

Gas Tax funding to provide more than \$670,000 toward supporting Dufferin-Caledon public transit

By Rob Paul

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones announced January 19 that the Ontario government is providing more than \$670,000 to support the expansion and improvement of public transit services in Dufferin-Caledon.

The funding is part of the province's Gas Tax program which will allocate \$375.6 million this year to 107 municipalities that deliver public transit.

In Dufferin-Caledon, the Towns of Caledon and Orangeville deliver public transit services within their municipality and receive funding through the province's Gas Tax program? and both Caledon and Orangeville are seeing an uptick in funding this year.

Caledon is set to receive \$6,072 more in funding this year than last year (from \$379,401 to \$385,473) and Orangeville will receive \$1,762 more in funding this year (from \$287,668 to \$289,430).

?Our government knows that supporting public transit systems is more important than ever as communities struggle to maintain service levels during COVID-19,? said Jones. ?Both Orangeville and Caledon rely on the Gas Tax funding to ensure transit services operate today as well as planning to meet the future needs of our communities as the municipality grows.?

Funding for the Gas Tax program is determined by the number of litres of gasoline sold in the province during the previous year. Municipalities that support public transit services receive two cents per litre of provincial Gas Tax revenue, which can be used to extend service hours, buy transit vehicles, add routes, improve accessibility or upgrade infrastructure.

To make up for reduced gas sales due to COVID-19, this year's Gas Tax funding includes one-time additional funding of \$120.4 million to ensure municipalities can support their transit systems.

?Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen how critical public transit is for frontline workers and for Ontarians who depend on these services to get to medical appointments, the grocery store and other important locations,? said Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation. ?Gas Tax funding remains a vital source of long-term transit funding that municipalities can rely on to help operate and expand existing public transit services?ensuring people have access to safe and reliable transportation when they need it.?

The 107 municipalities receiving funding through the Gas Tax program deliver public transit service to 142 communities representing more than 92 per cent of Ontario's total population.

The provincial and federal governments are providing up to \$2.15 billion to support municipal transit systems across the province in response to COVID-19 through the Safe Restart Agreement.

Ontario is developing regional plans that will help build a better transportation system across the province. The province has released draft regional transportation plans for Northern Ontario and southwestern Ontario, and planning is underway for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and eastern Ontario.