



York Regional Council Highlights

May 19, 2005

York Regional Council 'in training' for Persechini Easter Seals Run/Walkathon

Representatives from the Easter Seal Society, including a young Ambassador, made a presentation to York Regional Council on the forthcoming Annual Easter Seals Run/Walkathon founded by Joe Persechini.

The Annual Run/Walkathon gets bigger and better every year and has raised more than \$2.9 million to date towards assisting children with physical disabilities. Funds are used to purchase costly equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, and communication devices and provide accessible recreational experiences at Easter Seals camps.

There are 184 families across York Region with children that depend on Easter Seals.

The annual Newmarket-based Run/Walkathon will kick off its 29th year on **Sunday, May 29th at the Upper Canada Mall in Newmarket** (located at the northwest corner of Yonge St. and Davis Dr.) and is expected to attract more than 3,000 participants and 300 volunteers.

York Regional Chair Bill Fisch, this year's Run/Walkathon's Honorary Chair, expressed his hope that the event would top the \$3 million mark; while York Regional Police Chief Armand La Barge issued a friendly challenge to Regional staff for total participants and dollars raised.

York Region receives Ontario Safety League 2005 Public Service Award

York Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch along with York Regional Police Chief Armand La Barge accepted an award by the Ontario Safety League at the Royal Canadian Military Institute on April 27th for the Save-a-Life program.

The Safety League award recognizes the efforts of the Save-A-Life program to safeguard motorists and pedestrians on our regional roads. The award also recognizes the co-operative relationship between York Regional Police, the Transportation and Works department and the Health Services department – noting that this innovative partnership has served to both strengthen the program and make the Save-A-Life program the great success that it has become.

York Region receives Sustainability Community Service Award

York Region is the recipient of the FCM-CH2M HILL Sustainability Community Award for excellence in innovation in municipal services delivery that has advanced sustainable community development. An award presentation was given by Richmond Hill Regional Councillor Brenda Hogg on behalf of the national board of directors of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to York Regional Council.

York Region was specifically recognized for its leadership in energy conservation, in having developed "The Energy and Environmental Management System (EEMS)". EEMS is an in-house developed, web-based software tool produced to measure the performance of the energy and environment in municipal operations. This tool measures information on all facilities use, street and traffic lights, water and wastewater treatment, power generation and transportation.

The licence for EEMS software is available for other municipalities to purchase, and York Region has already sold the product to one municipality.



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York Regional Council recognizes winners of the Transportation and Works Design-A-Button Contest for National Public Works Week

York Regional Council recognized four York Region children for their winning submissions to the National Public Works Week Design-a-Button Contest. Winners were selected for three different age groups, with one overall winner.

The winners are:

- Zoe Williams, age 4, for “Washing our Streets”
- Samantha Jennings, age 7, for “Crane and Truck”
- Adrienne Sta. Ana, age 11, for “YRT Bus Stop”

And the Overall Grand Prize Winner is:

- Gianluca Baggetta, age 9, for “Boy with Binoculars”

Each of the winners will have their names and winning designs displayed in York Works Volume 7, the semi-annual Transportation and Works newsletter, to be released in late June. They also received a York Region gift pack from Transportation and Works that includes a t-shirt with their own design.

Update to Character Community initiative

York Regional Council was provided an update on the Character Community initiative by Executive Director Sue Smitko. Among the numerous activities that have recently taken place are the second annual Character Conference, attended by 250 people (including a number of local businesspeople), a new Character Business initiative to enlist the support of the York Region business community, and an upcoming series of Character Community features on Rogers Television.

For more information on York Region’s Character Community initiative, please visit www.charactercommunity.com

York Regional Council recognizes winner of York Children’s Water Festival Poetry Contest

York Regional Council recognized Nigel Tang, a Richmond Hill Montessori School student, for his winning submission to the York Children’s Water Festival (YCWF) Poetry Contest. Nigel was recognized at a VIP luncheon at the water festival on Tuesday, May 17th and invited to York Regional Council by Markham Regional Councillor Frank Scarpitti, the Honorary Chair of the YCWF.

