



## **Curbside re-use pilot**

York Region is partnering with Goodwill Industries to pilot a curbside reuse program in November.

The Region has been hosting successful reuse events throughout the year in East Gwillimbury, Newmarket, Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville where residents can drop off reusable clothing and housewares, but has not been able to establish a permanent facility due to prohibitive costs.

The new pilot will see the distribution of flyers to residents, requesting that those wishing to donate their clothing or small household items place them at the curbside on a day other than their regular garbage pickup day. Cube vans, operated by Goodwill, will collect the items for distribution at their various centres.

The arrangement with Goodwill Industries also opens the door to possible partnerships with other charitable organizations looking to help reduce waste going to landfill through reuse programs.

## **YRT to request funding from Government of Ontario for bus replacement and expansion**

York Region Transit (YRT) will request \$8 million from the Government of Ontario to refurbish, replace and add new conventional buses, and request \$600,000 to refurbish, replace and add new specialized transit buses under the Ontario Transit Vehicle Program (OTVP).

The OTVP is a public transit subsidy program launched by the Province in August 2004. The program allows for up to 1/3 funding on bus replacement, refurbishment and expansion costs.

YRT has allocated \$25.9 million for the purchase and refurbishment of buses, based on 1/3 funding from the Province. YRT received \$8.6 million from the Province under the OTVP program for refurbishment and fleet expansion.

## **August YRT ridership growth nearly 12 per cent**

York Region Transit (YRT) continued to post excellent ridership numbers, with 1.28 million passengers in August. Overall, passenger numbers for 2005 increased by 11.9 per cent over the same time period in 2004.

YRT ridership for 2005 was just over 9.8 million passengers in August. Over the same time period in 2004, ridership was just over 8.7 million passengers.

YRT has posted 10 per cent or greater ridership increases every year since the service was amalgamated in 2001.

### **YRT fares to change in New Year**

York Regional Council has approved a modest fare increase for York Region Transit (YRT) and Viva, effective January 1, 2006. The new fare rates are required to help offset rising operational costs and costs associated with rapid service expansion for the \$184.5 million system.

The new fares will be comparable with other transit systems in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), with YRT/Viva fares slightly below average in most cases. Weekly passes, GO supplements and GO sticker fares will not change.

The change in fares is anticipated to bring in nearly \$2 million in additional revenue to the Region. It will bring the cost recovery ratio up to 40 per cent, and help offset rising fuel escalation charges.

### **Progress report on managing traffic congestion**

York Regional Council received a report detailing work to date concerning the Region's efforts to manage traffic congestion. Efforts have included:

- The launch of Viva Rapid Transit on Yonge Street and Highway 7
- The establishment of Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) to examine alternative transportation methods
- The establishment of a teleworking policy
- Education regarding public transit
- Developing a Park-and-Ride program for Viva
- Working with local municipalities on transportation issues
- Expansion of the Regional road network
- Improved synchronization of traffic signals on roadways

### **Closed circuit television inspection service for York Durham Sewage System**

York Region has retained American Water Services Corporation to undertake closed circuit television inspection of areas of the York Durham Sewage System (YDSS).

Inspections of the sanitary sewer are routine to ensure the proper function of the wastewater system. The closed circuit television inspection is an invaluable tool for proactively assessing the condition of pipes, as well as identifying potential issues.

## York Regional Council tables 2006 Business Plan and Budget

York Regional Council tabled the 2006 Business Plan and Budget, which for the first time will incorporate the Region's share of federal and provincial gas tax money. The \$1.6 billion budget proposal includes a \$537.5 million capital component for roads, water/wastewater infrastructure projects, solid waste management and transit and rapid transit services (YRT/Viva). It also features \$21.6 million in growth and enhancements for residents.

The 2006 Business Plan and Budget, which proposes a 4.6 per cent tax levy, distributes \$16.2 million in federal and provincial gas tax money – 50 per cent to York Region's capital expenditures and 50 per cent to operating costs.

The Business Plan and Budget represents \$1,910 per household with an average assessed value of \$374,000. The 4.6 per cent levy represents a modest increase of \$88 per household per year or an extra 24 cents a day.

