



York Regional Council Highlights



Meeting held on
Thursday, November 15, 2007



The Regional Municipality of York

Just the Facts About Your Community **reveals vital information about York Region residents**

The Regional Municipality of York, in partnership with our Community Reference Group, has released *Just the Facts About Your Community*, a new series of fact sheets to help provide the stories behind the numbers regarding York Region's population.

The first four fact sheets – based on Statistics Canada data – provide an analysis of the characteristics, opportunities and challenges of four segments of our communities: families, low income residents, seniors and youth.

Some examples that stand out:

- York Region has the highest proportion of married couples with children in Canada
- The median family income of \$75,678 in York Region in 2001 was second highest in the GTA
- In 2001, 18 per cent of male seniors and seven per cent of female seniors were working or looking for work
- 97 per cent of youth aged 20 to 24 years in 2006 still lived in a family household
- 20 per cent of youth aged 15 to 19 years in 2001 were not attending school
- 10.5 per cent of youth aged 15 to 24 years in 2001 were unemployed compared to 4.5 per cent for the total population

Just the Facts About Your Community will be distributed across York Region, to the general public, area municipalities, community agencies, the business community and other stakeholders. Also available in Chinese, Farsi and Russian, the fact sheets can be found on York Region's website at www.york.ca under *Just the Facts About Your Community*.

The Regional Municipality of York invests \$1.7 million to assist working poor and other vulnerable residents

York Regional Council today invested nearly \$1.7 million in community agencies under the Community Development and Investment Fund (CDIF) strategy. Regional Council will invest \$458,000 for the last six months of 2008 and \$917,000 annually beginning in 2009 to replace a provincial program, the National Child Benefit Reinvestment Strategy, which will be discontinued in July 2008.

Through CDIF, the Region will purchase 24 community service projects to be implemented in 2008. Projects range from employment supports such as skills testing to housing support services that help young parents and the homeless to secure and maintain affordable housing. Other projects are designed to give children and youth positive role models through projects that include mentoring, counselling and goal-setting to help develop important life skills.

Each year, about 35,000 York Region residents benefit from the services purchased and delivered through the CDIF strategy. CDIF projects diminish the need for more costly social and community services at a later point in time.

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York Region demonstrates commitment to improving access for residents with disabilities

York Regional Council today received a progress report detailing the successful implementation of *Towards Accessibility*, York Region's 2007 accessibility plan, which highlights how our departments and York Regional Police Services are working to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

In the 2007 plan, 85 accessibility initiatives are included. Of these, 29 per cent are completed, 52 per cent are underway and 19 per cent are planned.

As part of this initiative, the York Region Administrative Centre's north parking lot was recently reconstructed to improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The project improved the number, size and proximity of accessible parking spaces and provided a safer crosswalk. A new building entrance features sub-surface heating coils to prevent ice build-up in the winter.

Planning for the 2008 plan is underway and will be integrated into the Region's 2008 business planning and budget cycle.

York Region to apply for federal homelessness funding

York Regional Council today authorized Regional staff to apply for \$1 million of funding under the federal Homelessness Partnering Initiative and any Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Funding has been conditionally allocated for the period April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2009.

York Region will contract out capital investments in shelter and transitional and supportive housing to facilities that help the homeless get off the street, and to community service providers in the Region.

Since April, York Region staff members have been working on a new Community Plan to Address Homelessness to provide vital services to the most vulnerable residents and strengthen the quality of life in all York Region communities. The plan is scheduled for completion by the end of the year and will be submitted to Regional Council for adoption early in 2008.

York Region Household Hazardous Waste Campaign Wins Awards

York Regional Council recognized the York Region Solid Waste Management department for winning a 2007 Gold Communications Award from the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) for our 2006 Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Campaign.

The campaign urged residents to keep hazardous waste out of the garbage and away from the drain. It also won the Silver Award for Promotion from the Recycling Council of Ontario (RCO). The successful campaign helped increase resident traffic to HHW Depots last year by 22 per cent.

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2008 York Region Tourism program

York Regional Council today approved the 2008 York Region Tourism program. Highlights of the program include:

- Advertisements in popular newspapers, radio stations and print publications such as CAA magazine, Festival & Events Ontario, and The Tait Collins Great Toronto Getaway and Great Ontario Getaway
- Participation in a number of York Region trade shows, the Ontario Motorcoach Canada Association Show, and Incentive Works Trade Show
- The print and distribution of 400,000 copies of the York Region Visitors Guide, 200,000 copies of FestiFall, 10,000 copies of the Keynote Meeting Resource Guide and 1,000 copies of Meet Local – York Region Corporations
- Ongoing participation and partnership with tourism and hospitality industry memberships
- Continued promotion of local events on www.yorktourism.com

Funds for the 2008 York Region Tourism program are subject to York Regional Council approval of the 2008 Economic Development operation budget.

