, a non-profit group partnered with the York Regional Police to help victims of crime and tragic circumstances. This year's participants included Fabulous Foundation Falsettos (Southlake Health Foundation, Team Captain Dionne Malcolm, performing WHAM's Wake Me Up), Chris and Erin Cartwright (performing Moves Like Jagger), Team AC Mrakas and the Hot Flashes (Team Captain Alison Collins Mrakas, featuring Patricia Wallace, Sandra Humfries and Shelley Lundquist, performing Man, I Feel Like a Woman), Orange Theory Fitness Newmarket-Aurora (Team Captain: Joe Derochie, performing a boyband montage); and Function Studios (Team Captain: Kelly Punzo, performing Simply the Best). Celebrity judges included YRP Chief Jim MacSween, Regional Chair Eric Jolliffe, and Joan Kelly-Walker, along with emcee Beverley Mahood.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

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Central York Fire Services held their annual open house at their Ian Laing Headquarters on Earl Stewart Drive on September 20, welcoming close to 1,000 residents for a day of family fun, including a chance to try out equipment, watch rescue demonstrations, learn more about smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and more. Adding to the fun was a dunk tank, with all money raised benefiting the Hawkins-Gignac Foundation, which aims to “do everything possible to stop The Silent Killer” of carbon monoxide “taking so many innocent Canadian lives.”

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



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Week of October 2, 2025

Rugby World Cup “Watch Party” attracts more than 220 to Town Square for Team Canada’s silver medal win in England



(Left) Rugby fans of all ages joined the fun at the viewing party held in the Aurora Town Square Performance Hall. (Right) Mayor Mrakas joined members of the Aurora Barbarians for a photo ahead of the viewing party.

Aurora photos by Jim Stewart

Aurora Barbarians McKinley Hunt and Tyson Beukeboom featured on Silver Medal-Winning Roster

BY JIM STEWART

The final score of Saturday’s Rugby World Cup championship game wasn’t to the liking of more than 220 raucous spectators at Aurora Town Square.

However, like the valiant Canadian Senior Women 15’s, a 33-13 loss to #1-ranked England did not dampen the spirits of the Aurora Barbarians-based crowd.

As the clock wound down on Team Canada’s 20-point loss to the mighty Red Roses squad, the Barbs’ faithful and friends gave the silver medal-winning Women’s team a rousing standing ovation and a “Hip Hip Hooray for Canada” chant which was captured for posterity by the CTV crew documenting the event.

Red-jerseyed rugby fans enjoyed the TSN/CTV2 feed on the Town Square’s big screen and reveled in Asia Hogan-Rochester’s try which opened the scoring, put Canada ahead 5-0, and raised hopes for an upset of red-hot England.

However, the white-clad Red Roses, which had won 62 of their last 63 matches, built a 21-8 half-time lead and Team Canada could not narrow the margin in the second half. Saturday’s dominant victory over #2-ranked Canada ended England’s 11-year drought at the World Cup.

The brave Canadians competed vigorously to the eightieth minute of play in front of 81,885 fans at Twickenham’s Allianz Stadium—the home of England Rugby. Team Canada earned its berth in the World Cup championship final with its own impressive string of victories including a 34-19 dismantling of six-time champion New Zealand in the semi-finals.

To qualify for the Final Four in England, the Canadian 15’s overwhelmed a series of teams starting with a 65-7 thrashing of Fiji, a 42-0 shutout of Wales, a 40-19 win over Scotland, and a 46-5 thumping of Australia in the quarterfinals.

Starter McKinley Hunt—a graduate of Country Day School in King City and a star player for the Aurora Barbarians—fronted a list of local players rostered by Team Canada for international play in 2025.

Rugby fans and Aurora residents Brian and Hilary Musker—whose daughter Alex played for both the CDS Cyclone and the Barbs—soaked in the atmosphere at Town Square.

Brian said he thought the event “was wonderful.

“It was great to be in a community centre like the Town Square and sharing the game with so many Aurorans.”

Hilary was equally impressed by the viewing experience: “Being able to watch this championship with so many people who are rugby fans raises the sport’s profile in town. Throughout the game, I was trash-talking my sister, Alison, who lives in England.”

Echoing the Muskens’ excitement about the Watch Party was Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inductee Marco Di Girolamo. Inducted into the Hall of Fame as a rugby player in 2022 after starring for Team Canada, Di Girolamo was pleased to “see so many people immersed in rugby in the Aurora community.” The current Barbarians’ Head Coach thought it “was great that the Town and the Barbs brought so many people together to cheer on Team Canada today.”

