Councillor Alan Shefman signing the Civic Action “Your 32” Pledge, to take action to ease the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area’s (GTHA’s) traffic congestion crisis.

This event took place on May 13 at the Richmond Hill Transit Terminal. The Mayors of Vaughan, Markham and Richmond Hill as well as Mitchell Hunter, CEO of Civic Action spoke to the gathering of over 20 Councillors from the three municipalities. The signing of the pledge event was initiated by Councillor Shefman, Councillor Godwin Chan from Richmond Hill, and Councillor Valerie Burke from Markham as part of their efforts to promote the Yonge Street subway extension and transit in general in the GTA.

Heritage Awards

The Holy Trinity Church is a landmark in Thornhill. Anyone travelling on Eby & Street just south of Centre can’t help admire this distinguished historical building. Constructed in 1830 in the Classical Revival style, the church was moved to its current location in 1951. Restoration of this designated building is evident in the attention to detail and its enhancement of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District character.

Get involved in your Community – Become a Park Ambassador Training for 2013

Park Ambassadors are the community “eyes and ears” in our community parks. They assist Parks Staff by being a regular presence in our parks by conducting site visits and performing visual checks. They report damage and undesirable activities to the appropriate City staff and/or department. They also inform park users about City services, events and initiatives.

If you would like to volunteer, please join us for the launch of this year’s program. The City of Vaughan Parks and Forestry Operations Department, in partnership with the City of Vaughan Enforcement Services Department, will be kicking off this year’s program with a training course designed to assist and advise Park Ambassadors on their role and responsibilities. If you are interested in becoming a Park Ambassador, and to confirm your attendance at the launch event, please contact Robert Leonardis at 905-832-8577 ext. 6172 or robert.leonardis@vaughan.ca.

Councillor Alan Shefman’s
W5-Thornhill UPDATE

Spring 2013 Edition

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Transit Initiatives

Act now on the Yonge Street Subway Extension

The number one issue for residents during the 2010 municipal election was the Yonge Street Subway extension. Yet today, the most advanced of the Big Move transit projects continues to be stalled. This is outrageous and unacceptable. It’s time we do something about it!

In Mid-April, local Councillors from three municipalities, Valerie Burke from Markham, Godwin Chan from Richmond Hill and myself, representing Vaughan, called on Metrolinx to take immediate action to fund the next step in the development of the Yonge Street subway extension from Finch to the Richmond Hill Centre.

We purposely did not ask for the billions of dollars needed to build this project at this time – we realize that amount of money is just not available – but rather we asked for incremental funding to allow Vaughan to move to the next stage of the project – Engineering. It is estimated that $150 – 200 million is required – a small amount in comparison to the billions needed for construction.

It is our belief that this project does not need to wait for the Metrolinx funding report, expected in June, or the decision of the Provincial Government to proceed to the next step. We cannot allow this critical transit project to be stalled.

Under the management of Vaughan, the Yonge Street project has completed extensive public consultation and has a provincially approved environmental assessment. The project is ready to move forward.

Hospital News

The Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital continues to progress. Mackenzie Health has recently been given permission by the Ministry of Health to tender the project in 2014.

Best City? – VAUGHAN!

I disagree with MoneySense Magazine, which just named Vaughan the 23rd best City in which to live in Canada (of 200). The magazine also rated our City as eighth of the 46 mid-sized cities it rated.

They are totally wrong. Vaughan is the Best City in this country. Sure, it would be great if we had a few mountains to look at and of course I’ve always wanted a large lake somewhere in the city. Rapid transit EVERYWHERE would be a bonus. And of course it would be outstanding to go to our local arena and cheer for our NHL team.

But in the meantime, the nice folks at MoneySense saw some of the terrific things we all love about Vaughan (hmmmm – I’m still looking through the article to find the part about its Members of Council!!!).