Key components of the draft 2006 Business Plan and Budget include:

- Public and Rapid Transit – Full-year operation of Viva and increased contractor prices for both YRT and Viva
- Regional Roads – Road resurfacing and accelerated road construction
- Solid Waste Management – Continued implementation of source separated organics (SSO) program and full-year operation of the new East Gwillimbury Waste Management Centre
- Emergency Medical Services – A new EMS vehicle and paramedics
- York Regional Police – Continued implementation of the York Regional Police five-year staffing plan
- GTA Pooling – Continuing increases in costs for social housing and social assistance across GTA municipalities

Following Regional Council, the budget has now been referred to the following Council Standing Committees for review throughout November:

- Transportation & Works; Planning & Economic Development – Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Finance & Administration; Health & Emergency Medical Services – Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Solid Waste Management; Community Services & Housing – Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>
- Transit and Rapid Transit – Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup>

Following budget reviews by Standing Committees, the Finance and Administration Committee will receive further budget recommendations at its meeting on Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Final 2006 Business Plan and Budget recommendations are scheduled to be considered for approval and adoption by York Regional Council on Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **York Region Receives Accolades for 2005 Budget**

York Region has received the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada's (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its 2005 budget. In order to receive the budget award, York Region had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. These guidelines are designed to assess how well an organization's budget serves as: a policy document; a financial plan; an operations guide and a communications device. Budget documents must be rated "proficient" in all four categories to receive the award.

The Government Finance Officers Association is a non-profit professional association serving 14,000 government finance professionals throughout North America. The GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award Program is the only national awards program in governmental budgeting.

### **2005 GTA Pooling**

York Regional Council gave approval for capping the 2005 GTA Social Housing and Social Assistance pooling payments at an amount equal to \$81.63 million through a reduction to the planned December Social Housing payment and future reconciliation payments for both of these programs. This is consistent with York Regional Council's motion at its February 17, 2005 meeting to cap GTA Social Housing and Social Assistance pooling payments at 3 per cent.

### **Commonwealth Games Bid City Agreement**

York Regional Council gave approval for the Chair and Regional Clerk to execute the Bid City Agreement with the Commonwealth Games Association of Canada.

The Region submitted an Intent to Bid on the 2014 Games on July 21, 2005. The bid process was outlined in a report to Regional Council on September 22, 2005 indicating that the formal bid must be submitted on November 1st together with the balance of the non-refundable bid deposit of \$55,000.00.

In order to participate in the bid process, the Region must also enter into the Bid City Agreement with the Commonwealth Games Association of Canada Inc. ("CGC"). The Bid City Agreement sets out the financial and legal obligations of the successful bidder from submission of the bid to CGC until conclusion of the 2014 Games.

### **York Region to implement recommendations of the Bellamy Report**

York Regional Council agreed to endorse the action plan set forth in the recently released Bellamy Report and conduct a review and evaluation of its recommendations.

The September 2005 report, authored by the Honourable Madam Justice Denise E. Bellamy, made numerous recommendations regarding municipal practices, including ethics, governance, lobbying and procurement, following the Toronto Computer Leasing Inquiry and the Toronto External Contracts Inquiry.

While not involved with these inquiries, York Region is taking the opportunity to perform a full review of its Code of Conduct, examine the merits of establishing an ombudsman-type position, review its procurement process and consider a corporate tracking mechanism for special event functions.

### **Progress Report on York Region's Accessibility Planning**

Regional Council approved a framework for developing the Region's 2006 Accessibility Plan and evaluating the progress of its implementation. The Accessibility Plan includes initiatives from every Regional Department, as well as the York Regional Police, to identify, remove and prevent barriers in its core businesses, encompassing every aspect of the Region's business including programs, services, regional facilities, policies, practices, by-laws and procedures.

All accessibility initiatives from 2004 onwards will be evaluated and the findings will assist the Region in identifying trends and possible priority areas that will assist future accessibility planning. It will also allow the Region to better prepare for the standards that will come into law under the new AODA.