On a familial note, Di Giralamo noted that “My daughter enjoyed cheering on her heroes on Team Canada.”

The Canadian contingent in England gave Di Giralamo’s daughter much to cheer about, especially the performance of speedy Asia Hogan-Rochester who contributed ten points to the 15’s attack versus England with two tries—one in each half—and churned up over 100 yards from scrimmage.

The best news for Canadian rugby fans and national team aspirants on Saturday was a post-game announcement that served nicely as a consolation prize for attendees.

Despite the loss in the championship final to England, Team Canada’s Sophia

de Goede was named World Rugby Player of the Year—further heightening Canada’s profile in international rugby. She is the first Canadian to earn such an honor since Magali Harvey won the award in 2014.

Mayor Tom Mrakas—who attended the event co-sponsored by the Town and the Barbarians—was taken by the Senior Women’s five-game performance in England.

“What an incredible run by Team Canada at the World Cup. The entire country was behind them, and they’ve inspired a whole new generation of players—including so many right here in Aurora.”

Mayor Mrakas credited the Barbarians Rugby Football Club for drawing so many residents to Watch Party: “It was fantastic to see the Aurora Barbarians play such a big role in today’s event. They’re a true example of community spirit and passion for the game, and we’re lucky to have them representing the Town.” He also expressed his satisfaction at “seeing people of all ages coming together at Town Square to cheer on our women’s rugby team—this is exactly what we envisioned: a place where the community can gather, celebrate, and create lasting memories. Cheers to the Town team for organizing such an outstanding event.”

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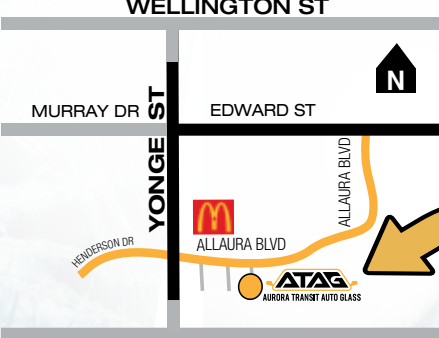


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Aurora Junior Hockey Roundup

U22 Central York Panthers' road trip yields two-game sweep versus Bluewater Hawks and Windsor Southwest Wildcats

BY JIM STEWART

The Central York Junior Panthers vaulted into fourth place in the 25-team OWHA U22 Elite division with a pair of road wins in southwestern Ontario on the weekend.

On Saturday, the Panthers edged the Bluewater Hawks 3-2 at the Gemini Sportsplex. CYP forward Audrey Martone opened the scoring four minutes into the first period, but the Panthers surrendered a power play goal by Bluewater's Olivia Minten with 1:37 left in the opening frame.

CYP's Lily Paisley broke the 1-1 tie eight minutes into the second period to restore the visitors' lead.

Paisley struck again in the third period when she scored the empty-net game-winner with 58 seconds

left on the clock. Paisley's last-minute empty-netter was significant because Bluewater's Leah Carnochan pulled the Bluehawks to within one with 37 seconds remaining.

On Sunday, the Panthers wiped out the Windsor Southwest Wildcats 13-1 at Forest Glade Arena. Audrey Martone led the Panthers' 49-shot attack with three goals. Keira Johnson and Ellie Lewington added two goals each.

By the midpoint of the opening frame, CYP opened a 3-0 lead on goals by Zoe Ordanis, Johnson, and Martone. The Wildcats' Taylor Williams narrowed the deficit to 3-1 at 12:31, but Lewington restored the Panthers' three-goal lead with five minutes left in the opening frame.

The Junior Panthers put the game away with a five-goal outburst in the second period.

Johnson, Annabella Van Berkel, Lewington, Elizabeth Janovski, and

Martone lit the lamp to stake the visitors to a 9-1 lead after forty minutes. Martone completed her hat trick with a power play marker 2:30 into the third. The Panthers kept on prowling in the final frame as Rachel Talesnik, Demi Lazarou, and Anastasia Trifon closed out the scoring. Johnson, Talesnik, and Ordanis added three assists each versus Windsor.

The Panthers will enjoy a home-stand this week as they host the Burlington Barracudas on Wednesday, October 1 at 7:40 PM, the Oakville Hornets on Saturday, October 4 at 1:25 PM, and the OHA Mavericks on Sunday, October 5 at 1:55 p.m. All three games will be played at SARC.

