



### Vaughan's Second Peace Tree Celebration A Big Success

For the second year in a row I am proud to have declared June 1st as Peace Tree Day in the City of Vaughan. I was first inspired by the idea of organizing a Peace Tree Day Celebration after viewing the movie "The Peace Tree," written by Mitra Sen. While the storyline behind this movie is simply about three young girls from different faiths wanting very much to learn and celebrate each other's festivities like Eid and Christmas, however the message of the film runs much deeper.

When these three young girls faced resistance from their parents, who feared that by sharing each other's celebrations will lead them to lose their own cultural identities, they embarked on a journey to overcome the cultural and religious differences experienced by their families.



Through the creation of a Peace Tree, decorated by various symbols representing peace from the diverse cultures and religions, the girls were able to influence and open up the eyes of the adults and help them to understand that sharing

each other's cultures can only enrich lives and encourage peace and harmony throughout the world. For me, having this day recognized is important because it is my hope that it will raise awareness to our residents that we are living in a multi-cultural and multi-faith community and by learning about our differences, we will learn to be more tolerant and more respectful of each other's cultures.

Last year we celebrated Peace Tree Day at the Civic Centre by showcasing the movie to the community. While the gathering was small, however the impact on those that attended was big.

This year, we planned a much larger celebration by holding a community event at the Concord Thornhill Regional Park on Racco Parkway. We partnered with the York Region Police, as well as the public and separate school boards and other private independent schools in York Region to encourage their participation of this event throughout the City. A small contest was organized to encourage all the schools in the

City of Vaughan to participate through their own designs of what a "Peace Tree" means to them. A winner from each Ward was selected amongst the submissions received and these winning posters will be used for next year's Peace Tree Day Poster. Other highlights from this year's celebration included various performances from different cultural backgrounds, including performances from Glen Shields Public School and St. Elizabeth Catholic High School, and culture-sharing activities such as making origami and henna drawing with the involvement of the Peace Tree Ambassadors from Bakersfield Public School; along with a variety of food and drinks for all to enjoy.



We had over 500 students participating from various schools across Vaughan. This has been a delightful event and it is my desire to make this an annual event; expanding each year with each celebration. I also hope that other municipalities across York Region and beyond will adopt the idea and join in our celebration or host similar celebrations of their own. By engaging as many youth as possible and getting them involved with the celebration, I am confident that it will remind our youth to be more open and embracing of the many cultural differences that we share within our community and to speak of what they've learned and share with their classmates, their friends and of course, their families. This can only strengthen our community and make our City a better place to live, work and play in.



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## *Vaughan Hospital Moves One Step Closer To Reality*

Recently, City of Vaughan Council showed its strong support of the Provincial government's initiative to work with the Vaughan Health Care Foundation to plan expanded health care services in Vaughan, including the building of a future hospital.

The announcement by Ontario Health Minister George Smitherman in April calls for the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) to work with the Vaughan Health Care Foundation and the local community to begin planning for a new hospital in Vaughan. LHINs are not-for-profit organizations established by the province to help plan, coordinate and fund new health care services across Ontario. The City of Vaughan, which has more than doubled its population in the past 15 years, is the largest City in Canada without its own hospital. A new hospital in Vaughan would not only decrease wait times for citizens, but also ease the pressure on health care facilities in neighbouring municipalities.

The Vaughan Health Care Foundation is a volunteer-based charity formed in 2004 to bring additional health care resources to the community. The Foundation is expected to work with the community to spearhead the development of the new health care facility, while the LHIN will provide advice on governance and capital planning. When completed, the new facility will be the first 'greenfield' hospital development in Ontario in more than a quarter century.



## *Tree Preservation Bylaw Approved*

One of the goals of the City of Vaughan is to preserve as much nature and woodlots as possible. And as such, on June 11, Vaughan Council passed a bylaw prohibiting the removal of trees from private property without a permit. The bylaw applies to trees more than 20 centimetres in diameter on properties up to half a hectare in size. The removal of these trees will require a city permit, and to learn more about the permit process, please visit the City's website at [www.vaughan.ca](http://www.vaughan.ca). Contravention of the bylaw can result in a fine of up to \$10,000 for a first offence for individuals and \$50,000 for corporations.



