



# York Regional Council Highlights



December 2005

The Regional Municipality of York

## York Regional Council Approves 2006 Business Plan and Budget

York Regional Council approved a \$1.6 billion Business Plan and Budget which includes more than \$35.9 million in service enhancements and new programs that will benefit current York Region residents and businesses, while keeping up with projected growth.

The 2006 budget includes a 2.9 per cent tax levy that translates into a modest increase of \$50 per household with an average assessed value of \$374,000. This represents an extra 14 cents a day to a York Region taxpayer.

The \$35.9 million in service enhancements and new programs also includes full-year costs (annualizations) for services that began throughout 2005, including the September launch of Viva Rapid Transit.

The major components of the 2006 Business Plan and Budget include the following:

- \$444 million for water and wastewater projects throughout the Region, including diversifying the Region's water sources through purchases from Peel Region
- \$220 million for roads projects, including providing maintenance for 3,359 lane kilometres of roadway and 700 traffic signals
- \$187 million for York Regional Police, including the addition of 67 new police officers and 35 civilian members
- \$170.8 million for York Region Transit and Viva Rapid Transit, including increasing transit service hours by over 46,000 hours for a total of 717,200 service hours, representing a 6.9 per cent increase, and providing approximately 163,000 additional Viva rapid transit service hours
- \$67 million for Family and Children's Services, including providing early intervention services to a monthly average of 1,066 children
- \$43 million for public health, including program enhancements and 21.5 new staff
- \$34 million for Emergency Medical Services (EMS), including the purchase of a new ambulance and hiring of six new paramedics and a supervisor
- \$32 million for solid waste management, including managing over 324,000 tonnes of solid waste for diversion and disposal, an increase of 4.5 per cent and expanding the Source Separated Organics processing program for the City of Vaughan

The 2006 Business Plan and Budget also include funds for the following special purpose bodies:

- \$84.2 million in collected GTA pooling costs
- \$12.3 million in Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) costs
- \$7.3 million in continued hospital capital funding
- \$13.8 million in funding to GO Transit
- \$3.5 million in funding to conservation authorities

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## **York Regional Council urges Province to phase out GTA Pooling**

York Regional Council is again requesting the Ontario Government to phase out GTA Pooling for Social Assistance and Social Housing and have discussions regarding a more equitable funding model. The Region's 2006 Budget also imposes a three per cent pooling cap over 2005.

GTA Pooling continues to represent a significant financial pressure on the Region's budget, and has become an unsustainable tax

As part of its approved 2006 Business Plan and Budget, York Region will collect and pay the province \$84.2 million (representing a three per cent cap over the 2005 amount) compared to the estimated \$90.8 million being requested from the Ontario Government.

Throughout 2005, York Region collected \$86.7 million and paid the province \$81.7 million (representing a three per cent cap over the 2004 amount). York Region withheld \$5 million – the difference levied versus being paid.

## **York Region wins two awards for innovative waste management strategies**

York Regional Council praised the Region's Solid Waste Management Branch for recently capturing two awards at the 2005 Ontario Waste Minimization Awards event hosted by the Recycling Council of Ontario (RCO). The Region won a gold award for its Yard Waste marketing campaign and finalist award for its Litter Prevention Strategy.

The Yard Waste marketing campaign, winner in the Promotions category, involved a colourful print advertising campaign to highlight the Region's move from plastic bags for yard waste to environmentally-friendly Kraft paper bags and reusable containers. The campaign also featured a mail-out to all households with educational material, a yard waste sticker for a reusable container and a 10 per cent discount card for the purchase of Kraft bags.

The Litter Prevention Strategy, finalist in the Municipal category, was established in 2004 to educate residents on the negative environmental and social effects of littering, and to encourage clean-up events. In 2004, the Region successfully recruited 5,700 participants in a variety of litter clean-up events and collected more than 1,100 bags of trash. The Region continued its litter collection success this year with a school round-up event in October where more than 900 bags of trash were collected in one afternoon by more than 9,500 students.

## **Dongara Residual Waste Proposal will reduce Region's landfill requirements**

York Regional Council decided to move forward with an agreement to ship 100,000 tonnes of residual waste per year for 20 years to Dongara Developments Inc., and convert it to an alternative fuel source. The date for initial processing is anticipated to begin in January 2008.

Dongara Developments has entered into an agreement with the City of Vaughan to construct a processing facility at the northeast corner of Highway 407 and Highway 27, to receive and manage waste from curbside garbage collection. The facility will remove elements from the residual waste and grind it down into pellets that can be used as burnable sources of fuel.

The initial processing costs for the Dongara option will be \$51.50 per tonne, plus transportation costs to the end market. Currently, this type of fuel can only be sold in the United States; however, York Region will be requesting that the Minister of the Environment allow the use of the pellets as an alternative fuel in Ontario.

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## **York Regional Council approves Winter Needs Program to aid homeless**

York Regional Council approved a report regarding the Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF) Winter Needs Program funding for 2005/2006. The goal of the initiative is to enhance the services and infrastructure of community agencies in the Region who serve homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

In the 2005 Business Plan and Budget, a total of \$100,000 was allocated to the Winter Needs Program. On September 26<sup>th</sup>, a Request for Proposals was issued to community agencies, with a closing of October 14<sup>th</sup>. The maximum allowable funding under the Program is \$8,000. A total of 17 proposals were submitted from agencies and all applicants have received funding for at least part of their proposals.