Aurora Tigers edged 4-2 by Chargers in Mississauga

The Aurora Junior A Tigers incurred a 4-2 loss to the Chargers in Mississauga

on Saturday.

Owen Barfoot fired two first period goals to lead the Chargers' attack.

Mississauga led 3-0 after the opening frame, but Aurora's Marcus Carter tallied the only goal of the second period to cut the deficit to two. Carter's third goal of the season was assisted by Simon Howard and Cayden Smith.

Tigers' forward Tommy Nistopoulos pulled the visitors to within one at 2:55 of the third period with helpers from Jonathan Scott and Luke Howard. However, a late goal by Jonathan Herrington restored the Chargers' two-goal lead at 17:54 and sent Aurora to its fourth defeat in five games.

The Tigers (3-4-0-0) host back-to-back home games versus the Pickering Panthers (6-3-0-0) on Friday, October 3 and Cobourg Cougars (1-6-0-0) on Saturday, October 4.

Both puck drops at the ACC will be 7 p.m.



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First-time homebuyers rebate could be on ice until other levels of government pay up

From page 9

“As a result, the number of new apartments being sold to first-time homebuyers is expected to be relatively low in the short-term and then slowly recover over the medium to longer term. Based upon a qualifying home purchase price of \$1 million and in consideration of the above-noted rental versus non-rental new apartment unit trends, the annual financial cost to the Town is estimated to be \$283,300 on average, or \$2.8 million over the next 10 years.”

Speaking at last week's Council meeting, Rachel Wainwright-van Kessel told Council that staff will

not “spend much time on developing policy” unless there's some certainty around funding from other levels of government.

“We would also work in collaboration with the Region because I believe they've done a fair bit of work on this type of policy and then adjust that policy to make it for our Made-In-Aurora type of policy,” she said.

The program, Mayor Mrakas added, has been subject to further discussions around the Regional Council Table.

“We thought the policy was a good policy and a rebate program that would actually benefit first-time homebuyers

and actually put the money back in the hands of actual homeowners instead of giving an exemption or rebate to the development community,” he said. “There was the conversation that we wanted to make sure that other levels of government were involved as well and make sure that they made us whole as part of that rebate program.

“When we talk about rebates of incentivizing, it tends to fall on the development side and we all know that we don't want to incentivize from that perspective and give those breaks there. We'd rather give it directly to the homeowner or to the residents and that's what this does.”



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1. Witth
2. Utilize
3. Writing utensil
4. Where rockers work
5. Becomes less intense
6. Consume
7. Type of catfish
8. "Horsetown, U.S.A."
9. Atomic #50
10. The Muse of lyric poetry
11. Brings back to life
12. Humorous critiques
13. Cool!
17. Worst
18. Wet dirt
21. Useful
23. Hebrew unit of liquid capacity
24. High schoolers' test
27. Internet device
29. City in India
32. A place to rest
34. Chat responder
35. A way to move on
36. What consumers are given
39. Digital audiotape
40. More (Spanish)
43. Disfigured
44. White (Spanish)
46. Church building
47. Georgia rockers
49. Surgeon's tool
51. "Much ___ about nothing"
54. Make by braiding
59. Local area network
60. Unit of work
61. Indigenous person of Thailand
62. Liquefied natural gas
64. Distance to top



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Thanks to the generous support of our community, our 22nd Annual Tee Off for Hospice has raised \$91,000 so far...

This year's event took place on September 16th at Cardinal Golf Club.

We are grateful for our golfers, volunteers, sponsors, donors and community for supporting our hospice palliative care programs and services.

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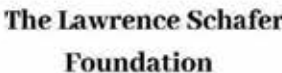
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Culture Days in Aurora! See all that culture in Aurora has to offer over this three-week festival. For an ever-growing roster of family-friendly activities, visit aurora.ca/culturedays.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3

The Towns of Aurora, Stouffville and King will gather at the Aurora Peace Park this afternoon at 5.30 p.m. for a special rededication of the Cenotaph, celebrating its 100th anniversary. A reception will follow at the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North). All are invited to take part in the events.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4

The Aurora Farmers' Market returns to Town Park today from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9