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## *Upcoming Community Consultation Meetings*

**Design of Park next to Thornhill Woods Public School**

Wednesday, August 8, 2007  
7:00 pm – Location TBD

**Design of Park along Ohr Menachem Way**

Tuesday, August 14, 2007  
7:00 pm – Location TBD



## *Apple Blossom Park Opening A Success*

In celebration of the official opening of Apple Blossom Park in the Thornhill Woods community, my colleagues and I joined special guests and residents in a ribbon cutting ceremony on Sunday, June 24.

The 1.62 hectares park is located at Apple Blossom Drive and Clovis Street. At the consultation meeting of last year, the residents present had requested to have more play structures for the young ones to serve the many young families in the area. As such, we have built a delightful park, with both junior and senior play structures, a mini soccer field, lighted walkways and shaded sitting areas.

The opening was a great success with lots of fun for kids and adults alike. Through generous donations from area retailers and MPP Mario G. Racco, we were able to offer our

residents pizza, watermelon, bottled water and ice cream.

While Apple Blossom Park offers residents wonderful outdoor experiences, one of the key features of this park is the preservation of a number of mature trees, offering natural shade canopies for all to enjoy.



## *Parks Update*

On June 14, 2007 Council ratified the 2007 Operating and Capital Budgets. Within this budget, monies for the construction of 3 parks were approved, along with the design of a 4th park.

As the community design consultation process for the Crossroad Park along Sassafra Circle has already taken place, it is now out for tendering and is scheduled to come back on July 4. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, Parks Development plans to start construction as soon as possible and we are looking forward to having this park completed by late Fall 2007.

Furthermore, the other 2 parks that also received budget approval are the Thornhill Woods Park (next to the Thornhill Woods Public School) and the park along Ohr Menachem Way. Both of these parks still need to go through public consultation for design purposes and it is my hope to have both of these meetings during these summer months. And towards the latter part of the year, I will also hold a design public consultation for the park located along Foxwood/Thornhill Woods.

Be sure to watch out for notices informing you of the various meetings.

## *Online Safety Audit Program For Parks Now Available*

The City of Vaughan is the first municipality to introduce an online Safety Audit for its parks and open spaces which is accessible to the public. A Safety Audit will allow the residents to voice any concerns or interests that they may have with their parks. An audit form is available on the City website at [www.vaughan.ca](http://www.vaughan.ca). It can be completed and transmitted using a secure line to the appropriate departments. Any issues on parks maintenance will be sent to the Parks and Forestry Department, while issues of safety, such as alcohol consumption and unruly behaviour, will be sent to Enforcement Services and the York Region Police.

The Safety Audit program will also help the City track problem areas, such as areas with poor visibility and hidden areas, so that once identified, an action plan may be developed.



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## Block 10 Community Centre Update

At the 2007 Budget meeting, the money for the construction of the new Block 10 Community Centre was approved. It has been a long process but the pre-qualification stage for General Contractors has finally been reached. It will take approximately 3 weeks for the pre-qualification, and then the construction will go out for tender. Construction is expected to begin in the Fall/Winter of 2007, with the anticipated opening for the community centre being Fall of 2008/ Spring of 2009.

If you wish to obtain further information regarding the Community Centre, please call or email Councillor Racco.



## Vaughan Supports Province's Rapid Transit Initiative

On June 15 the Province announced its plan to expand rapid transit service across the GTA. Vaughan Council quickly endorsed the Move Ontario 2020 plan, calling for \$17.5 billion in funding to complete 52 rapid transit initiatives over the next 12 years. As well, several projects in this plan will provide improved public transit services in Vaughan, including the extension of the Yonge subway line, north of Finch to Highway #7, the extension of the Spadina subway line, north from Downsview station to Jane Street and Highway #7, and expanded bus rapid transit systems along Highway #7 and Yonge Street. The advantage of the extension of the Spadina and Yonge subway will not only benefit the residents from Vaughan, but

those living right across the Greater Toronto Area. As well, this announcement will help provide residents the advantage of linking retails, industries and residences together, while cutting down travelling time and cleaning up our air.



