



# York Regional Council Highlights



Meeting held on  
May 15, 2008



The Regional Municipality of York

## 2008 Persechini Easter Seals Run/Walkathon

York Regional Council received a presentation from Joe Persechini and Easter Seals youth ambassador Julia Oliver promoting the 2008 Persechini Easter Seals Run/Walkathon, which takes place on Sunday, May 25<sup>th</sup>.

York Region employees participate each year to help support children in need. Proceeds raised help families purchase costly equipment, including wheelchairs and communication devices.

Money raised over the years has contributed directly to the quality of life of Easter Seals kids and their parents.

## Jeffrey Abrams to become Clerk at City of Vaughan

York Regional Council thanked Deputy Clerk Jeffrey Abrams for his service to The Regional Municipality of York as he is leaving to become the Clerk for the City of Vaughan.

Mr. Abrams served as Deputy Clerk with the Region for 3 ½-years.

## York Regional Council seeks more input to guide growth management decisions

York Regional Council approved plans for a third and final phase of consultations for *Planning for Tomorrow*, York Region's growth management initiative. The consultations will encourage public discussion on the issues and choices facing York Region, identify solutions and seek broad public consensus on the public policy decisions that need to be made about how to manage our future growth.

The provincial growth plan has forecast York Region's population to reach 1.5 million people by 2031. Adding 500,000 more people in 23 years is similar to adding the population of our two largest municipalities, the Town of Markham and the City of Vaughan, combined.

As of the 2006 Census, 42 per cent of York Region residents were newcomers to Canada.

To successfully implement the provincial growth plan, York Region must add 333,000 jobs for a total of 797,000 jobs by 2031. In addition, York Region must add 231,300 households to our current total of 275,500 households.

The consultations will feature town hall meetings in September to encourage public discussion on the choices facing York Region and will include discussions of the outcome of the initial phases of consultation.

To obtain copies of the staff report *Planning for Tomorrow - Public Engagement Phase 3*, please call York Region's Planning and Development Services Department at 905 895-1231, Ext. 1550, or toll-free at 1-877-464-9675, or send your request via email to [strategicplanning@york.ca](mailto:strategicplanning@york.ca)

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **York Region recognizes National Access Awareness Week, ESL Week and Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Awareness Month**

York Regional Council recognized the following:

### **June 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> as National Access Awareness Week**

National Access Awareness Week was established in 1988 in response to a request from Rick Hansen following his Man in Motion World Tour to promote better access for people with disabilities to education, leisure, transportation, housing and employment.

### **November 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> as English as a Second Language (ESL)Week**

ESL Week recognizes both those who have contributed and those who have benefited from ESL learning in Ontario.

### **June as Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Awareness Month**

Spina bifida is the incomplete development of the nervous system and spinal cord that causes permanent damage. It occurs within the first four weeks of pregnancy, and is the No. 1 disabling birth defect occurring in one in 750 children born in Canada. Hydrocephalus is the accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid within and around the brain which can result in permanent brain damage or death without treatment. Children and youth living with spina bifida or hydrocephalus require appropriate health care, education, employment and recreational opportunities and community support to reach their full potential.

## **York Region recognizes Regional Councillor Danny Wheeler's 25 years of municipal service**

York Regional Council recognized Town of Georgina Regional Councillor and York Regional Police Services Board Chairman Danny Wheeler for receiving a 25-year, long-standing service award from the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Councillor Wheeler has been representing the citizens of Georgina at York Regional Council since 1988 as Regional Councillor for seven consecutive terms.

## **York Ride for Juvenile Diabetes Research event**

York Regional Council recognized the York Ride for Juvenile Diabetes Research, being held on Wednesday, October 8th. The event is a stationary bike-a-thon where teams raise pledges in support of children with Type 1 diabetes.

## **Terms of Reference in development for Source Protection Areas**

York Regional Council approved Environmental Services staff to lead technical tasks and Planning staff to co-lead planning tasks for development of Terms of Reference in the preparation of the Assessment Report for the Toronto and Region and Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching/Black River Source Protection Areas.