Bio-Diesel for Viva Fleet in 2008

York Regional Council today approved the use of a cleaner burning bio-diesel fuel blend to be used in all 90 Viva rapid transit vehicles in 2008. The integration of the biodegradable fuel will significantly reduce fuel emissions, making Viva an even greener alternative to driving a car.

A 2007 pilot project conducted by York Region Transit (YRT) and the Region's contracted Viva operator Veolia Transportation demonstrated a significant decrease in emissions from using bio-diesel fuel in five Viva test vehicles. Pilot project results reported a minimal increase to operational cost; however, carbon monoxide emissions were significantly reduced by an average of 22 per cent.

Bio-diesel is a clean-burning alternative fuel produced from vegetable oils and/or animal fats. The bio-product contains no petroleum, but can be blended with petroleum diesel to create a bio-diesel blend. The 2008 Viva fleet will be fuelled with a 20 per cent bio-product to 80 per cent diesel blend from mid-spring to mid-fall, switching to a five per cent bio-product to 95 per cent diesel blend for the colder months.

The switch to bio-diesel blend fuel is pending final 2008 budget approval and is subject to continued successful operations and emissions tests. The cost to extend the program to the entire Viva fleet in 2008 is estimated at \$200,000. Ongoing evaluation of the program will be used to assess the merit of expanding the use of bio-diesel fuel in the YRT fleet.

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Economic analysis of human services costs

York Regional Council today received a report outlining costs for providing human services to residents. Human services are defined as services and programs that support a safe, health community, while maintaining and promoting its quality of life.

Among the key facts and findings of the report:

- Human services costs for a 12-month period between 2005 and 2006 were \$2.7 billion
- Of the \$2.7 billion, 13 per cent or \$361.5 million were directly borne by The Regional Municipality of York through community services, health services, housing and GTA pooling costs
- Human services costs are expected to rise with the rapid pace of growth in the Region, with the population expected to reach 1.5 million by 2026
- With this pace of growth, human services costs are anticipated to reach as much as \$3.4 billion by 2026, with York Region assuming as much as \$789 million of those costs

Faced with the potential of rapidly rising costs, the report recommends a further analysis and projection of human services costs that include:

- An update of current human services spending
- A projection for human services spending through to 2031, based on changing demographics and variations in the consumer price index
- A set of policy recommendations on human services planning that reflect York Region's growth management planning and Sustainability Strategy

The additional analysis is to be presented to York Regional Council in early 2008.

York Region receives building accolades for Administrative Centre

York Region has won a Masonry Masterpiece Award in recognition of the York Region Administrative Centre building in the Town of Newmarket.

The Administrative Centre was recognized in the innovation category for its extensive stone façade and as a building of architectural significance in the Region.

The York Region Administrative Centre was opened in late 1993 and designed by architect Douglas Cardinal, renown for his curvilinear building designs.

The Masonry Masterpiece Awards, sponsored by MasonryWorx in partnership with Construction Canada, recognizes excellence in building with masonry products and celebrates heritage and unique buildings.

MasonryWorx is an industry association representing Ontario's masonry product manufacturers, suppliers and skilled professionals.

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York Region Sustainability Strategy adopted by Regional Council

York Regional Council today adopted the final version of the York Region Sustainability Strategy, a new approach to decision-making that better integrates economic, community and environmental objectives.

The strategy includes more than 100 actions, with half already underway. The actions are organized under the themes: Corporate Culture of Sustainability, Healthy Communities, Economic Vitality, Sustainable Natural Environment, Education, Engagement and Partnerships, and Implementation and Monitoring.

York Region's website – www.york.ca – provides information on the Region's Sustainability initiative as well as opportunities to submit online feedback. Click on the "Planning for Tomorrow" link on the main page for more information, or email your comments or questions to futureyork@york.ca

York Regional Council supports City of Vaughan's objection to Waste Excellence Corporation growth request

York Regional Council voted today to support the City of Vaughan in its objection to Waste Excellence Corporation's request to increase the size and scope of its operation through an amendment of its Provisional Certificate of Approval from the Ministry of the Environment (MOE).

The Regional Municipality of York will send correspondence to the MOE requesting that the ministry enforce all conditions of the current Certificate of Approval before considering any amendments.

York Regional Council approves study of fiscal and economic implications of the Region's Growth Management Strategy

York Regional Council approved a study of the fiscal and economic implications of the various growth options available to the Region as part of the Region's Growth Management and Regional Official Plan update process.

The products of this study will be a series of reports and analyses, covering capital expenditures and revenues, tax levy impacts, reserve and reserve fund requirements, debt interest and principal payments, long term fiscal impacts, and funding requirements.

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The next Regional Council meeting will be held Thursday, December 13, 2007 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 under Regional Government.