Aurora's final outdoor concert of the year, The Colours of Fall Concert, will take place at Town Hall this evening from 6.30 – 8.30 p.m., and featuring live entertainment from Fiddlestix. For more information, visit www.aurora.ca/recreation-arts-and-culture/specialevents-colours-of-fall-concert.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15

The Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series continues this evening at 7 p.m. with Pickering & the 1837 Rebellion with Katrina Pyke. Held

at Hillary House National Historic Site and virtually over Zoom. Tickets are \$10.50 for AHS members, or \$12.50 for non-members. "Explore the events that lead to the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837. Join Katrina as she shares an interactive exploration of Pickering's involvement in the uprising and challenges you consider if you would have risked your life for liberty as Pickering's fated rebel, Peter Matthews, did." Katrina Pyke has worked in the museum field for over 30 years. She has an MA in Public History and a passion for researching and sharing fun and exciting aspects of our storied past. Tickets can be purchased on at www.aurorahs.com or by calling 905-727-8991

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26

York Symphony Orchestra Presents: A Symphonic Halloween. Trinity Anglican Church, 79 Victoria St. The first concert of the YSO's new season features music famous for its invocation of the spooky spirit of the season, including the final catastrophic movements of Berlioz' Symphonie Fantastique, and Mussorgsky's very scary Night on Bald Mountain. Also featured is pianist Elly Hung playing Rachmaninoff's beloved Second Piano Concerto. Tickets at Eventbrite.ca or at the door.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19

The Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series continues this evening at 7 p.m. with Barn-Raising, Threshing, & Quilting Bees: The Stories that Farm Diaries Tell with Cathy Wilson. Held at Hillary House National Historic Site and virtually over Zoom. Tickets are \$10.50 for AHS members, or \$12.50 for non-members. "Cathy Wilson shares her recent book, Being Neighbours, about barn raisings and quilting bees in Ontario. She takes the audience into families' daily lives to uncover the subtle social politics of mutual dependency, the expectations neighbours had of each other, their relationships, and ways of managing conflict and crisis. Catharine Wilson is a Professor Emerita of History at the University of Guelph and Founder and Director of the Rural Diary Archive." Tickets can be purchased on at www.aurorahs.com or by calling 905-727-8991.

ONGOING

Partagez le Français: Ce groupe accueille les ADULTES / 18+ (des francophones aux débutants capables de converser) - qui cherchent à mettre en pratique leurs compétences Conversationnelle en français. Over Zoom with a nominal fee of \$2.50. RSVP by visiting meet-up.com/Partagez-le-francais. For more information, email partagez.york@outlook.com.

Support AbuseHurts' Delivering Hope Full Circle Program textile recycling and donation program. A greater number of people are wanting to donate or get rid of unwanted items, increasing the need for more outlets being available to receive the items. This program will provide a convenient way for people to donate or get rid of used/unwanted clothing, blankets, linens and furniture and will help lessen the amount of items ending up in landfills. Materials that were previously perceived as waste will now be seen as a valuable resource further encouraging redistribution. The items will be recycled in the following ways: To be given to individuals who are survivors of violence and are transitioning from shelters into new homes; To be sold in our store; To be sold to a textile recycler, which makes for an ongoing source of funding for Abuse Hurts enabling them to provide their services to the thousands of people that require them each year. When and Where: Monday and Wednesday, every week, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., with 30-minute time slots – only 1 drop off per time slot. If you do not have an appointment, we cannot accept your donation. The Abuse Hurts Warehouse is located at 1208 Gorham St, Unit 4, Newmarket - rear unloading dock. Visit AbuseHurts.ca to select your drop off time slot.

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Changes to Development Charges laws are bringing a financial hit to the Town

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Provincial changes on how municipalities like Aurora can collect Development Charges (DCs) from incoming developers are resulting in a financial hit at the municipal level.

Council last week considered a year-end update from staff outlining where things stand on incoming DCs – that is, money paid by developers to municipalities to account for the stress of growth on municipal services and facilities – given the recent changes.

“DCs are imposed by the Town of Aurora to recover growth-related capital costs from both residential and non-residential developments as determined under the Development Charges Act,” reads the report. “More specifically, these growth-related costs relate to investments that are necessary for the Town to maintain its

existing levels of service to a growing community. Any investments resulting in a level of service increase are ineligible for recovery through DCs. As required under the DC Act, all DCs are held in a separate reserve fund until spent.”

While the report notes that Aurora’s DC Reserves had a net balance of \$19.03 million as of December 31, 2024, DCs reserved for Parks and Recreation uses are overdrawn and the DCs brought in over the course of the last year were well below average.