Following Ministry of the Environment approval of the Terms of Reference, the development of the Assessment Report is expected to be completed next year. The process will conclude with the first Source Protection Plan by 2012.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **1,000 Police Officers Partnership extended two years**

York Regional Council approved a report from the York Regional Police Services Board recommending a two-year extension of the Provincial Safer Communities – 1,000 Officer Policing Partnership Grant Program.

The Government of Ontario program started in October 2003 with a commitment to provide funding for 1,000 new police officers across the province to enhance community safety by bolstering community policing.

The initiative focuses on six areas of policing: youth crime, guns and gangs, grow ops, Internet luring and enhancing the efficiency of the court system.

Under the program, York Regional Police received funding for 100 new officers in the following categories:

• Organized Crime	45
• Guns and Gangs	25
• Community Policing	10
• Protecting Children from Internet Luring and Child Pornography	10
• Dangerous Offenders	3
• Domestic Violence	3
• Court Efficiencies	2
• Youth Crime	2

Funding is provided on a 50-50 cost share between The Regional Municipality of York and the Government of Ontario for salary, benefits and related overtime costs to an annual maximum of \$35,000 per officer.

## **Standardized Fortification Bylaw endorsed to combat organized crime**

York Regional Council endorsed a presentation from York Regional Police and the Regional Solicitor encouraging all nine area municipalities to adopt a standardized bylaw to regulate excessive fortification and protection of properties in efforts to combat organized crime in the Region – particularly by outlaw motorcycle gangs.

Excessive fortification poses a serious risk to emergency responders – police, fire and paramedics – who may be required to enter the premises. Fortified premises often allow for suspects to flee and pose a serious risk to adjacent properties.

Excessive fortification can include:

- Windows covered with steel plates, bars, bullet-proof shutter, mesh on windows
- Concrete or bricks blocking windows or doorways
- Walls reinforced by steel
- Break or bullet-resistant windows and doors
- Traffic barriers and observation posts
- Perimeter warning devices
- Electrified fencing
- Visual surveillance beyond the perimeter of the property

A standardized fortification bylaw would also assist in the fight against illegal drug labs and grow-ops operated by organized crime groups.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## Georgina Mobility Transit Update

York Regional Council approved a report recommending the ongoing support of Georgina Mobility Transit as a low-cost transportation alternative for those without access to, or ineligible for York Region Transit (YRT) and YRT Mobility Plus services in the Town of Georgina. York Region will provide a grant of \$50,000 to help support Georgina Mobility Transit operations in 2008.

Last year, Georgina Transit provided an average of 940 trips per month. Future financial support will be based on the demand for alternate transit service and the existing and planned expansion of conventional transit services.

## Additional funding for roads capital programs

York Regional Council has approved \$3.3 million in roads capital funding to complement the \$4.6 million allocated by the Government of Ontario to York Region roads and bridge projects in the province's 2008 Budget.

The \$3.3 million from York Region was approved as part of the York Region Capital Budget in December 2007. The combined funds will go to the following projects:

### Resurfacing:

- Warden Avenue from Vivian Road to Davis Drive
- Wellington Street from Yonge Street to Bercy Street
- King Road from Bathurst Street to Bond Crescent
- York-Durham Line from 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Major Mackenzie Drive
- Kennedy Road from Ravenshoe Road to Old Homestead Road
- Highway 7 from Jane Street to Keele Street
- Yonge Street from north of Oak Ridges to Bloomington Road

### Intersection improvements:

- Woodbine Avenue at Hooper Road
- Ninth Line at Millard Avenue
- Keele Street at 17<sup>th</sup> Sideroad
- Keele Street at McNaughton Road
- Dufferin Street, Keele Street and Jane Street at King/Vaughan Line

### Bridge maintenance:

- The Little Rouge Creek Bailey Bridge on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue east of Reesor Road

### Road reconstruction:

- Ravenshoe Road from Prout Road to Weirs Sideroad

# York Regional Council Highlights

## 2008 Roads Capital Plan

York Regional Council received a presentation outlining the Region's 2008 Roads Capital Plan. The plan outlined all roadways under construction or maintenance in 2008. The plan includes:

