



April 2006

York Regional Council Highlights



The Regional Municipality of York



Statistics Canada presents Census 2006

Jim McKibbin, Census Communications Manager for Statistics Canada's Central Region, made a presentation to York Regional Council about the importance of Census Day 2006, quickly approaching on May 16th.

Mr. McKibbin related how York Region joined the Federal Government in promoting Census 2006 to York Region residents. Statistics Canada provides resource materials, such as posters and flyers, and has invited partners and stakeholders such as York Region, York Regional Police, both school boards, the United Way and its member agencies and as many groups as possible to promote the Census.

Statistics Canada will be mailing the 2006 Census forms to households beginning the first week of May in urban areas. For the first time, Canadians can complete their Census forms online or by mail.

York Region's large recent immigrant population who speak neither English nor French may not be aware that participating in the Census, which is undertaken once every five years, is required by law and is entirely confidential.

The information residents provide that day will stand for the next five years. It will help all levels of government to plan and deliver accurate and effective programs and services our residents need. Census data is also used in funding formulas that determine some of the revenue streams to York Region from senior levels of government.

The federal government is promoting Census 2006 to new Canadians across the GTA through advertising in the ethnic media. For its part, York Region will help to ensure that all residents are aware of the need to participate in the Census by placing two half-page advertisements in local newspapers May 7 and 14.

The York Region ads will feature brief messages in English, French and the top 10 non-official languages used in the Region: Italian, Chinese, Russian, Persian, Punjabi, Greek, German, Spanish, Tagalog and Tamil. The goal is to help ensure that no residents inadvertently discard their Census forms, which would impact negatively on data quality.

Statistics Canada is providing assistance in more than 40 languages at their Census helpline at: 1-877-594-2006. Translations of the Census questions are available in 62 languages on the Census Web site. For more information, please visit: www.census2006.ca

Easter Seals Run/Walkathon

York Regional Council is recognizing May as Easter Seals month in celebration of the 30th Annual Persechini Run/Walkathon supporting Easter Seals. York Region is proud once again to support this event.

Bruno Tombari, Corporate Chair of the York Region Easter Seal Society, presented an update on the 30th anniversary of Persechini Easter Seal Run/Walkathon to Regional Council.

Regional Council encourages participation in the Run/Walkathon on Sunday, May 28th, to be held in the Town of Newmarket. It is a great way for families to meet one another, get some exercise and most importantly, help out children within our community.

A special plaque presentation was made on behalf of York Region to run founder Joe Persechini to acknowledge his long-standing service and commitment to the Easter Seal Foundation. Each year an average of 1,000 people participate in the Persechini Run/Walkathon. Last year's event raised more than \$100,000 in support of Easter Seals. To date, more than \$3 million has been raised in support of Easter Seals.

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National Access Awareness Week

York Regional Council recognized:

- The month of May as “Community Living Month”
- May 14 to 20 as “National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week”
- May 28 to June 3 as “National Access Awareness Week”

York Region approves sustainability standard for new buildings

York Regional Council approved the adoption of a new design and construction standard for new Regional facilities being built. The new benchmark, called “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver” is considered a minimum standard that affords the Region the important benefit of being sustainable because it will allow York Region to provide a positive example and commitment to the environment.

A LEED Silver standard will ensure that Regionally-owned facilities are designed, developed and operated to demonstrate leadership in sustainability for the benefit of the environment and the residents of York Region. The new LEED Silver standard will be applicable to all new Regional facilities with floor area over 500 square metres (5,382 square feet).

LEED Silver designation is a component of the Sustainable Development Initiative for York Region approved by Regional Council in 2005, which set out a work plan with the objective of moving the Corporation toward a more sustainable Region.

LEED is a management tool used for measuring sustainable building performance. LEED certification is obtained through the Canada Green Building Council. In order to meet a specific level of LEED certification, projects accumulate credits for specific categories of sustainability, including sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, material and resources and indoor environmental quality.

