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For Immediate Release

York Regional Council – June 23, 2011

York Region releases 2010 Annual Report

York Regional Council today received The Regional Municipality of York 2010 Annual Report.

The 71-page report highlights information on Regional Council, Committee and staff accomplishments, audited financial statements, plus a five-year review. It also features a description of the nine area municipalities and a list of the core services provided by York Region.

The report is also accompanied by the 2010 Housing York Inc. Annual Report.

The 2010 Annual Report is available at the York Region Administrative Centre information kiosk, 17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket and online at www.york.ca

English as a Second Language Week

York Regional Council is recognizing October 23 to 29 as English as a Second Language (ESL) Week to recognize those who have contributed and benefited from ESL education across Ontario. English as a Second Language Week coincides with the Teachers of English as a Second Language Association of Ontario's 39th annual conference to be held in Toronto.

York Region to donate two decommissioned ambulances

York Regional Council authorized the donation of two York Region Emergency Medical Services ambulances that were decommissioned from service in 2011.

Upon reviewing requests for donated ambulances, the High Adventure Gospel Communication Ministries and 1st York Region EMS Medical Venturers and Rovers – Scouts Canada were consistent with the donations guidelines and will each receive a decommissioned ambulance.

The High Adventure Gospel Communication Ministries intends to use the ambulance to support a 40 to 60-bed medical centre providing maternal, paediatric and general surgical care in Ongutui, Uganda.

The ambulance donated to 1st York Region EMS Medical Venturers and Rovers – Scouts Canada will be used to serve as a stationary first aid post at community events and to support a youth-in-training program.

In accordance with York Region guidelines, a maximum of 25 per cent of the decommissioned surplus vehicles may be donated in any given calendar year.

The donation of decommissioned, surplus ambulances is to registered not-for-profit, community or international humanitarian organizations that are generally aligned with the services supported by York Region.

Any expense for shipping, permits and related costs will be covered by the organization receiving the donation.

York Region Transit (YRT)/Viva evaluates current performance to guide the development of its 2012 Service Plan and Five-Year Service and Operational Plan

York Regional Council today received an update on the current YRT/Viva system performance and an overview of priorities for the next five years.

In 2011, YRT/Viva has focused on on-time performance and service reliability. YRT/Viva experienced significant ridership gains in the first five months of 2011. If this trend continues, YRT/Viva will surpass 21 million riders in 2011.

In the fall, YRT/Viva will present two service plans to Regional Council: YRT/Viva Five-Year Service and Operational Plan and the YRT/Viva 2012 Service Plan.

The YRT/Viva Five-Year Service and Operational Plan will focus on management measures to improve on-time performance with the goal of retaining and growing ridership. The plan will also focus on mitigating the impacts of vivaNext construction and being "Rapid Transit Ready" by adjusting services to operate on the rapidways and connect with the new subway stations.

The YRT/Viva 2012 Service Plan will provide a framework for next year's service improvements in order to attract new customers and increase ridership.

The Regional Municipality of York identifies measures to manage disruption during vivaNext construction

The Regional Municipality of York today received a report identifying measures to aid in the management of expected disruptions during vivaNext rapidway construction on the Highway 7 Regional corridor.

Construction activities in the Highway 7 corridor will result in significant changes to traffic patterns over a wide area that will affect 14th Avenue, 16th Avenue, Yonge Street, Bayview Avenue, Leslie Street, Woodbine Avenue, Warden Avenue and Kennedy Road.

York Region and York Region Rapid Transit Corporation have identified a number of measures to minimize the impacts of vivaNext construction to pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, drivers, residents and businesses in York Region.

Various communications tools will be implemented to provide frequent, timely and practical information about construction activities, including:

- Construction materials for public distribution, such as project newsletters, bulletins, brochures, fact sheets and illustrations
- Public outreach via special events, presentations and group meetings
- Variable message boards that provide roadside travel time information and wayfinding signage
- Frequent construction updates posted to the web and shared via social media
- Print, broadcast, on-street and online advertising
- Community engagement activities, such as community events, open houses and on-street liaison
- Business support via events with the Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade and ongoing liaison

The construction of this major Regional infrastructure is planned over the next three years.