The positive steps taken by the Region in accessibility planning will assist the Region in its preparations to meet the challenges of the newly proclaimed Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

### **Announcement of Federal/Provincial Affordable Housing Program**

Regional Council approved, in principle, the Region's participation in the recently announced federal/provincial Affordable Housing Program, which could enable the Region to expand its supply of affordable rental housing.

Creation of new affordable rental housing in the Region could benefit some of the nearly 5,600 households on the Region's Social Housing Waiting List. Participation of local municipalities will be key to the success of this program, as has been the case with the Region's recent housing initiatives including Armitage Gardens in the Town of Newmarket, the Sutton Multi Service Youth Centre in the Town of Georgina and Blue Willow Terrace senior's project in the City of Vaughan.

**Parallel implementation of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005**

Proclaimed into law on June 13, 2005, the new *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) will ensure that all Ontarians with disabilities have full access to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises by January 1, 2025.

York Region is a proven supporter of accessibility for all of our residents. In implementing the AODA and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) simultaneously, the Region's approach to accessibility planning must now balance and meet the requirements of both Acts. The Region will continue to work to implement its accessibility plans and pursue regulations and policies that will provide local municipalities with the necessary tools and resources to implement the new AODA in a balanced and effective manner.

To these ends, Regional Council authorized the Chair to write to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to ask that it endorse the Region's recommendations for and advocate with the Province to address the recommendations to amend the regulations to the AODA.

**York Region to develop affordable rental housing on Stickwood-Walker Farm in Newmarket**

Regional Council authorized staff to retain an architect through the Region's purchasing by-law, to develop conceptual drawings and prepare an outline specification to establish a detailed capital cost estimate for the project.

The intention is to develop and build an affordable rental housing project on a site to be transferred to Housing York Inc. (HYI) from the Town of Newmarket in the Stickwood-Walker Farm development plan. The site of approximately 1.65 acres (0.668 ha.) will have a multi-residential, low rise building containing 40 one-bedroom and 10 two-bedroom units. The gross floor area of the building will be approximately 45,000 - 50,000 square feet. It is proposed that the construction of the apartment building could start as early as summer 2006.

Council authorized the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing to utilize funds from the Social Housing Reserve and to apply to the federal and provincial governments to secure any potential funding.

The Region is committed to the creation of new affordable rental housing. The development of this affordable housing project on the Stickwood-Walker Farm provides an excellent opportunity for the Region to partner with a local municipality, access funding from senior levels of government and help meet its commitment to deliver affordable rental housing across York Region.

### **Convalescent Care Program revitalizes long term care**

Regional Council agreed to convert 11 beds for the new Convalescent Care Program at the Newmarket Health Centre and authorized adding a full time equivalent (FTE) of 2.29 permanent staff to deliver the higher care requirements.

This Convalescent Care Program further expands the short stay beds in the Newmarket Health Centre. The program will facilitate the early discharge from hospital of individuals who require ongoing rehabilitation and therapeutic support before discharge to a community setting and will help to free up beds in the acute care sector.

### **York Region Sustainable Development Initiative and Proposed Workplan**

Regional Council endorsed a workplan for a Sustainable Development Initiative for York Region. An attachment, "The Primer for a Sustainable York Region," provides the definition, meaning and importance of the sustainable development concept.

A major first step in implementing a successful sustainable development initiative will be integrating a sustainable development theme into the Growth Management Workplan.

The Region has been successful with sustainable development in such as the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt initiatives, Viva Rapid Transit, the Centres and Corridors Strategy and the Water for Tomorrow Program. Implementing the proposed workplan for a Regional Sustainable Development Initiative will consolidate and formalize existing and future sustainable initiatives under one policy umbrella.

This approach will position the Region as a leader in sustainable development. It is in sync with the Federal grants initiative to implement the Kyoto protocol on sustainable development.

Adopting a sustainable way of thinking across the Region would involve taking a comprehensive and innovative approach to long-term growth management, infrastructure and human services implementation. Public awareness and engagement will help avoid project-by-project conflict.