Sustainable buildings carry a higher initial cost premium for design and construction based upon many factors, including the type of project, market maturity and when LEED is integrated in the planning process.

Based on current cost studies, it is estimated that construction of a LEED Silver building results in an incremental capital budget allowance of 2.5 to 3.5 per cent. However, the benefits of this investment include lowered operating and maintenance costs, reduced energy and water consumption, a healthier and more productive workplace and a decrease in materials going to landfill sites.

GO Transit fine revenue

York Regional Council approved an agreement be entered with GO Transit for the distribution of fine revenue and the recovery of the Region’s costs associated with court proceedings.

Pursuant to the *Provincial Offences Act*, charges issued by GO Transit are filed at the Region’s Court facilities in respect of various matters, including non-payment of fares and unlawful parking at GO Transit parking lots.

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York Region moving towards increased Web-based technology utilization

York Regional Council approved a plan to develop a Web-based collaboration environment to reduce the need for staff travel, improve productivity, demonstrate state-of-the-art technology and advance the Region as a centre for best practices in technology utilization.

A Web-based collaboration environment will permit real-time virtual meetings, discussions, emailing, instant messaging, presentations and reporting over the Internet, as part of the One York Initiative.

The development of a business plan for a portal for the Region and the area municipalities will highlight the importance of portal technology as another important channel of service to the residents and businesses of York Region.

York Region will join the Town of Markham in developing a Business Plan for a portal to serve regional residents and businesses, and will retain IBM Canada Ltd. to assist regional staff in the development, testing and implementation of the portal.

Toronto-York Region subway extension

York Regional Council received a report on the recent Provincial budget announcement regarding the Spadina-York Region subway extension to the Vaughan Corporate Centre. Report highlights include the following:

Cost: The total cost of the project is estimated to be approximately \$2 billion, of which \$670 million would be funded by the Province. The provincial contribution to the project will hinge on a tri-government funding agreement being reached between the municipal, provincial and federal governments.

Ontario Trust Fund: The Province created the Move Ontario Trust Fund to hold and manage its \$670-million contribution to the project. Regional staff are currently identifying issues that will require further clarification and investigation in order to accurately assess the overall cost to the Region.

Tax Increment Financing (TIFs): The Provincial Budget highlighted the Province's intent to introduce legislation to enable Tax Increment Financing ("TIF") on a pilot basis for this initiative.

Development Charges ("DCs"): Identified as significant sources of funding for growth municipalities such as York Region if the Province addresses shortfalls in the *Development Charges Act*.

Debt and Credit Rating: Municipalities may be required to issue additional debt although the amount is uncertain at this time. York Region staff will explore the implications on the Region's credit rating, as well as the use of alternative funding and financing tools.

York Region Transit to purchase two additional buses for Mobility Plus service

York Regional Council has approved the purchase of two new 25-foot ELF buses from Overland Coach Limited at a maximum cost of \$420,000, for Mobility Plus, the specialized transit service provided by York Region Transit (YRT).

The new buses will help meet the demand for additional service forecast by YRT. The purchase of the buses are included in the 2006 Business Plan and Budget.

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Security cameras to be installed in transit terminals and on YRT and Viva buses

The Regional Municipality of York will be installing security cameras in transit buses and stations as part of an effort to ensure public safety for both passengers and transit staff.

York Regional Council approved a Request for Proposals (RFP) to assess the types of surveillance technologies available. Depending on the technology selected, costs could be between \$5,000 and \$8,000 per camera. Cameras will be installed at the Promenade Terminal, Bernard Terminal and Richmond Hill Centre later this year.

While there have been a minimal number of incidents to date, YRT will install cameras on all of its buses as an added level of security to passengers and drivers.

York Region to continue with Newmarket Community Bus Pilot Project

Following positive trends in ridership numbers, York Regional Council has agreed to extend the six-month Newmarket Community Bus pilot project for an additional six months. York Region Transit (YRT) introduced the Community Bus service to routes 520 and 521 in Newmarket last June as part of a small bus pilot project.