The YCWF celebrated its seventh year this week. Part of York Region’s award-winning Water for Tomorrow program, the YCWF hosts 5,000 children from across the Region in a week of interactive activities designed to educate students on water conservation and environmental stewardship.



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York Regional Council recognizes Pride Week

York Regional Council will recognize Pride Week 2005, which runs from May 29 - June 4.

PRIDE York Region is hosting a variety of events, including awareness displays at local public libraries:

- Newmarket Library May 28 - June 11
- Georgina Library May 28 - June 10
- Vaughan (Bathurst/Clark) May 28 - June 30
- Richmond Hill May 29 - June 4
- Markham Village May 29 - June 4
- Aurora Library May 30 - June 11
- Markham (Angus Glen) May 30 - June 17

PRIDE York Region provides advocacy and referral services for people of all sexual orientations, with the broader goals of celebrating diversity and furthering inclusiveness in York Region.

York Regional Council recognizes Brain Injury Awareness Month

York Regional Council will recognize June 2005 as Brain Injury Awareness Month.

In York Region, approximately 1,150 individuals sustain a brain injury each year. Approximately 240 of these are children (infancy to age 14). These injuries result in a variety of physical, cognitive and social/emotional impairments.

Falls, motor vehicle accidents, infections, cycling accidents, drug abuse, tumours, strokes and aneurisms are among the leading causes of brain injuries.

It is estimated that annual costs associated with brain injury are more than \$1 billion in Ontario alone.

The York Region Head Injury Support Group works to support York Region residents whose lives have been impacted by a brain injury.



York Regional Council Highlights

York Regional Council recognizes National Access Awareness Week

York Regional Council will recognize May 29 - June 4, 2005 as National Access Awareness Week (NAAW).

National Access Awareness Week brings Canadians together to ensure the full participation of people with disabilities in community life.

Established in 1988, NAAW recognizes the importance of having all individuals, businesses and government partners work together to promote an accessible and barrier-free community.

During the week, York Region will be hosting a workshop conducted by Future Abilities and Creative Employment (FACE). The workshop will target managers and supervisors responsible for recruiting and providing leadership initiatives to assist in the workplace re-entry of persons with disabilities.

On June 1st, the Corporate Learning division will be offering the *Just Ask! Inclusion and Accessibility Learning Session*. This customized session supports the Region's Accessibility Plan and provides tools and knowledge for offering exceptional service to persons with disabilities.

York Regional Council approves *Inclusivity Action Plan*

Regional Council approved the *Inclusivity Action Plan*, a community initiative sponsored by the Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC) to increase York Region's capacity to meet the needs of immigrants and new Canadians.

Community groups comprised of human service providers from across York Region, including governments, employers, ethno-cultural organizations and individual residents, officially put a plan into action to make York Region an ethno-culturally inclusive community at a launch May 18th.

As part of this initiative, the HSPC also released *What do all these organizations have in common?* – a brochure that outlines the six specific areas of the Action Plan:

- Development of a welcome centre for immigrants to help people become settled into appropriate employment and housing and to gain access to education, health care and social services
- Language development programs
- Region-wide education campaign to raise awareness of inclusivity practices
- Learning opportunities for children to advance inclusive and respectful character traits at an early age
- Volunteer opportunities for immigrants and the development of their leadership skills
- Tools to help organizations become more inclusive

Community groups developed the *Inclusivity Action Plan*, and leading in implementing the six action areas.

The *Inclusivity Action Plan* is the result of six months of community consultations and an Inclusivity Summit earlier this year, attended by 180 people representing 95 different organizations in York Region. Representatives from the organizations and ethno-cultural communities attending the summit formed working groups to develop recommendations for approval and implementation.



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York Region to ask Province to fund subsidy shortfall for Early Intervention Services for children

Regional Council will ask the provincial government to increase York Region's subsidy through the federal funding for Early Learning and Care by \$2.01 million in order to cover York Region's subsidy shortfall.

The Region's Early Intervention Services, in the Family and Children's Services Division of the Community Services and Housing Department, continues to respond to increased service demands and expanded population requirements. Additional subsidies received in 2005 under the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) initiative allowed York Region to add direct service staff to help meet service demands and to offset a portion of 100 per cent regional funding of the program.

