

John Webster, Councillor Ward Five: Nine Key issues for 2010

Over the past year, these 9 issues have emerged as the biggest concerns of Ward Five residents. I'm asked frequently, "What is being done about them?" Here is my view of the situation, and my position on these issues.

More information can be found on my website at:

http://www.johnwebster.com/Re_Elect_John_Webster_Ward_5_Top_Issues.htm

If you have questions, please call John Webster at: (905) 472-3122, or e-mail JohnWebster@JohnWebster.com

ISSUE 1: Experience

I have a wealth of business and public service experience that will continue to serve Ward 5 well:

- Councillor for seven years
- Chair, Development Services Committee
- Member, Budget Committee
- 34 years Business experience
- Close cooperation with ratepayer groups
- Exposure to virtually all Markham social, cultural and recreation groups
- Held many other relevant positions, offices and contacts
- I approach this office as a full-time position, not a part-time pastime

ISSUE 2: Traffic Gridlock and Transit

Traffic is a continuing problem throughout Markham, partly because of our rapid growth, and partly due to "Urban Sprawl" permitted in the past, although many improvements have already been made:

- Major arterial roads have been widened to the maximum permitted
- Bur Oak opened before it was assumed
- VIVA can now be extended to Ward 5
- Need to replace large bus with a lighter shuttle on a faster route
- VIVA bus will be in a segregated lane, with the ability to change traffic lights
- Light rail preparations and Highway 7 improvements coming soon
- High occupancy lanes and Travel Demand practices now in use
- Will implement the 'live, work, play and learn' concept to reduce congestion
- Donald Cousens Parkway extended south of 407

ISSUE 3: Traffic Calming

Congestion and speeding can also be improved by applying traffic calming techniques:

- Speed bumps have proven ineffective
- Roundabouts installed in Ward 5 are working well
- Road Watch program has been shown to reduce speeding
- Working with York Regional Police for more enforcement

ISSUE 4: Employment Opportunities

I am working hard to bring more employment opportunities to our area:

- Reserved Reesor Road land parcel for Research Park like Warden IBM campus
- Resisted pressure to give this to Rouge Park, last space for employment lands
- Markham has not suffered as badly as other areas from recession problems
- Continuing efforts to increase balanced residential/commercial development

ISSUE 5: Downtown Markham Main Street Revitalization

Continuing work towards an improved Downtown Markham Main Street:

- Have guided the Environmental Assessment through all stages
- Work begins in Spring 2011 to design/build a functional Main Street
- Aimed to attract the types and numbers of businesses residents want
- Encouraged revitalization of tired non-heritage buildings to repair long neglect

ISSUE 6: Parks and Open Spaces

Dedicated to bringing more parks and open spaces to Ward 5:

- Our ward already has more parks per person than any other Markham ward
- That's no reason not to push for more in reasonable locations at sensible cost
- Woodlots can be control-developed, to maintain tree canopy & provide recreation
- Some off-leash parks to balance safety of people and pets

ISSUE 7: Rouge Park

On-going work with Rouge Park Implementation Task Force:

- Founding member of this committee
- Committed to ensure Park is a place for people and the environment

ISSUE 8: Controlled Growth

Ensure growth in Markham is controlled, and conforms to carefully planned standards:

- Chair Development Services Committee, so in close touch with all issues
- Brought over 1,000 people to Growth/Strategy meeting
- Hammered out arrangement that was acceptable to all (not perfect)
- Committed to keeping high-rise apartments on arterial roads with transit
- Work with Council and residents to maintain/improve quality of life in Ward 5

ISSUE 9: Tax and Value for Money Spent

I'm determined to ensure that Ward 5 residents continue to get excellent value for money on the taxes spent in their behalf:

- Believe strongly that taxes should be tightly controlled to ease burden on residents
- Council has managed to hold the line on Town tax rates for the past 2 years
- All tax revenues must be leveraged to the maximum possible extent
- Aim to achieve the "most with the least", while preserving the great life style that has been developed over the last 5 years in Markham, through our long-term planning and careful money management.