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.

The routes are operated with a 25-foot, low-floor ELF bus. The strategy will determine the feasibility of using smaller buses (less than 30 feet) on Regional roads.

Greening securement partnership agreements

York Regional Council has entered into a three-year agreement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada to provide contributions to a maximum of \$100,000 per year and with the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust to provide for contributions to a maximum of \$40,000 per year in support of the Region's Greening and Securement Strategies.

These agreements represent a renewal of two significant and successful partnerships formed in 2002 that have resulted in York Region being able to leverage funds from other environmental organizations, secure important greenlands and promote public education on the Region's natural heritage.

York Regional Council Highlights

Managing traffic congestion – setting priorities for roads capital program

York Regional Council has endorsed an expanded set of criteria to help prioritize roads capital projects for 2007. These criteria will be used to update the 10-Year roads capital program forecast.

In 2002, York Region produced a Transportation Master Plan (TMP), which established a long-term framework for transportation decisions. The TMP used the following criteria to establish priority projects:

- Existing traffic volumes
- Future traffic volumes
- Pavement condition
- Collision prediction factors
- Overall community and network benefits, including:
 - Transit priorities
 - Lane continuity
 - Centres and corridors

Since 2002, there have been a number of factors influencing road capital priorities, including a host of economic and social factors. The Region has added the following criteria to establish new priority projects:

- Transit initiatives
- Management of congestion
- Planning initiatives
- Management of assets

For the 2007 capital planning process, York Region will consult with the area municipalities on priority projects, including these expanded set of criteria. The results of these consultations will be considered as part of the 2007 Business Plan and Budget process.

Lay-by parking protocols established

York Regional Council authorized protocols to approve requests for lay-by parking on Regional roads from its area municipalities. Lay-by parking occurs where vehicles park in a dedicated parking lane adjacent to the existing traffic lane.

Considerations for lay-by parking will not include:

- Areas slated for improvements in the next five years
- Areas where there are dedicated high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in operation
- Roadways where the speed limit is 60 km/h or less

The Region will establish a streetscape review team to analyze requests for lay-by parking, which will be subject to the new protocols and approval by York Regional Council for the following year's capital budget.

York Regional Council Highlights

York Region to update area municipalities on successes of *Water for Tomorrow* program

York Region's Water and Wastewater branch will make presentations to area municipalities to communicate the continuing success of the Region's *Water for Tomorrow* program.

The Region's award-winning program, *Water for Tomorrow*, was established in 1996 to find innovative ways to reduce water consumption in an effort to effect a positive change on the environment and cut costs for new water infrastructure.

Through such programs as the Annual York Children's Water Festival – an educational initiative to teach children about reducing water use -- a shower and toilet retrofit program, free landscape audits, numerous seminars and promotion events, as well as an incentive-based industrial retrofitting program, *Water for Tomorrow* has succeeded in saving 22.5 million litres of water per day, which is enough to service 85,000 homes.

More than 30,000 residents benefit from York Region's Community Development and Investment Fund

According to a report to York Regional Council, Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF) funded 60 projects in 2005 through a total investment of \$3.4 million. These projects provided a range of services and supports to York Region residents with a focus on:

- Child and family supports
- Services to the homeless and prevention of homelessness
- Employment skill development
- Capacity building for improved inter-agency service delivery

The CDIF Strategy enables York Region to purchase community-based services in York Region in a way that ensures both the process and the results are accountable, fair and equitable. York Region annually issues a purchase of service request that invites community agencies to submit proposals for projects that will be implemented in the following year.

Some examples of 2005 CDIF successes include:

- The Catholic Community Services of York Region's expanded Focus on Fathers Program and Young Parents Program workshops and provided opportunities for over 180 fathers and 34 young parents to improve their parenting and family interpersonal skills
- The Citizens for Affordable Housing's Housing Help Centre served 4,500 clients and landlords directly with its updated walk-in and on-line housing registry

A media release along with a list of the 60 CDIF projects and results is available on the York Region Web site at

www.york.ca

York Regional Council Highlights

Immigrants are fastest growing segment of York Region's population

According to *Community Snapshots: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region*, a report presented to York Regional Council, the number of recent immigrants to York Region increased by 132 per cent, while non-immigrants increased by only 31 per cent, between 1991 and 2001.