### **Roads under construction to be completed this spring:**

- Ninth Line from Rose Way to Donald Cousens Parkway, Town of Markham
- Bathurst Street from King Road to Wellington Street, Township of King/Town of Aurora
- Teston Road from Dufferin Street to Bathurst Street, City of Vaughan
- Warden Avenue from MacPherson Drive to Highway 407, Town of Markham
- Kennedy Road at Birchview Lane Intersection Improvement, Town of Markham
- Elgin Mills Road at Yorkland Street Intersection Improvement, Town of Richmond Hill
- Yonge Street sewer replacement and road rehabilitation, Town of Aurora

### **Ongoing construction projects expected to continue through 2008:**

- Weston Road from Major Mackenzie Drive to Teston Road, City of Vaughan.
- Teston Road from Weston Road to Jane Street, City of Vaughan
- New interchange at Highway 400 and Teston Road, City of Vaughan
- Highway 427 Arterial Road Extension to Zenway Boulevard, City of Vaughan
- Major Mackenzie Drive from Woodbine Avenue to Kennedy Road, Town of Markham
- Ravenshoe Road from Prout Road to Weir's Sideroad, Town of Georgina
- Bathurst Street from Wellington Street to Mulock Drive, Towns of Aurora and Newmarket and Township of King

### **Construction projects to be tendered and started later this year:**

- Warden Avenue at Mount Albert Road Intersection Improvement, Town of East Gwillimbury
- Highway 7 bridge rehabilitation west of Kennedy Road, Town of Markham
- Highway 7 bridge rehabilitation west of McCowan Road, Town of Markham
- Ninth Line Highway 407 to Rose Way, Town of Markham
- Bathurst Street from Mulock Drive to Highway 9, Town of Newmarket and Township of King
- Dufferin Street from Steeles Avenue to Glen Shields Avenue, City of Vaughan
- Stouffville Road from McCowan Road to west of Highway 48, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Stouffville Road from Highway 404 to Warden Avenue
- Ninth Line from Don Cousens Parkway to north of Major Mackenzie Drive, Town of Markham
- Major Mackenzie Drive from Don Cousens Parkway to east of Ninth Line, Town of Markham
- Woodbine Avenue from Ravenshoe Road to Morton Avenue, Town of Georgina

### **Resurfacing and rehabilitation projects:**

- Aurora Road from Highway 48 to York-Durham Line
- Baseline Road from McCowan Road to Dalton Road
- King Road from Yonge Street to Bond Crescent
- Keele Street from Major Mackenzie Drive to Teston Road
- Leslie Street from Green Lane to Mount Albert Road
- Metro Road from Kennedy Road to Salvation Army Road
- Mount Alert Road from Leslie Street to Colonel Wayling Boulevard
- Warden Avenue from Old Homestead Roads to Baseline Road
- Weston Road from King Road to 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Old Yonge Street from Mount Albert Road to Queensville Sideroad
- York-Durham Line from Elgin Mills Road to 10<sup>th</sup> Line

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **Dial-a-Ride Update**

York Regional Council approved the continuation and expansion of the York Region Transit (YRT) Dial-a-Ride program following a successful pilot project on Route 44 – Bristol London in the Town of Newmarket. Service will continue and expand on Route 44, as well as six additional routes in the Towns of Aurora, Richmond Hill and Markham.

Dial-a-Ride is an on-call contracted taxi service that replaces regular YRT/Viva vehicles during hours of low ridership. By calling a toll-free number 30 minutes in advance of a trip, customers can request to be picked up and dropped off at stops along a Dial-a-Ride route.

Results from the six-month Dial-a-Ride pilot project between September 2007 and February 2008 show positive results in the areas of ridership, financial efficiency and customer satisfaction. Daily ridership has remained constant, cost to operate the service has improved by 61 per cent and customer feedback has been positive throughout the pilot project.