“The Town collected a total of \$6.29 million in new Development Charge revenues in 2024, well under the \$16.9 million annual average projected by the Town’s 2024 DC Study,” the report continues. “Numerous legislative changes and present economic conditions have negatively impacted the Town’s actual Development Charge collections. As a result of DC

fund availability, some planned growth infrastructure may need to be deferred or financed.”

In one instance, the report notes that a loss of \$0.4 million due to DC exemptions was replaced in coffers from the Town’s Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve, a detail which raised questions from Council members and members of the public alike.

Town Treasurer Rachel Wainwright-van Kessel told lawmakers this was a temporary measure until there was more certainty from the Province over DC exemptions, but resident Shawn Deane delegated to Council concerned that “taxpayers are paying to give developers a break” through use of the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve.

“I work hard for my money and I don’t think you’re disrespecting it or trying to waste it, but I get nothing out of private land development – nothing – and not even a residual benefit that, ‘Oh, we’re going to have extra homes... to generate extra revenue,” said Deane. “My recommendations would be to do a survey with Engage Aurora (the Town’s online feedback platform) about this specific matter, write a new bylaw that protects taxpayers from paying for non-essential expenses, which taxpayers do not receive a benefit... I would think it’s appropriate to voice our opposition to Premier Ford on this Development Charge Act. If developers are exempt, but taxpayers aren’t, that’s problematic.”

Following the delegation, Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo questioned how

the decision was made to use the Tax Rate Stabilization in this way.

“That’s, in my view, a delicate fund and I believe we at this table should be in control of it unless we’ve given authority to staff to do it,” said Gallo. “If this is a temporary concept, okay, but I would like to know more [in the next report] to better understand how we’re dealing with it because this is not a one-off. I suspect it is going to just get worse. We have to figure out how to do this and we can’t keep funding it from the Tax Rate Stabilization Fund.”

Added Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson: “I support the idea of coming back and having a broader conversation and, to Councillor Gallo’s points, I do think that the issue will continue... as we continue to see some changes, perhaps there’ll be additional legislation.”

Addressing the Treasurer, he continued: “I appreciate the information you shared with us today, which once again says that the Development Charges we’ve collected are less than what we budgeted for. We’re seeing an impact with that respect. I know you mentioned that we’ll have some broader conversations at Budget time when it comes to our 10-Year Capital Plan.

“I think that...we have so very few mechanisms to collect revenue for the municipality that certainly all the changes that are happening with DCs will have a big impact on us. It warrants a bigger, broader conversation amongst staff and Council.”



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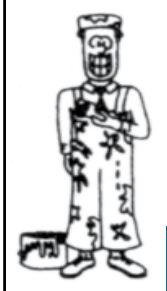
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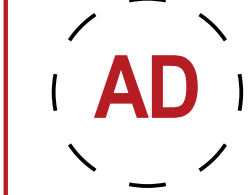
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NOTICE OF PASSING



SHIRLEY GALLAUGHER

We regretfully announce that Shirley Gallagher, 85 years old, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, September 24th, 2025 at Peterborough Regional Health Centre in the Intensive Care Unit. She was married to Earl Gallagher (deceased, August 23rd, 2017) for 60 years and had daughters Debbie (deceased, May 4th, 2015 (Don)) and son Adam, Kathy (Paul) and children Marissa (Julien), Patrick (Ahva), and daughter Susan and her extended family Richard and Carol Gott and children. Shirley is survived by her brother Kenny (Linda), and predeceased by her siblings, Marion (Steve, deceased), Dolores (Jack, deceased), Leslie (Evelyn, deceased), Jack (Doreen, deceased), Clarence (Debbie, deceased), and George. She is also remembered by her many nieces and nephews. Family and Friends are invited to call at St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain St. Haliburton, Ontario on Saturday, October 11th, 2025 at 11 o'clock for a service in Shirley's memory. A reception will follow in the Church Hall. As an expression of sympathy, donations to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation or to the Peterborough Regional Health Centre Foundation would be greatly appreciated by the Family. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the Haliburton Community Funeral Home.

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Saturday, October 18

10:00 a.m.

Junior School (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5)

11:00 p.m.

Sphere Program (for families with children entering
Grades 4-5 in September 2026)

1:00 p.m.

Middle School (Grades 6-8) + Senior School (Grades 9-12)

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