Regional Chair Fisch, in a speech on August 16, 2005, discussed the concepts and history of sustainable development and the Region's actions in moving to achieve sustainable development principles. The presentation is appended to the report as Attachment 3.

Given the direction of the Federal and Provincial governments and the basic concept of sustainability, there are considerable reasons for the Region to further incorporate sustainable development thinking into its operations, practices and approach to public awareness and engagement.

### **Economic and Development Review Mid-Year 2005**

Regional Council received the Economic and Development Review – Mid-Year 2005 and approved its distribution to stakeholders, including area municipalities, Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, libraries and the public via the Region's Web site at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

The Review is a semi-annual document that reports and analyzes several key economic and demographic indicators for York Region. Highlights include:

- As of June 30<sup>th</sup>, York Region was home to 903,600 people, an increase of 14,000 people since December 31, 2004. York Region continued to grow at a rapid, though slightly more moderate pace through the first half of 2005 than recent years. The increase over the past 12 months is 30,700 persons.
- There were 4,585 building permits issued for new residential units in York Region during the first half of 2005.
- York Region is producing an increasingly diverse mix of housing, including apartments, townhouses, row housing and detached housing.
- The Region's total estimated construction value for the first six months of 2005 was \$1.22 billion.
- In the first six months of 2005, York Region's residential construction was valued at \$852.1 million.
- Due to the increased demand for industrial floor space and institutional uses, the value of ICI construction increased from \$328 million in mid-year 2004 to \$371 million in mid-year 2005.

The unemployment rate, as of June 2005, was estimated to be 6.5 per cent in York Region.

### **York Region Employee Trip Reduction Program**

York Regional Council approved an Employee Trip Reduction Program to encourage York Region employees to reduce the amount of travel, use alternate modes of transportation versus driving alone or avoid travel altogether.

To encourage carpooling, the use of public transit and alternate modes of travel such as walking and cycling to work, Regional Council approved a comprehensive, three-year plan for employee travel options that include initiatives such as parking management, transit incentives and shuttle services. And to avoid travel altogether, the plan contains initiatives to encourage working via telecommuting or tele/video-conferencing as well as compressed work week and flexible work hours.

Bicycling and walking have healthy benefits that positively impact on an individual's well-being and productivity.

Phase 1 of the program focuses on implementation for employees located mainly at the Regional Administrative Centre in Newmarket. Phases 2 and 3 will introduce more aggressive programs and services and expand them to other Regional buildings throughout York Region.

The principal outcome of these programs will be a reduction in car emissions, a corresponding increase in air quality and the promotion of a healthier lifestyle.

### **Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Study**

York Regional Council approved a proposal to develop a Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan in support of local municipal efforts focuses on establishing bicycle paths and walkway systems.

York Region is taking leadership in reducing car emissions, improving air quality and encouraging active and healthy lifestyles. The Employee Trip Reduction Program is comprehensive and is leading edge in the Greater Toronto Area.

The Pedestrian and Cycling study will also look at options for interconnecting key nodes of walking and cycling pathways, and for increasing access to them by York Region residents to create one large and connected network.

A community with walking and bike paths is more liveable. The Region will become more attractive as a place in which to work and operate a business.

The Go for Green/EnviroNics (1998) study, a national survey on active transportation, found that 82 per cent of Canadians showed an interest in walking and 66 per cent showed an interest in cycling, indicating they would cycle 30 minutes or more to work if cycling lanes were available.

The recreational benefits of walking and cycling, along with increased use of transit are far reaching, and include:

Less environmental impacts, cleaner air to breathe and increased exercise generally lead to the improved health of residents.

More people taking public transit reduces traffic congestion and leads to an even more efficient transportation network that reduces our dependence on the automobile.

### **CHATS Community Home Assistance to Seniors**

York Regional Council received a presentation from Deborah Egan, Executive Director of CHATS (Community Home Assistance to Seniors), and recognized the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization and its commitment to seniors in the community.

### **TESL Week 2005**

York Regional Council has endorsed November 13-15, 2005 as English as a Second Language Week. The move was promoted by TESL (Teachers of English as a Second Language) North York/York Region.

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