Expanding the Dial-a-Ride program has the potential to save York Region taxpayers \$75,000 in 2008 and \$227,000 over a one-year period, based on initial pilot project contractor rates. A new Dial-a-Ride tender will be required, as the contract for the pilot project does not include a major expansion of the program.

## **York Region to seek cost-sharing agreement with Government of Canada to expand closed circuit camera sites on Regional roads**

York Regional Council has agreed to partner with the Government of Canada for up to \$250,000 to offset the costs of expanding closed circuit television network cameras sites on Regional roadways.

The funding is part of Transport Canada's program to help fund 50 per cent of the cost of municipal Intelligent Transportation Systems to a maximum of \$250,000.

York Region has allocated \$2.1 million to expand its closed circuit camera coverage from seven locations to 20. The cameras monitor traffic to assist with signal timing in an effort to keep traffic moving efficiently. The technology may also be adapted in the future to allow updated traffic information to motorists via transit, media and the Internet.

## **York Regional Council receives update on Ontario Works Program**

York Regional Council received an update regarding the Ontario Works Internal Review and Social Benefits Tribunal Appeal activity for 2006 and 2007.

While administering the Ontario Works Act, decisions on the initial and ongoing eligibility of applicants and participants are made daily. An applicant or participant may appeal any decision that would refuse, terminate or reduce an allowance or mandatory benefit.

The Internal Review process allows for decisions to be upheld, changed or modified. If an applicant or participant disagrees with an Internal Review decision, they may make a formal appeal to the Social Benefit Tribunal. They may also consider issues regarding human rights as they relate to the appeal.

In 2006 and 2007, 100 per cent of the Social Benefits Tribunal appeal findings supported York Region's decisions.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **Small drinking water systems**

York Regional Council approved the receipt of \$128,100 from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to hire one additional, full-time public health inspector to conduct risk assessment of small drinking water systems across York Region. The funds will also be used to purchase water testing supplies and equipment.

Small drinking water systems include: churches, motels/hotels, gas stations, restaurants, community halls, arenas, trailer parks, campgrounds and industrial facilities.

The Advisory Council on Drinking Water Quality and Testing Standard recommended the transfer of responsibility for small drinking water systems serving non-residential systems and seasonal residential systems from the Ministry of the Environment to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Risk assessments and inspections of small drinking water systems can only be done by public health inspectors.

York Region public health inspectors will carry out site-specific risk assessments of small drinking water systems over a two-year period. Small drinking water systems identified as high risk will be inspected every two years and systems identified as medium and low risk will be inspected every four years.

The Government of Ontario will provide 100 per cent cost support for the program in 2008 and 2009. After the two-year risk assessment period, funding for continuation for the program will be cost-shared, with local health units responsible for 25 per cent of human resource and other inspection costs.

## **York Regional Council updated on social assistance delivery**

York Regional Council will request that the Government of Ontario reinstate 100 per cent funding for the Back-to-School and Winter Clothing allowance for 2008 that is currently being provided to families on social assistance, and annually review the Ontario Child Benefit to ensure it is meeting desired outcomes.

Families on social assistance receive a bi-annual clothing allowance for their children – at back-to-school time and for winter wear. When the new Ontario Child Benefit payments begin, the two clothing allowances will be incorporated into the monthly Child Benefit payments. This will require families to save a portion of the monthly payment to compensate for the loss of the lump-sum payment. The mid-year timing for the start of the program does not allow for sufficient funds to be saved for the 2008 year.

A number of municipalities across the province, plus the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, have expressed their concern regarding this decision.

Council also received an update of the changes in social assistance delivery, including the restructuring of benefits for families. The new Ontario Child Benefit will help families with lower income provide for their children by removing children's benefits from social assistance and creating a separate child benefit. This ensures eligible families continue to receive children's benefits when they leave social assistance for employment.

The Ontario Child Benefit has potential as a tool to reduce child and family poverty by reducing barriers to employment.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## York Region to add emergency shelter units for families at Leeder Place

York Regional Council approved a design/build contract recommendation for the completion of 15 new emergency shelter units for families at Leeder Place in the Town of East Gwillimbury. Leeder Place is owned by Housing York Inc.