York Region establishes an income priority category within the wait list for child care fee assistance

Regional Council approved the establishment of a priority category within the wait list for child care fee subsidy for families with \$36,000 or less in net income (defined as gross income minus mandatory deductions, e.g. CPP, EI, Income Tax), effective June 1, 2005.

The implementation of new provincial policies regarding RRSPs and RESPs expands eligibility criteria to families wishing to apply for child care fee subsidy. It is expected that there will be an increase in the number of households eligible to receive this subsidy. Therefore, the waitlist will grow. A waitlist income priority category will help those families in greatest financial need to access child care fee subsidy.

Regional Council endorses clean air declaration for Smog Summit on June 8, 2005

Regional Council endorsed the Greater Toronto Area Clean Air Council (GTA CAC) 2005 Inter-Governmental Declaration on Clean Air that will be signed by participating municipalities at the sixth annual Smog Summit on June 8, 2005. The GTA CAC includes representatives from federal and provincial governments as well as municipalities across the GTA.

Since 2001, York Region has demonstrated leadership and commitment to improve air quality through its participation in the GTA CAC and the annual Smog Summit. The clean air components of Regional initiatives and most recently the formation of York Region's Corporate Clean Air Task Force, ensure that clean air actions are made a priority in York Region.

York Region is committed to several new and existing initiatives that will have the additional benefit of improving air quality. Clean air initiatives can reduce emissions directly (e.g. tail pipe emissions) or indirectly (e.g. reducing energy use which in turn reduces emissions from coal fired power plants).



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Sampling program monitors water quality of public beaches in York Region

Regional Council will distribute a report on the Region's beach sampling program to the nine area municipalities, Lake Simcoe and Region Conservation Authority, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

The goal of the York Region Beach Sampling Program is to protect York Region residents and visitors from waterborne illness and injury by routinely sampling and monitoring water quality at local beaches. York Region Health Services (YRHS) is responsible for the beach monitoring program under the Beach Management Protocol set out by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC).

YRHS routinely monitors beach water quality at designated beaches in York Region as per MOHLTC protocols. For 2005, permanent rainfall warning signs will be posted at York Region Beaches to warn bathers not to swim after heavy rainfall. Health Services will also be reviewing the beach sampling program, including beach data collection, public notification and factors influencing beach water quality to determine the best strategies and options for 2006 and beyond.

Health and EMS Department provides activity report for 2004

Regional Council received a report from the Health and Emergency Medical Services (H&EMS) Department providing statistical data regarding its programs and services in 2004.

Throughout 2004, H&EMS collected and analyzed data regarding the programs and services provided by its three operational branches: Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Long Term Care and Seniors (LTC) and Public Health. This report presents the cumulative results for the year 2004.

York Region joins Halton, Peel and Durham Regions in demanding immediate hospital funding equity

Regional Council will demand that the Government of Ontario immediately address the funding shortfalls for GTA/905 hospitals, including hospitals in York Region. Council will also ask the Ontario Government to create and use a population, needs-based funding formula as the main criteria for future funding allocations.



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Region to amend Official Plan to allow expansion of 404 North employment lands in the Town of Markham

Regional Council received a request by the Town of Markham to amend the Regional Official Plan (ROP) and incorporate 180 hectares into the urban area. Council authorized staff to hold the required public meeting in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act.

The lands are located in the northwest corner of the Town of Markham and are bounded by Highway 404 to the west, the northern town boundary to the north, Woodbine Avenue and a portion of the Hydro corridor to the east. The southern boundary is the northern limits of the Cathedral Secondary Plan area and Victoria Square.

It was agreed that any comments from the public meeting and circulation of the proposed ROPA be received and that staff be directed to prepare a further Planning staff report on the application with recommendations for presentation at a future Planning Committee meeting.

Economic and Development Review 2004

Regional Council approved the Economic and Development Review 2004 for distribution to stakeholders, including area municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, and Boards of Trade and libraries, and to be made available on the Region's Web site.

The purpose of the Economic and Development Review 2004 is to report on and analyze key economic and demographic indicators for York Region.