No fare increase for YRT/Viva for the balance of 2011

York Regional Council today approved a recommendation to keep existing YRT/Viva fare structure and pricing in place for the balance of 2011.

YRT/Viva fares have been kept at their current level since January 2009.

York Regional Council's decision to keep the existing fare structure involved many considerations, including expected service disruptions due to vivaNext construction and YRT/Viva's ridership momentum.

Any possible fare increase will be considered in the fall as input to the 2012 business planning and budget process.

The Regional Municipality of York wins Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Canada national award

The Regional Municipality of York has won an Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Canada national award for York Region Transit (YRT)/Viva's transit management systems.

The ITS Project/Program Award for larger metropolitan areas recognizes York Region's work in spearheading the implementation of intelligent transportation systems on Viva (bus rapid transit), York Region Transit (conventional transit service) and Mobility Plus (paratransit service).

The intelligent transportation systems installed on YRT/Viva vehicles thus far include computer-aided dispatch applications, automatic vehicle location and numerous traveller information services. Each system component is designed to enhance customer service, improve passenger and driver safety, optimize operational performance and provide real-time bus arrival information at stops and terminals.

Investment Attraction and Export Development programs created positive partnership model

The Regional Municipality of York's Investment Attraction and Export Development programs have created a positive and effective partnership model for the Region to work with local municipalities and businesses across all nine municipalities.

During the first half of 2011, the programs held several events and workshops in partnership with local and external business and trade organizations. Advisors will engage more than 150 York Region companies in 2011 to facilitate export development and business investment initiatives.

York Region's Investment Attraction and Export Development programs expand the Region's business networks, generate awareness in target foreign markets, support growth in our local export base and promote new business investment in the Region by both local and international companies.

Funding program leveraged more than \$1 million in its first year

York Region's funding initiative has successfully assisted in securing more than \$1.2 million for 10 projects to expand community capacity and contribute to the Region's economic vitality. Another 12 projects are in progress.

In 2010, a new staff position dedicated to researching and securing project funding for initiatives of The Regional Municipality of York and community partners was added to the Region's Planning and Development Department.

The role of the staff person included identifying funding programs, assisting applicants with research, building applicants' understanding of how to make successful proposals, working with the applicants and funders to align needs and writing and submitting and managing applications.

York Small Business Enterprise Centre assists entrepreneurs

The York Small Business Enterprise Centre 2011 program stimulates, promotes and supports small businesses in their start-up and early growth phases as well as the expansion of existing businesses.

The program identified a series of new events, increased partnerships and community involvement to encourage entrepreneurship, stimulate new and sustainable small and medium-size business start-ups and support the growth of existing businesses in The Regional Municipality of York.

Client interactions from January to April 2011 include:

- 6,403 general information inquiries resulting in business consultation and advice provided to 162 clients
- 256 participants attended educational forums and the annual business conference
- 69 Summer Company inquiries result in 21 new summer business start-ups

The York Small Business Enterprise Centre serves the northern six municipalities and complements the services provided by the Small Business Enterprise Centres in Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan, operated by those respective municipalities.

Progress report tracks implementation of Vision 2026 and the Sustainability Strategy

York Regional Council today released *Vision 2026: Sustainability Progress Report 2010*, which describes the progress made by The Regional Municipality of York in implementing *Vision 2026* and the *Sustainability Strategy*.

York Region continued to take innovative actions in 2010 to help ensure our communities remain sustainable. Significant progress was made in transit and trip reductions, human services, housing diversity, green development and accessibility.

Vision 2026 outlines what residents want to see happen over the next 25 years and the *Sustainability Strategy* provides a framework for making informed decisions that better integrate the economy, community and environment.

A key highlight among many 2010 achievements listed in the report is the new *Regional Official Plan*, which will guide decisions to manage growth and ensure the Region's efforts remain truly sustainable.