York Region will award a contract in the amount of \$2.5 million to Monteith Building Group.

Council also authorized the 2008 capital budget for the Leeder Place Emergency Family Shelter Expansion to be increased by an additional \$700,000 to a total of \$2.9 million.

Council will commit \$583,000 of the \$9.665 million provided by the Province's Developing Opportunities for Ontario Renters (DOOR) initiative towards the project, with the remaining \$117,000 to be provided by federal homelessness funding.

The new beds will provide safe, decent emergency help for families in crisis.

## York Region maintains economic growth; creating jobs to match population

The Regional Municipality of York released the *Economic and Development Review 2007*, which examines and reflects upon various demographic trends, economic indicators and building activity within York Region.

The total value of non-residential (industrial, commercial, institutional) construction in York Region increased by 23 per cent from last year's report, which demonstrates the impact of a strong economy.

The report highlights numerous indicators that demonstrate the Region's strong demographic and economic growth as well as construction activity during the past year:

- York Region's total population increased 3.5 per cent from last year, to approximately 983,100 in December 2007
- Total construction for all sectors (residential, industrial, commercial and institutional) was valued at approximately \$3.5 billion in 2007, a \$380-million increase over 2006
- The number of jobs in York Region increased about 15,000 to approximately 485,000 in 2007
- York Region's housing stock is becoming increasingly diversified, with 48 per cent of housing starts in 2007 comprised of multiple unit dwellings (semi-detached, row, condo and apartment)

Copies of this publication will be circulated to area municipalities, chambers of commerce, boards of trade, other business groups and key stakeholders. The report will also be available on the Region's website by the end of the month at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

To obtain copies of the *Economic and Development Review 2007*, please call York Region's Planning and Development Services Department at 905 895-1231, Ext. 1550, or toll-free at 1-877-464-9675, or send your request via email to [strategicplanning@york.ca](mailto:strategicplanning@york.ca)

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **Province identifies four urban growth centres in York Region**

York Regional Council received a staff report explaining the current status, size and location of local urban growth centres.

In York Region, urban growth centres have been identified in Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan, where the density of people and jobs per hectare was 20, 55, 15 and 15, respectively. The Provincial Growth Plan establishes a goal of 200 people and jobs per hectare within each urban growth centre.

Urban growth centres will feature high density, major employment uses and major transit infrastructure. They will be focal areas for investment in institutional and region-wide public services, as well as commercial, recreational, cultural and entertainment uses.

York Region will consult with the affected area municipalities in reviewing and commenting on the Provincial urban growth centre technical paper.

## **Comparative analysis of growth scenarios enables York Regional Council to adopt a 40 per cent intensification scenario for future development**

York Regional Council endorsed a staff recommendation to adopt a preferred growth scenario of a minimum of 40 per cent intensification as the basis for York Region's growth plan to 2031.

Staff conducted a comparative analysis of the impacts or implications of three scenarios (30 per cent, 40 per cent and 50 per cent intensification) on human services, the environment, water and wastewater, transportation and 25-year fiscal and economic impacts.

A 40 per cent scenario:

- Is in keeping with planned Regional urban structure
- Supports the significant investment York Region is making in transit
- Strengthens York Region's economy by attracting more diverse businesses in vibrant centres, including major office employment
- Provides greater housing diversity and more affordable housing, thereby attracting a more diverse and skilled labour force
- Reduces traffic congestion and promotes a more balanced transportation network, including a greater reliance on transit
- Enables successful Regional centres to provide an improved Regional image through more amenities and cultural attractions
- Is consistent with *Places to Grow* and provincial legislation

Extensive public consultation on the preferred minimum 40 per cent intensification scenario will be undertaken as part of the Planning for Tomorrow consultations proposed for September.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## York Regional Council takes steps to protect strategic employment corridors

York Regional Council confirmed the importance of protecting strategic employment lands located along existing and future 400-series Highways. Regional Council also agreed, in principle, to support a strategic and Regionally-significant employment area within the City of Vaughan, adjacent to Highway 400, as proposed under Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 52.