Community Snapshots looks at the socio-economic data pertaining to recent immigrants, including demographics, employment, income, education, language, housing, use of public transit and religion.

The study affirms that federal and provincial funding for settlement and integration services in York Region declined from \$416 per immigrant in 2001/2002 to less than \$200 in 2004/2005. In contrast, in 2004/2005 other GTA municipalities received between \$873 and \$418 per immigrant.

Additional report highlights about recent immigrants (1996-2001):

- about two-thirds of immigrants are of working age
- they are more likely to be married or to have been married
- many are of an age where they bring their families or start families here
- most choose to become Canadian citizens
- approximately 3,300 recent immigrant children and youth (19 years and under) have no knowledge of either official language
- they are twice as likely to live with relatives as part of an extended family
- they generally have a higher level of education than the non-immigrant population
- their children are more likely to seek post secondary education than the non-immigrant population
- they earn less than non-immigrants regardless of level of education
- they are economically and socially vulnerable during the first years after their arrival
- they are three times as likely to be within the low income cut-off
- they adjust well with time (after 15 years they have a lower incidence of low income)
- 87 per cent of recent immigrant households (1991-2001) are homeowners and 12 per cent are renters, compared to 90 and 10, respectively, in the total population

Community Snapshots: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region will be available on York Region's Web site, www.york.ca For more information about the report and the York Region Community Social Data Strategy, please refer to the Media Release dated April 24, 2006 and the accompanying Backgrounder and Fact Sheet.

York Regional Council Highlights

Affordable rental housing project on the Stickwood-Walker Farm site named in honour of Newmarket Mayor Tom Taylor

York Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch announced that the Board of Directors of Housing York Inc. approved the name “Tom Taylor Place” for the new affordable rental apartments to be built on the Stickwood-Walker Farm property in the Town of Newmarket. The naming honours Town of Newmarket Mayor Tom Taylor’s tireless efforts in obtaining affordable housing for York Region in addition to his extensive years of service to the community as councillor and mayor.

Regional Council also received an update on the progress of the 50-unit affordable rental housing project development in the Town of Newmarket.

The design concept is an “L” shaped, split two and three-storey building of approximately 52,000 square feet. This design takes into consideration the adjacent two-storey single family residential character of the neighbouring community. The unit breakdown of the building is 40 one-bedroom units and 10 two-bedroom units for a total of 50 apartments. The proposed building will contain three units with enhanced features for wheelchair accessibility, plus up to seven units for persons with hearing impairments. In addition, there are interior and exterior amenity areas for the residents. The building will accommodate a mix of households, including singles, families and seniors.

The 1.71 acre site is located at 615 Fernbank Road, south of Mulock Drive and west of Leslie Street, within the 90-acre subdivision developed by the Town of Newmarket. The site is within easy walking distance of public transit, schools and convenience shopping.

Sabrina’s Law

York Regional Council is urging the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to expand the scope of Sabrina’s Law to include child care centres and private schools, and to monitor the need for anaphylaxis education and resources in sites not already covered.

An Act to Protect Anaphylactic Pupils, also known as Sabrina’s Law, came into effect in Ontario on January 1, 2006. This provincial legislation is the first of its kind in Canada and is intended to protect students with potentially fatal allergies to foods and other allergens. It is named for 13-year old Sabrina Shannon, a teenager with an anaphylactic allergy who died in September 2003 in her Pembroke, Ontario school cafeteria after eating food contaminated with a product she was allergic to.