The progress report is based on six theme areas of the Sustainability Strategy and contains a new section, Moving Forward into 2011, spotlighting key initiatives for this year. The report also integrates Vision 2026 perspectives on indicators, Council initiatives, successes and innovations.

Vision 2026: Sustainability Progress Report 2010 will be distributed to the public, stakeholders and local municipalities and will be available online at www.york.ca

2012 Budget Timelines

York Regional Council today approved a timetable for the 2012 budget.

The 2012 operating and capital budgets will be tabled at Regional Council in November, presented to Committees in December and be approved at Regional Council in January 2012. The December meetings will be devoted to budget discussion and urgent items only to allow time for a thorough review and discussion, including performance measurement and capital infrastructure debt financing.

The 2012 business plan and budget represents the second year of a multi-year operating budget that was presented to Council as part of the 2011 budget process. It provides Regional Council with more accurate budgeting forecast estimates, including budgetary pressures and assessment growth forecasts.

The 2012 Business Plan and Budget will be the second budget to be addressed by York Regional Council in 2011. Following the inauguration of the new term of Council in December 2010, the 2011 budget was tabled in January and approved in March 2011.

York Region achieves AAA credit rating for 10th consecutive year

Standard & Poor's have affirmed a AAA credit rating for The Regional Municipality of York for the 10th consecutive year. The rating agency cited in its report:

- York Region's highly diversified, dynamic economy is well-integrated within the broader economy of the Greater Toronto Area
- York Region's strong liquidity, including access to approximately \$500 million in Development Charge (DC) reserves
- York Region's need to install certain infrastructure (particularly for water and wastewater) ahead of development

The Region also holds a AAA credit rating from Moody's Investors Service, maintained since 2000. Both Standard & Poor's and Moody's have taken into consideration York Region's rapid population growth, expanding assessment base and robust economy as part of their ratings.

York Region approves management plan to help mitigate impact of Emerald Ash Borer

York Regional Council has approved a management plan to monitor and help mitigate the impact of the Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive insect that kills all types of ash trees.

The management plan includes:

- Development of a communications strategy to educate residents and other stakeholders
- Increasing private planting programs and incentives to help offset impacts to affected landowners
- Timely identification and removal of infested ash trees along Regional roads and along paths in the York Regional Forest
- Replanting with different native tree species after affected ash trees are removed
- Protecting select significant ash trees of significance with pesticide
- Annual surveys to monitor the expansion of the infestation

York Region has re-allocated \$50,000 from other forestry programs to support communications and surveying in 2011. Full implementation of the Emerald Ash Borer management plan could cost as much as \$11.7 million over 10 years.

The Regional Municipality of York reduces ecological footprint with five per cent cut in greenhouse gas emissions

The Regional Municipality of York has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by five per cent since 2006 and cut energy costs, despite rising fuel and electricity rates.

York Region continues to reduce its ecological footprint through a combination of energy retrofits to existing buildings, purchasing renewable energy as part of the Region's energy supply mix and commitment to a minimum *Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design* (LEED) Silver standard for all new facilities.

Energy retrofits of the York Region Administrative Centre have produced annual savings of approximately \$200,000. Retrofits include the installation of more energy efficient fluorescent lighting and ballasts, motion sensors to turn off lights when occupants leave their work space and variable-speed fans for *HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning)* systems.

York Region recently renewed a contract for electricity from low-impact green power generators in Ontario for several facilities, including the York Region Administrative Centre.

The York Regional Police Central Services Building in the Town of Aurora, which opened in November 2010, is designed to LEED Silver standards to minimize energy usage.