The MoneySense survey focused on looking for the “best quality of life” in communities across Canada. The survey considered everything from incomes and employment, price of housing, weather, crime rates and access to medical treatment. MoneySense also pointed out that “quality of life isn’t only about practical concerns,” they also factorized in the ability to take part in cultural activities and gave points to communities with high numbers of people working in the arts or sports (I am sure our very own Milos Raonic and Andrew Wiggins kicked us up a few points).

We need to challenge the current thinking on building transit in the GTA on a big project basis. We cannot stand by doing nothing. By the time the engineering component of this project is completed, there may be funds available to actually start construction. We need action and we need it now.

It’s time for everyone who cares about the future of our community to take action; I urge you to write to both Metrolinx and the Premier asking:

• that the next step of the Yonge Street Subway Extension to Richmond Hill be funded immediately to the amount of $150 million, and
• that an incremental funding (i.e., providing smaller amounts of money to initiate a variety of projects so they could all progress simultaneously) approach be used for rapid transit development across the GTA.

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Councillor Alan Shefman’s W5-Thornhill UPDATE

Spring 2013 Edition

Dear Neighbour

I am very pleased to present the Spring 2013 edition of W5-Thornhill UPDATE — the newsletter for the residents of Ward 5 – Thornhill. This newsletter is just one part of my commitment to communicate with the residents of my Ward, to help inform you of the issues, developments, and processes that take place in your City. As always I look forward to hearing from you about the issues that are important to you.
The City at Work in Thornhill

Ward 6 – Thornhill will be a very busy place this summer. Look for a variety of upgrades and improvements to our parks and parks and community centres. For details on all the projects we have planned and how your tax dollars are spent.

Yonge Streetscape Beautification

Staff are coordinating their efforts with Matamish to design continuity of colours and plants used in the planters and flower baskets in the Heritage District area. Other areas (Main Street and Matamish) are now on both sides of the street.

Bathurst/Clark Woodlot, west of the library

This is one of the City’s oldest maintained woodlots. In recent months hazel trees and invasive species were removed in order to allow native species to flourish. Staff are preparing a strategy to provide guidelines on how we can ensure that these valuable trees areas can be enhanced in the future.

Shrub Beds

Over the years as the area ages, features such as the extra street shrub beds have deteriorated. Our goal is that we need to develop a procedure to both renew and maintain shrub features. Plans are underway to rejuvenate a number of locations in the area this year, as well as establish a more aggressive maintenance program.

Oakbank Pond on Centre Street

This important feature has been an ongoing matter of concern. A number of years ago, the City established a program to rehabilitate the pond. Some of the things that are being done to improve the health of the pond include: improved water quality, cutting back reeds near the dock and on Oakbank, goose egg sitting to control the goose population, and applying special microfibres to control excessive duck weed. The weesing area (rights) which were originally installed last summer will be re-installed.

Uplands Nature Trails

While not well known, this City has maintained a small nature trail on the edge of the Uplands property. It can be reached by entering the golf course parking lot and following the trail to the right, below the sign. Work will be done in the late summer to improve the trail.

Speaking of Uplands, Vaughan’s only ski resort has been open for the last 11 years. This year is still an early season.

Glen Shields Park

A major rejuvenation of the playground will take place this year, including moving it to a better location. Improvements will also take place to the existing pathways system in the playground area.

Parks and Tennis Courts

York Hill District Park

New tennis courts will be installed this summer.

Dufferin District Park

Tennis court resurfacing

Vaughan Crest Park

Replacement of playground courts

Marita Payne Park

Two bridges to be replaced

Lakeview Park

Replacement of playground equipment

Garnet Williams Community Centre

New floors to be installed (partially funded through a Federal grant)

Dufferin Clark Community Centre

Relocation of Seniors Room

The most active location for seniors’ clubs in Ward 5 is at Dufferin Clark C.C. At present there are at least four seniors clubs meeting in this building. This project will provide more accessible space on the main floor for the seniors.

Seniors Accessible Washrooms

This project is related to the use of the building by seniors. Under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the City is responsible for providing accessible facilities.