

Wednesday, November 5, 2008

For Immediate Release

The Regional Municipality of York to hold final discussions on Transportation Master Plan

Public invited to participate in consultations across York Region this month

NEWMARKET – The Regional Municipality of York will conduct a final series of public consultations beginning next week as part of the process to update the Region's Transportation Master Plan. To be held this month across York Region, the public meetings will allow residents to learn more about the draft recommendations and provide further input.

The update to the Transportation Master Plan is necessary to incorporate significant increases in the Province's forecasts of York Region's population, employment and the number of households in addition to changes in land use planning and environmental policies.

"York Region remains one of the fastest growing communities in Canada and our communities are expected to continue to experience extensive growth over the coming decades," said York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch. "In order to meet our growing travel demands in an economically and environmentally-sustainable manner, York Region must further develop our regional transportation infrastructure."

The recommendations integrate our sustainability objective to preserve and enhance our natural environment, economic vitality and healthy communities while providing safe, affordable and efficient transportation for people and goods.

"We need to obtain input from our residents on a draft transportation network and a set of policy recommendations that will benefit everyone," said Town of Markham Regional Councillor Tony Wong, Chair of York Region's Planning and Economic Development Committee. "Our goal is to ensure our communities sustain the high quality of life we already enjoy across York Region."

York Region's work in transportation infrastructure planning has been underway for a number of years. The 2002 master plan provided a strong foundation for the York Region projects included in Metrolinx's Big Move initiative. The current update will enhance and complement the 2002 plan and continue moving forward in developing new phases of York Region's transportation network.

Throughout the current study, York Region residents and stakeholders have provided valuable input to the study team and have used the input to prepare draft policies, programs and transportation networks for recommended implementation over the next 30 years. Information highlighted includes requests for the Transportation Master Plan to be sustainable, bold and innovative in addressing traffic congestion and the continuing rapid growth in York Region.

Initiatives to encourage carpooling, the use of public transit and alternative modes of travel such as walking and cycling to work are regarded as necessary to take cars off our roads, reduce car emissions, improve air quality and encourage active and healthy lifestyles.

The agenda for these public meetings are structured with an open house, followed by a formal presentation and a facilitated discussion with all participants.

The third and final round is scheduled this month as follows:

Meeting Date & Municipality	Location
Wednesday, November 12 th Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville	Latcham Hall 8 Park Drive South Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
Tuesday, November 18 th City of Vaughan	Vaughan Civic Centre Council Chambers 2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, City of Vaughan
Thursday, November 20 th Town of Markham	Town of Markham Anthony Roman Centre Council Chambers 101 Town Centre Boulevard, Town of Markham
Tuesday, November 25 th Town of Newmarket	Newmarket Municipal Office Council Chambers 395 Mulock Drive, Town of Newmarket
Thursday, November 27 th Town of Richmond Hill	York Region South Services Centre Rooms ABC, 1 st Floor 50 High Tech Road, Town of Richmond Hill

Time and format for these events

- 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. - Open house**
- 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. - Presentation**
- 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. - Facilitated Discussion**

To obtain more information about the public meetings, please call York Region's Planning and Development Services Department staff at 905 830-4444, Ext. 1578, or toll-free at 1-877-464-9675, or send your request via email to masterplan@york.ca

For more information on The Regional Municipality of York, please visit www.york.ca

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Please see the accompanying attachment

Backgrounder - "What is new in York Region's updated plan?"

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Monday, November 3, 2008

For Immediate Release

Beat the flu bug. Get your flu shot!

The Regional Municipality of York begins annual flu shot campaign

NEWMARKET – The flu season is almost here and the flu vaccine is available free of charge to all Ontario residents over the age of six months. The Regional Municipality of York Community and Health Services department encourages residents to get their flu shot as early as they can.

What is influenza?