The Region's population and employment growth remain strong. The Region's total estimated construction value for 2004 was \$2.56 billion and total estimated value of industrial construction was \$277 million, while commercial construction was \$385 million, up 16 per cent from 2003. The Region's population was estimated to be 889,600 in 2004, an increase of 4 per cent over the December 2003 population figure.

The report is intended to give Council a broader regional and national perspective of economic indicators used to measure the growth and competitiveness of the Region's economy. This information is used by Regional Council as well as public and private sectors as baseline information to prepare such things as economic investment strategies.

York Region amends Official Plan to accommodate Toronto Archdiocese Roman Catholic Cemetery

York Region is taking the necessary steps to amend its Official Plan to re-designate approximately 46.54 ha (115 acres) of land located at the southwest corner of Davis Drive and Woodbine Avenue from "Agriculture Policy Area" to "Rural Policy Area." This change will allow for the development of a Roman Catholic cemetery proposed by the Toronto Archdiocese.

Approval of the application would facilitate development of a cemetery and related uses that include a prayer garden, columbarium, crematorium and mausoleum.



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Region approves Aurora's Official Plan amendment to retain employment lands

Regional Council authorized the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services to approve the Town of Aurora's Official Plan Amendment No. 55 (OPA 55).

Council agreed that an adequate supply of employment lands must be maintained and enhanced to support the demand for the development of employment lands and to sustain the economic competitiveness of York Region.

York Region adopts new Forest Conservation By-law

York Regional Council has adopted a new Forest Conservation By-law, in accordance with the Municipal Act 2001. The by-law replaces the Region's 1991 Tree Cutting By-law, which was enacted under the now repealed Trees Act.

Among the highlights of the new by-law:

- Restriction of the Region's jurisdiction to woodlands greater than one hectare
- Regional tree protection abilities and powers through agreements with local municipalities to protect woodlands less than one hectare in size
- Exemptions for personal use of up to five cords of wood per 12-month period and building permits involving the clearing of less than one hectare of forest
- More effective administrative instruments, including a permit system for tree cutting activities
- A right of appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board
- Enhanced enforcement tools and penalties including a set fine process and stop work orders

March marks highest monthly YRT ridership

York Region Transit (YRT) continued to post excellent ridership numbers, with 1.35 million passengers in March; marking the highest monthly ridership ever for YRT. Overall, passenger numbers for 2005 increased by 8.4 per cent over the same time period in 2004.

YRT ridership for 2005 was just over 3.7 million passengers in March. Over the same time period in 2004, ridership was just over 3.3 million passengers.

YRT has seen ridership increases of more than 10 per cent each year since the service was formed in 2001.



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New buses for YRT Mobility Plus Transit

York Regional Council has authorized a contract with Overland Custom Coach for the purchase of eight new low-floor 25-foot Elf buses, totalling \$1.7 million. YRT's Mobility Plus has seen a marked increase in passengers with special needs requesting service. The new buses will replace five existing older buses and add three new buses to the fleet to accommodate demand and keep maintenance costs manageable.

Funds for the new buses will be drawn from the 2005 Mobility Plus Business Plan and Budget.

York Region launches Small Bus Strategy in Newmarket

Starting in June, York Region Transit (YRT) will launch a one-year Small Bus Strategy Pilot Project in the Town of Newmarket. The strategy will determine the feasibility of using smaller buses (less than 30 feet) on Regional roads. If successful the Newmarket pilot may allow for general use of small buses across YRT's transit operations.

The Small Bus Strategy Pilot was brought forward in an attempt to address a number of factors on Newmarket YRT routes, including: limited demand in certain areas or certain off-peak periods, noise and emission issues, cost effectiveness, operational effectiveness on suburban routes and the perception of empty buses.

YRT staff will report back to York Regional Council after the pilot has operated for six months. The development of a longer term Small Bus Strategy will be included in the new YRT Five-Year Service Plan currently under development.

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The contents of this summary are intended to be for information purposes only. Actual text of Council resolutions and official copies of reports to Council can be obtained from the York Region Web site at www.york.ca under Regional Council.