York Region's Winter Needs Program annually provides community agencies with funding for the purchase of items for distribution to clients, such as food, winter clothing, furnishings, transportation tickets, and resource information. Funding has also been approved for minor capital improvements to facilities which serve homeless and at risk residents, such as the emergency shelters and drop-in centres.

## **York Regional Council releases 2005 State of the Environment Report**

York Regional Council received *Focus on Our Environment*, the 2005 State of the Environment Report, and adopted its 33 recommendations to help continue to protect York Region's natural environment.

*Focus on Our Environment* follows the State of the Environment report produced by York Region in 2000, acting as both a progress indicator as well as a current assessment of the natural environment. The report comprises 85 separate indicators to assess land, water and air resources, and examines major stresses on these resources.

The report cited 33 recommendations from five key areas to preserve our natural heritage. The five areas included monitoring the environment for the future, taking action on sustainability, meeting targets and commitments, enhancing the Region's role as leader and working in partnerships for success.

The recommendations cited key challenges for the future, including balancing population growth with services and environmental protection, meeting reforestation and transit targets and meeting provincial criteria and federal standards for air quality.

The report will be distributed to each of York Region's nine municipalities through schools and libraries, and will be available on the Region's Web site at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

## **Council receives update on Human Services Planning**

York Regional Council received a report on Human Services Planning that provides an update on its major initiatives, including the *Inclusivity Action Plan*, government relations strategy and research partnerships.

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## **Council approves Growth Management work plan**

York Regional Council approved the Growth Management Public Information and Engagement Work Plan for the Region's Growth Management initiative.

The public information and engagement process – involving public open houses and forums, publications and the Internet – will proceed early 2006 over a two-year period and will examine the best ways for accommodating significant population and employment growth, protecting our natural heritage to ensure a legacy for existing and future residents and making sure that both human services and infrastructure keeps pace with growth.

The Region's Growth Management systems, as well as the Region's Master Planning strategies for Transportation and Water and Sewers, will be reviewed as part of this process and will culminate in a Regional Official Plan Amendment in late 2007.

## **Council approves report on achieving 40 per cent residential intensification**

York Region approved a report identifying numerous challenges towards achieving the Provincial residential intensification target of 40 per cent. The report, *York Region Residential Intensification Opportunities*, identifies some of the issues related to the implementation of Provincial Growth Plan targets and discusses the progress that has been achieved to date.

Intensification of 40 per cent translates into a demand of approximately 81,000 new residential units to be built by 2031 within existing built-up urban boundaries located within the Town of Markham, the City of Vaughan and the Town of Richmond Hill – particularly along the Region's rapid transit corridors.

The realization of the 40 per cent intensification target, however, will require political will for policy implementation and, more importantly, economic and financial resources to support the necessary infrastructure. This would include funding for public transit, 400-series highway infrastructure, housing, legislative changes and human services.

Council authorized staff to forward the report to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and York Region's nine area municipalities.

## **Council receives Transportation Master Plan update**

York Regional Council received an update to the 2002 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Study.

The update outlines strategies and programs:

- to deliver a sustainable funding model for a mature transportation system throughout York Region
- for a transit infrastructure program based on newly adopted environmental and growth management sustainability factors (including the improvement of air quality and the reduction of traffic congestion)
- for a framework for partnership with the Provincial and Federal governments to provide infrastructure and funding to support the continued development of York Region transit initiatives

The report follows the successful launch of Viva Rapid Transit in September and policies regarding development of the Regional Centres and Corridors now beginning to take effect.

The report will be shared with local municipalities, the City of Toronto, the regional municipalities of Durham and Peel, County of Simcoe, the provincial ministries of Infrastructure Renewal and Transportation, GO Transit and the TTC.

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## **Council receives update on York Region tourism program**

York Regional Council received a report outlining the Region's tourism initiatives from May to October 2005, as well as partnership status updates and a snapshot of Ontario's tourism performance and travel trends.

The Region's tourism program identifies the most critical tourism markets and works to maximize potential while developing new business opportunities and diversifying the market base. The program sells the virtues of York Region as a destination while supporting emerging municipal tourism initiatives.

## **Lloyd Russell named new York Region Commissioner of Finance and Regional Treasurer**

The Regional Municipality of York is pleased to announce the appointment of Lloyd Russell as its new Commissioner of Finance and Regional Treasurer. Mr. Russell succeeds Sandra Cartwright, who is retiring after more than 10 years of service to the Region.

Mr. Russell is a Certified General Accountant (CGA) with a wealth of financial management experience in both the private and public sectors, most recently with the amalgamated City of Ottawa as City Treasurer since October 2000.

Mr. Russell will begin with the Regional Municipality of York on February 13, 2006.

## **Next meeting of York Regional Council**

York Regional Council's next meeting will take place on Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, at 9:30 a.m. in the Council Chambers of the York Region Administrative Centre, located at 17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket.

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