Influenza is commonly called the flu. It is a serious respiratory illness caused by a virus that spreads from person to person. You can get the flu when an infected person coughs or sneezes. You can also get the flu if you touch surfaces or objects that have been contaminated by the flu virus, such as unwashed hands, toys, telephones and office equipment.

People who get the flu experience headache, muscle aches, cough, sore throat, fever, fatigue and weakness. The flu can lead to other serious illnesses (such as pneumonia) that may result in hospitalization or even death.

Influenza is *not* what is commonly called the "stomach flu" and does not usually include vomiting and diarrhea, which are caused by different viruses.

The flu usually lasts for five to 10 days, but the cough and weakness can last for as long as six weeks. Often, people who get the flu cannot go to work for several days.

How well does influenza vaccine protect against the flu?

Protection from the vaccine develops about one to two weeks after the shot and usually lasts less than one year. With a good match, the vaccine is about 70 to 90-per cent effective in preventing influenza infection in healthy children and adults. In the elderly, the vaccine can prevent pneumonia and hospitalization in about six out of 10 people, and prevent death in about eight out of 10 people.

A small number of people who get a flu shot may still get the flu, but not as seriously as if they were unvaccinated.

The viruses that cause the flu change from year to year. Therefore, a new vaccine is made every year. People need to be vaccinated every fall to be protected against the flu. The flu shot cannot give you the flu because the vaccine does not contain any live virus.

Who should get a flu shot?

Much of the illness caused by the flu can be prevented by annual flu immunization. Anyone who wants to avoid becoming ill with the flu should consider getting immunized.

Health Canada and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) statement for the 2008-2009 season recommend the flu shot for all healthy children over the age of six months and adults every year and particularly for:

- people with chronic health conditions such as heart, kidney or lung (including asthma) disease, diabetes, cancer, anaemia or weakened immune systems
- residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
- people 65 years of age and over
- healthy children aged 6 to 23 months
- healthy pregnant women
- health care workers and other care providers including those providing care to children under 24 months

- emergency services workers (paramedic, firefighter or police)
- people who provide services within relatively closed settings (e.g., hairdressers)
- household contacts of individuals at high risk of influenza complications

Why should healthy people get the flu vaccine?

Healthy people should get the vaccine to protect themselves and their families from the flu. People who protect themselves will not miss quality time with their families and friends. They will avoid missing work and won't pass the virus to others, especially to babies, the elderly and the chronically ill who could develop severe complications.

The flu is much worse than a cold. Even healthy young people can become very sick and develop serious complications.

Is the flu vaccine safe?

For the majority of people, there are little or no side effects from the flu shot and if they occur they are mild. There may be a little tenderness in the area where the shot was given. Some people report a fever and muscle aches within one or two days of vaccination.

The risk of a vaccine causing serious harm is extremely small. Almost all people who get the flu vaccine have no serious reaction. Anyone who experiences a more serious reaction than listed above should call his/her family physician.

The vaccine is considered safe for pregnant women at all stages of pregnancy and for women who are breastfeeding.

See your physician to get the flu shot if:

- you have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of influenza vaccine or any component of the vaccine (thimerosal, neomycin, formaldehyde)
- you have an allergy to eggs or chicken meat
- you have developed Oculo-Respiratory Syndrome (ORS) after a previous flu shot
- you have ever experienced Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS)
- you are taking Theophylline, Phenytoin, anti-coagulants, prednisone, and/or other immuno-suppressive drugs

Does the flu vaccine protect against avian flu?

No, there is not yet an effective vaccine to protect humans against avian flu.

Do residents have to pay for this vaccine?

No, the vaccine is available free of charge for all Ontario residents over the age of six months.

Do you have questions about the flu or the vaccine?

Speak with your doctor or contact York Region *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653 or www.york.ca/flu

Where can residents go to be vaccinated against the flu?

Visit your family physician or one of the many York Region Community and Health Services flu clinics. Also, some workplaces and local pharmacies offer clinics.

For more information on The Regional Municipality of York, please visit www.york.ca

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