## 2007 Budget Highlights

- Equivalent to a 1% tax rate increase
- \$2.5 million surplus carried forward from 2006
- Construction of the North Thornhill Community Centre (Block 10)
- Design and construction of 14 neighbourhood parks, including parks at Thornhill Woods P.S., Sassafras Circle, and

Ohr Menachem Way

- Dufferin Street and Jane Street sidewalks and streetlights
- \$2 million in Community Centre repairs



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## Sandra's Corner

### Leaf and Yard Collection:

Just a reminder that our summer leaf and yard collection program started the week of June 5, which means that leaf and yard material is collected every other week. Our Public Works Department has advertised this change, and will continue to do so, via the website, mobile signs, and newspaper ads. Please refer to your collection calendar or the City of Vaughan website at [www.vaughan.ca](http://www.vaughan.ca) to determine which week your yard waste will be collected.

### Powerstream Conservation Programs:

As part of Powerstream's ongoing commitment to Conservation and Demand programs, they are launching two initiatives this summer in conjunction with the Ontario Power Authority. These programs, the Great Refrigerator Roundup and the Summer Savings Program will further encourage the responsible use of electricity, while providing customers with tools to save money and be environmentally responsible.

The Great Refrigerator Roundup program offers customers free in home pick up of older refrigerators, freezers, window air conditioners and small bar fridges. All appliances collected will be fully decommissioned in an environmentally friendly manner. The Summer Savings program provides a financial incentive for customers who reduce their electricity use between July 1 and August 31. For more information on these programs, please contact Powerstream directly 905-417-6900 or check out their website at [www.powerstream.ca](http://www.powerstream.ca).

### Contact the City of Vaughan

Main Switchboard	(905) 832-2281
By-Law Dept.	(905) 832-8505
Building Standards	(905) 832-8510
Clerks Dept.	(905) 832-8504
Engineering Dept.	(905) 832-8525
Fire Inquiries	(905) 832-8506
Licensing Dept.	(905) 832-8504
Meeting Information	(905) 832-8600
Parks Development	(905) 303-2069
Planning Dept.	(905) 832-8565
Public Works Dept.	(905) 832-8562
Recreation Dept.	(905) 832-8500
Snow Hotline	(905) 879-SNOW
Tax Dept.	(905) 832-8502
Waste Collection	(905) 832-8562
Public Libraries	(905) 653-7323

### Garbage Pick-Up:

Please remember that garbage and recycling pick up starts at 7:00 am, so all materials must be curbside by that time to ensure it isn't missed. As well, please remember that as per the Bylaw, garbage and recycling materials cannot be set out prior to 6:00 pm the night before or it may be tagged as an early set-out.

## QUICK NOTES

Did you know that Vaughan's population has grown by over 58,000 people since 2001?

On July 1, 2001, census data recorded Vaughan's population at 190,573. By February 28, 2007, Vaughan estimated population was 249,464.

## UPCOMING TOPICS

Look for some of the following topics in the next **RACCO's Community Forum**:

- Helmet Safety Taskforce
- Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan
- Skate Park Project (ProjectSK8)

### Useful Telephone Numbers

Emergency	911
Animal Control	(416) 213-7176
Canada Post	(800) 267-1177
Ministry of Environment Ontario New Home Warranty Program	(800) 263-1299
Police (Non-emergency)	(905) 881-1221
York Central Hospital	(905) 883-1212
York Region Transit	(905) 762-2100
York Region Main Line	(877) 464-YORK
York Region Health	(800) 361-5653
Social Assistance	(905) 850-3490
York Catholic District School Board	(800) 363-2711
York Region District School Board	(416) 969-8131
PowerStream Inc.	(905) 417-6900



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