Detailed information is contained in the annual Corporate Energy Report for 2010, compiled as part of requirements under Ontario's Green Energy Act. York Region's Corporate Energy Report 2010 can be obtained by clicking [here](#)

2010 Annual Report Municipal Streetscape Partnership

York Regional Council has approved \$587,000 from the 2011 Municipal Streetscape Partnership Program for the following streetscape proposals:

Town of Aurora – Wellington Street (Bayview Avenue to Leslie Street)

- Formation of a community gateway with tree planting and stone-edged planting beds

Town of Georgina – Woodbine Avenue (Glenwood Avenue to Wexford Drive)

- Installation of decorative lighting

Town of Markham – Warden Avenue (16th Avenue to Major Mackenzie Drive)

- Tree planting along medians and boulevards

City of Vaughan – Intersection of Keele Street and McNaughton Road

- Circular planters, paving and decorative brick and crosswalks

The Municipal Streetscape Partnership provides funding to help local municipalities create vibrant attractive Regional roads.

Council receives update on total forest cover in The Regional Municipality of York

York Regional Council received an update on the extent of forest cover within The Regional Municipality of York. Recent aerial photography reveals approximately 22.5 per cent or 40,000 hectares of the Region is forested. This coverage suggests despite rapid development over the past 10 years, accompanied by incremental gains and losses of forests, York Region has retained its overall share of forest coverage.

Through land-use initiatives and strategic programs such as the Greening Strategy, the Region protects and restores forests. The Greening Strategy has an established goal of 25 per cent forest coverage.

Pavement Management Strategy update

York Regional Council has received a pavement management strategy update for Regional roads, highlighting the following facts:

- York Region has nearly 3,500 lane kilometres of Regional roads
- The value of the Regional road network is approximately \$2.2 billion
- The Region invests \$2.5 million annually in road maintenance
- Over the past five years, 870 lane kilometres of Regional roads have been resurfaced or repaired
- Asphalt roads account for 96 per cent of the Regional road network, with surface treated roads accounting for the other four per cent
- Asphalt pavement is used for medium to high-traffic roads, yielding a service life between 15 and 20 years
- Surfacing is used for low traffic roads, yielding a service life between four and six years

The Region's pavement management strategy outlines the following four areas to improve the service life of Regional roads:

- Routine maintenance: Includes crack sealing, grading shoulders, grinding worn areas of asphalt and cleaning ditches and storm outlets
- Preventative maintenance: Includes applying different road coatings, including thin layers of asphalt
- Pavement rehabilitation: Includes removing and repaving single asphalt layers
- Pavement reconstruction: Includes removing and rebuilding small to large sections of roadway

The Region collects road data every two years for all sections along the Regional road network to make a determination on what improvements need to be made based on the road condition. One dollar in preventative maintenance eliminates or postpones four to five dollars in reactive repair costs.

Highway 7 Cycling Facility Design: Town Centre Boulevard to Doncrest Road in the Towns of Markham and Richmond Hill

York Regional Council received an update on a proposed cycling facility design for Highway 7 between Town Centre Boulevard and Doncrest Road in the Towns of Markham and Richmond Hill.

Following consultation on alternative designs, the Region has recommended changing the original proposed design of a 1.5-metre wide lane separated from three lanes of traffic by a white pavement marking strip, to a 1.4-metre wide lane with a half-metre buffer separating the three lanes of traffic. The new design will also feature side inlet catch basins to maximize cycling space.

Status of Infrastructure Stimulus Fund (ISF) Projects

In September 2009, York Region implemented the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund (ISF) Contribution Agreement with the Federal Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure and the Provincial Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for 17 infrastructure projects.

Projects include:

- Resurfacing of nine Regional roads
- Rehabilitation of 1,000 bus stops
- Rehabilitation of 11 bus loops
- Widening of Gamble Road in the Town of Richmond Hill
- Instrumentation upgrades at several water / wastewater facilities
- Upgrades to the water treatment plant in the Town of Georgina
- Upgrades to the York Region Waste Management Centre in the Town of East Gwillimbury
- Construction of a new Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Central Support facility in the Town of East Gwillimbury
- Construction of a Community Environmental Centre (CEC) in the Town of Richmond Hill

On December 2, 2010, Infrastructure Canada announced a seven-month extension to the original ISF program timelines, allowing completion of projects up to October 31, 2011.

