

Gas Tax funding will help support local transit services



Local transit services will benefit from a significant funding from the Province of Ontario.

On Friday, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy announced \$17 million, funded from the 2024-2025 Gas Tax Program, will come to York Region, to support existing transit services and facilitate changes to the future.

Such changes could include an expansion of service hours, an increase in routes, and the purchase of new vehicles ? which are now being procured by the Region through an environmental lens.

?Our government knows that municipal transit systems are essential to the success of our local communities, connecting people and families to jobs, housing and wherever they need to go,? said MPP Gallagher Murphy at the May 2 announcement, held at York Regional headquarters in Newmarket. ?This investment will go a long way in helping our communities stay connected, especially during these uncertain times when every dollar counts. Reliable and accessible transit it is not just about getting from Point A to Point B; it's about making life more affordable for families, students, and seniors. It means fewer cars on the road, more people accessing jobs, their appointments, and other opportunities, and stronger local businesses as people move through the Region with greater ease.

?This funding is part of a larger commitment across Ontario. Through the gas tax program, our government is providing? two cents for every litre of gasoline sold in this Province to support municipal transit systems. In fact, this year alone, 106 municipalities are receiving funding. That covers 93 per cent of all Ontarians. Municipalities like York Region can use this support for both operating and capital transit costs, which helps keep services running efficiently and affordably, saving riders both money and time.?

Welcoming the announcement was York Region Chair Eric Jolliffe who hailed the Provincial Government ?for their continued commitment to building strong, connected communities.?

?This funding is critical in supporting the day-to-day operations of our York Region Transit system, keeping buses on the road, routes active and services accessible for everyone,? said Jolliffe. ?As one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Canada, York Region is expected to grow to more than 2 million people by 2051. This growth brings tremendous opportunity but also a shared responsibility to plan and invest in the infrastructure our residents rely on every day.

?Reliable, accessible public transit is a cornerstone of that vision. In 2024?we saw ridership reach nearly 24 million trips, a 12 per

cent increase over the previous year, driven by weekday school travel and leisure trips. On Request and Paratransit Services also improved significantly, serving more than 550,000 riders. This tells us people are moving to school, to work, to appointments, and to places that make our communities vibrant and liveable, and it demands our investments in service, technology, and innovation and they are paying off.

As part of the Regional Council's commitment to sustainability and service excellence, York Region continues to modernize our fleet of 18 new electric buses arriving in 2026. We also are seeing over 100 service improvements and award-winning technology that supports on-time performance that is consistently above 90 per cent. The Gas Tax program plays a critical role in making this possible. It helps offset costs to the taxpayer and has been a key part of our annual budget planning for many years. Together with the Province, we're building the foundation for a stronger, more connected York Region, one that keeps pace with growth, supports economic viability, and delivers the services that our residents rely on.

The funding was also welcomed by King-Vaughan MPP Stephen Lecce, who said in a statement: "I have heard loud and clear from commuters in King and Vaughan that it's time to put an end to standstill gridlock."

"Our government is mobilizing all-hands-on-deck to get Ontarians moving by delivering the largest public transit infrastructure expansion in North America including by bolstering public transit in York Region by adding net-new routes and supplying high-tech vehicles to meet rising demand," he said. "From substantial upgrades at the King City, Maple and Rutherford GO stations and our government's introduction of the 'One-Fare' program saving transit-users \$1,600 every year we are committed to delivering reliable and affordable public transit for workers and families in our community."

By Brock Weir