

## Fighting for Affordable Housing:

In November 2013, Council endorsed my motion to support the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Region of York in our fight for more affordable housing options. My motion was based on the following facts:

In ten years, York Region's, **house prices have increased an average of 87 per cent**, while hourly wages have only risen 26 per cent. Many people are being forced to live beyond their means, in inadequate housing, or move outside the region. **York Region's housing market has the lowest percentage of rental housing in the GTA.**

Essentially no new private rental housing has been built in the last decade, which means extremely limited choices for those who cannot afford to buy a home. It will take the commitment from all orders of government to work with the private sector to increase the number of safe, affordable rental homes. This initiative is necessary for our existing and future residents and for the health of our local economy. Working on it!



### **Protecting our Town – RAIL SAFETY**

As a Director with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, I endorsed the FCM Rail Safety Working Group who, in cooperation with the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, has successfully championed the Federal government to improve rail safety. Municipalities will know what is moving through their community. Canadian Rail companies and shippers will require greater insurance policies.

Rail infrastructure, tank car design, and traffic control technology needs review and updating as we continue to move dangerous goods on our rail systems. We need federal regulations based on consultation with our first responders to make sure that loads are properly tested, labeled, and handled enroute with a well prepared response should another disaster happen.

### **'VIVA NEXT' ON the MOVE ...**

Construction of the **Yonge Street rapidway** begins this year. Rapidway construction will happen in two phases over several years: Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie – has begun and the expected completion is 2015. Next phase, Leventdale Road to 19th Avenue/Gamble Road – 2016 to 2020.

For more info see: <http://www.vivanext.com>



### **2014 is an Election Year!**

**On Monday, October 27, your vote will count.**  
*An educated and caring taxpayer is our Town's best asset.*

*Thank you for taking the time to read my newsletter.*



*Brenda*

**Questions? Comments? Concerns?**

**Please call: 905 771-2498 or you may reach me at: [brenda.hogg@richmondhill.ca](mailto:brenda.hogg@richmondhill.ca)**



## Welcome 2014

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Regional and Local Councillor

**Brenda HOGG**

Representing all the people of Richmond Hill at the Region of York, Town of Richmond Hill and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

### **Ice Storm 2014 - The IMPACT and The RESPONSE:**

We are very privileged in Richmond Hill. We have just been tested by a major ice storm and for the most part, we rallied, endured, survived, and continue to be well-served. **These truly are your municipal tax dollars at work.** Our well-trained emergency response team coordinated their efforts with our electrical services– no one died and there were no injuries to report. Within hours in some cases, days in others, heat and hydro were restored to thousands of people in Richmond Hill. I am most grateful to all our dedicated Town staff and Emergency Service workers who provided round-the-clock service. They kept roads cleared, communication lines open, managed warming shelters, and assisted our residents in need. Our electrical supplier, Powerstream, brought in hydro workers from Cornwall, Niagara, Sudbury, Ottawa, and neighbouring municipalities to help. **The Town's emergency responders were tested and have proven our commitment to the health and safety of our residents first.**

The 2013 Ice Storm has been called a 40 – 50 year weather event. The last time I remember a significant ice storm in Richmond Hill was December 26, 1971. Which means that years from now, we all will be asking, "Where were you during the 2014 Ice Storm?" My husband and I were at home alone without heat or hydro for three and a half days. We believe that we earned our winter camping badge!

There is still much more work for the Town to do. Our staff are assessing the damage with a view to applying for disaster funding from the Province. We may not pass the qualification threshold for relief funding but we need the damages assessment as we continue to rebuild and restore. **There will likely be an impact on our Town budget. York Region Council has asked for relief funds or a similar funding program to be considered.**

What have I learned? Shelter is vital. Water is vital. Two-way communication is very important especially if you have health concerns. Transportation is extremely important. Flashlights, radios, and batteries are very important. Candles can be dangerous. Restaurants that stay open are very important. Cash-on-hand is important. Be patient. Communication is the key to keeping people calm. Communication is challenging when managing any crisis.

**Municipal government delivers!**





## Budget Time is ALL the Time

Every year the Town goes through an extensive budget process. As the Chair of the Town's budget committee, I expect the Town to follow all the principles of responsible investment in the provision and management of our government facilities, programs, and services.