As described by Anaphylaxis Canada, anaphylaxis is a sudden, severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. Anaphylaxis occurs when the immune system becomes unusually sensitive and overreacts to common substances, such as foods, insect stings or medications. Foods that commonly produce severe allergic reactions include peanuts, shellfish, fish, tree nuts (such as almonds, cashews, walnuts) and eggs. Other foods, such as milk and milk products, soy, wheat and sesame seeds, can also cause anaphylaxis, as can certain medications. Exercise-induced anaphylaxis is rare, but can occur especially if certain foods or medications are ingested prior to physical activity.

York Regional Council Highlights

York Regional Council endorses Vision 2026 annual update

York Regional Council has endorsed *Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable Region, Fourth Annual Report on Indicators of Progress for the Year 2005*.

This is the fourth in a series of annual reports that communicate the Regional Municipality of York's progress towards implementing Vision 2026, the Region's strategic plan for the next 20 years. Under this plan, York Region strives to build strong, caring and safe communities that reflect the kind of community residents want York Region to be now and in the future.

Successes in 2005 include:

- the launch of Viva Rapid Transit
- an energy reduction program
- an initiative to increase the Region's forest cover under the Greening Strategy
- a second State of the Environment Report
- a second accessibility plan
- an increased waste diversion rate
- a Fresh Air Fair and initiatives to improve air quality
- an economic strategy
- a continued, high quality-of-life ranking by York Region residents

The annual report captures survey results that show:

- 89 per cent of residents approved of the high quality of life in York Region
- 71 per cent of residents were satisfied overall with York Regional government – a rate that has been consistent over the past three years

York Region business publication provides influential information

The Regional Municipality of York has released a publication to promote awareness of business opportunities in York Region.

The *York Region Business Directory 2006* builds on local and global awareness of the Region's strength as a destination to operate a business or pursue a career. The directory lists approximately 12,000 businesses and provides information on Regional business and employment trends, population and labour force analyses and economic development contact information. It can be used by businesses to source local trades and suppliers, provide insightful data about the size and nature of York Region's economy and help residents target their job searches.

The *York Region Business Directory 2006* is available in print form and electronically on CD-ROM and online. At \$175 for the electronic directory and \$50 for the print directory, demand for the CD and publication continues to grow.

Copies are available free of charge to non-profit organizations, local libraries and area municipalities by emailing businessdirectory@york.ca

York Regional Council Highlights

Overview of 2004 Tourism Economic research

York Regional Council received a report, "An Overview of Tourism in York Region," that provides an analysis, highlights and statistics pertaining to the economic impact of tourism in York Region during 2004.

York Region experienced a growth year in 2004, with an increase in visitor spending and tourism visits from previous years. The relatively better performance of York Region's tourism industry in 2003 and again in 2004 compared to the Provincial and Toronto data tends to indicate that despite global competitiveness and soft market conditions, the Region's tourism marketing efforts have been effective in increasing tourism visitation and revenues and supports sustainable economic growth.

This research focuses on the York Region perspective of the current markets, economic impact and characteristics of tourism visits. It is based on the most recent information (2004 data) provided by the Statistics Canada's Canadian Travel Survey and the International Travel Survey made available by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation.

The Canadian Travel Survey is a monthly telephone survey that captures the previous month travel for all overnight trips, same-day, one way trips of 40 kilometres or more among Ontario residents (other than for work purposes) and 80 kilometre trips for all other Canadian travellers.

The International Travel Survey is a self-completion survey distributed at ports of entry for completion by USA and Overseas visitors at the end of their trip. The survey is supplemented by exit surveys administered by interviewers in airport exit lounges.

Staff will continue to work with tourism stakeholders to develop programs, partnerships and packages that augment stakeholder and area municipal efforts to increase revenues and build market share. The challenge will be to avoid a fragmented marketing approach by working in partnership to strengthen the industry sector and raise overall awareness of York Region as a viable four-season tourism destination.

The research project "An Overview of Tourism in York Region" for 2004 is available on the York Tourism Web site at www.yorktourism.com and hard copies are available through the tourism office.

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The next Regional Council Meeting will be held Thursday, May 25, 2006 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 Web site at www.york.ca under Regional Government.