York Regional Council also endorsed a framework for identifying similar strategic areas and bringing them into service. This strategic approach provides a level of certainty and clarity for proceeding with the planning process for future employment areas.

The Highway 400-series corridors are strategic locations for economic development and are vital to the current and long-term competitiveness of York Region's economy. Identifying those segments of the Highway 400-series corridors outside of the current urban area and the Greenbelt as future employment areas will strengthen York Region's employment structure, and reinforce on-going planning for employment areas by the local municipalities.

## Opening Doors: York Region's 2008 Accessibility Plan approved by York Regional Council

York Regional Council approved *Opening Doors: York Region's 2008 Accessibility Plan*. This comprehensive document outlines the actions that The Regional Municipality of York will take to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in regional programs, services, facilities, bylaws, policies and procedures.

*Opening Doors* includes initiatives to improve accessibility in every regional department, including York Regional Police and York Region Transit/Viva. The plan was developed with advice from the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee and builds on the work established in the Region's four previous accessibility plans: *Understanding Barriers* (2004), *Moving Forward* (2005), *Removing Barriers* (2006) and *Towards Accessibility* (2007).

The plan includes 91 accessibility planning initiatives whereby 34 possible barriers will be identified and 57 barriers will be removed from across all Regional departments. All municipalities, including York Region, must develop an annual accessibility plan under the requirements of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*.

A copy of *Opening Doors* is available on the Region's website at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca) under "services/accessibility planning." The plan will also be available in printed copy or in alternative formats such as large print and on CD, upon request.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **York Regional Council receives an update of 2007 Rent Supplement Program**

York Regional Council received a summary of the 2007 activity of the Rent Supplement Program, which provides rent subsidy to low income families and individuals for rental units primarily in the private sector housing market.

Eligible applicants/households are obtained from York Region's waiting list and Housing Services staff determine their rent-geared-to-income amount. The household pays their rent-geared-to-income amount to the landlord and York Region pays the subsidy directly to the landlord on behalf of the tenant.

The Rent Supplement Programs are effective methods to increase the supply of affordable housing to low income households in the Region. Accordingly, the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program enables the Region to secure more than \$2.8 million of provincial funding annually to assist low income and supportive housing households in the Region.

As of December 2007, 370 households were receiving rent supplements under this program and, in accordance with provincial rules, approximately 20 per cent of the units are allocated to households receiving supports from provincially-funded social service agencies.

## **York Regional Council receives an update of 2007 program to assist children with developmental needs**

York Regional Council received an update of the 2007 activities and initiatives of Early Intervention Services, a program York Region delivers directly to children with special needs from birth to school entry.

The children in the Early Intervention Services programs have, or are at risk of having delays in development due to established or biological risk factors. In 2007, 53.5 per cent of children enrolled had a diagnosed developmental special need. Of all children enrolled in Early Intervention Services, 16.3 per cent (301) had some form of autism, while 20.2 per cent (381) were born premature.

Once Early Intervention Services are accessed, children receive ongoing developmental assessments provided by multidisciplinary teams, including parents, early interventionists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

In addition, family members of children enrolled in Early Intervention Services, child care operators, and community programs are supported to ensure their services continue to assist the children.

In 2007, it cost \$7 million to deliver Early Intervention Services, including \$590,000 from York Region. In addition, another \$2.8 million was spent on child care services provided through the Best Start program, which is funded 100 per cent by the Province.

The Family and Children's Services Branch operates a toll free telephone line, 1-888-703-KIDS (5437) for referral and information to Early Intervention Services, as well as the Preschool Speech and Language Program and the Tri-Regional Infant Hearing Program delivered by Markham Stouffville Hospital.

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The next Regional Council meeting will be held Thursday, June 19, 2008 at 9:30 a.m.

The contents of this summary are for information purposes only. Actual text of Council resolutions and official copies of reports to Council can be obtained from the York Region website at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca) under Regional Government.