Substantial progress has been made on all 17 ISF projects, with 13 projects complete, three more nearing completion and the remaining project on schedule for completion by October 31, 2011.

Total project costs are anticipated to be \$79.5 million.

Councillor Hogg re-elected to National Board

Richmond Hill Regional Councillor Brenda Hogg has been re-elected to the National Board of Directors at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) 74th Annual Conference and Municipal Expo in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

First elected to FCM's Board in 1997, Councillor Hogg has held many significant offices, including the office of Vice-President-at-Large, Chair of the Ontario Regional Committee from 1999 to 2002, Chair of the Social Economic Development Committee and Chair of the Quality of Life Reporting System.

Councillor Hogg's role on the Board ensures the Town of Richmond Hill and The Regional Municipality of York continue to be well-represented in dealing with policy and program matters impacting municipalities.

The FCM has been the national voice of municipal government since 1901. With more than 1,775 members, the organization represents the interests of municipalities on policy and program matters that fall within federal jurisdiction.

York Region Planning and Development Services Commissioner Bryan Tuckey retires

Today marked York Region Planning and Development Services Commissioner Bryan Tuckey's last Regional Council, as he will retire at the end of the month.

York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch thanked Mr. Tuckey for his contributions and praised his 11 years of service to the Region, highlighting his strong leadership and role in establishing appropriate policies, programs and practices to help manage the Region's growth.

During his years of service at the Region, Mr. Tuckey has been responsible for Community Development, Infrastructure Planning, Long Range & Strategic Planning, Geographic Information and Economic Strategy and Tourism.

York Regional Council welcomes Bill Hughes

York Regional Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch officially welcomed Bill Hughes as York Region's new Commissioner of Finance and Regional Treasurer.

Mr. Hughes, who succeeds Lloyd Russell, commenced his new role at the Region on June 13.

Prior to joining York Region, Mr. Hughes served with the Ontario provincial government in a variety of portfolios that included Assistant Deputy Minister of Infrastructure, Policy and Planning where he was responsible for the Province's capital budget and Ten-Year Infrastructure Plan.

Mr. Hughes holds a Master of Business Administration degree and a Master of Environmental Studies degree from York University, as well as a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Toronto. He also holds executive designations from the Rotman School of Business at the University of Toronto.

General Manager of Roads, Paul Jankowski thanked for his years of service to The Regional Municipality York

York Regional Council gave thanks to General Manager of Roads Paul Jankowski for his years of service to the Region and its residents. Paul leaves the position of General Manager to assume the post of Commissioner of Engineering and Works with the City of Vaughan.

York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch cited Paul's dedication and professionalism over an 11-year career with the Region, overseeing billions of dollars in capital investments in our community.

Among the many projects that Paul oversaw were the expansion of the York Durham Sewage System, construction of the Newmarket Bypass, Box Grove Bypass, Donald Cousens Parkway and Regional extension of Highway 427, as well as the reconstruction of St. John's Sideroad and boardwalk installation over the McKenzie Wetland Complex in Aurora, which won the 2006 Ontario Public Works Association Environmental Project of the year.

Friendly competition among York Region Mayors helps raise money for Southlake Regional Health Centre

Steve Hinder, Chair of the *A & B Courier Run for Southlake*, advised Council the annual run raised \$144,000, providing much-needed funds that will support Southlake Regional Health Centre's priority needs, including a second Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Machine and routine hospital equipment such as mattresses, wheelchairs and IV poles.

Town of Aurora Mayor Geoffrey Dawe, Town of East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson, Town of Georgina Mayor Robert Grossi, King Township Mayor Steve Pellegrini, Town of Newmarket Mayor Tony Van Bynen and their respective local Council's participated in a challenge to create their own teams, involve the largest number of constituents and to raise the most money for the community hospital.

Town of Newmarket Mayor Tony Van Bynen was acknowledged for raising the most money among the Mayors and received a trophy in recognition of the achievement.

Next meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, September 22 at 9:30 a.m. at the York Region Administrative Centre Council Chambers, located at 17250 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket.

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