We are accountable to the taxpaying public. I expect Council to support fairness, equity, and value for money when spending tax dollars. We will also adhere to the principle of transparency for public education and meaningful input.

**BUDGET MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. EVERYONE IS WELCOME.**

### **This is YOUR MONEY and MINE.**

As the Town Budget Chair with input from our Budget Committee, the Public, and guidance from our professional Staff, I uphold the Council-approved principles of:

- Thorough Short & Long Term Planning  
(4 year Operating Budget and 10 year Capital Forecast.)
- Prudent Consideration of Reserves  
(Setting aside money today for repairs and replacement tomorrow.)
- Leverage All Available Funding Sources  
(Applying for grants and participating in partnerships.)
- Maintain Debt-Free Status  
(Richmond Hill is one of the few debt-free GTA municipalities.)

**By adhering to these principles, Richmond Hill has maintained its status as a DEBT FREE TOWN.**

The town collects property taxes on behalf of the Region; the Town of Richmond Hill; and the Province, for the school boards. **From every municipal tax dollar approximately 25 cents goes to the Town**, 50 cents to the Region, and 25 cents to the school boards.

### **Town Services for 25 Cents from your Municipal Tax Dollar**

- 6 cents goes to Fire and Emergency Services
- 3 cents goes to Town-owned facility maintenance, utilities & repairs
- 3 cents goes to Providing for infrastructure sustainability & capital programs
- 2 cents goes to Parks maintenance & operations
- 2 cents goes to Library services
- 2 cents goes to Road-related maintenance
- 2 cents goes to Organics, recycling & waste collection
- 1 cent goes to Recreation programming & events
- 1 cent goes to Winter maintenance & snow clearing
- 3 cents goes to Other (including administration)

**25 cents\* 100%\* \* TOTAL**



## **Community Mail Boxes ?**

The Federal government just announced that Canada Post would cease door-to-door delivery. Apparently Canada is the first G-8 country to end this postal service and to date there has been **no public discussion**. We need to consider the impact to small businesses, the quality of life for our residents, the impact on retrofitting mailboxes into established neighbourhoods, traffic and parking concerns amongst many other urban design issues including how to dispose of the unwanted mail. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has begun its investigation and outreach to our member municipalities to lobby the Federal government. The Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce is also taking the matter into consideration with its membership. If you want your voice heard, you may contact my office 905 771-2498 or the office of our Federal representatives:

M.P. Costas Menegakis, 905-770-4440 or M.P. Paul Calandra 1- 866 - 341-0004.

### **Protecting our Natural Environment**

There will be a number of major events affecting the protection and restoration of our natural environment. The Ice Storm's impact will be felt for sometime, the Emerald Ash Borer is quietly destroying our streetscapes, and most importantly for me in 2015, the Province, York Region, and all local municipalities will be reviewing the policies of the **Provincial Green Belt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act**.



### **Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act**

If you lived through the creation of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan 14 years ago, you will remember how well the battle lines were drawn between land developers and the environmentalists. It was a tense time with residents threatening to stop development and builders threatening law suits. As the legal battle played out at the Ontario Municipal Board, the Province stepped in and **shut down the OMB** hearing. It was the first time in Ontario's history that the OMB had been dismissed by the Province. But it led to the Oak Ridges Conservation Act and ultimately to the Green Belt Protection Plan. The residents were united in their determination to protect our water sources, our wildlife, our forests, our air quality and our quality of life in Richmond Hill and York Region. When the legislative reviews of the **Provincial Green Belt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act** begin next year, **we must ensure that the hard-fought and hard-won principles and policies of environmental protection are upheld.**

### **Damages from The Emerald Ash Borer can be managed**

Before the Ice Storm, the Region and the Town developed a Management Plan for the Emerald Ash Borer. This insect is destroying Ash trees at an alarming rate.

York Region estimates the cost to eradicate the pest and recover our trees around \$4.75 million with an estimated 10 year cost in excess of \$52 million. The cost to the Town in 2014 will be \$0.5 million and an estimated \$14.5 million over the next 10 years.

**but we'll have to go from this ... to this...**

