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For Immediate Release

York Regional Council – December 18, 2008

York Regional Council approves \$1.04 billion Capital Budget for The Regional Municipality of York

York Regional Council has approved a \$1.04 billion Capital Budget as part of The Regional Municipality of York's 2009 Business Plan and Budget.

The Capital Budget will increase services for York Region residents and businesses in areas including York Regional Police, transit (YRT and Viva), water and wastewater, Regional roads, solid waste management, housing and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). A portion of the growth-related capital infrastructure costs will be paid through increased Provincial Government support as well as Development Charges (DCs), which are one-time fees charged to builders for developing a property.

Some of the priorities identified in the 2009 Capital Budget include:

- **Rapid Transit (\$398.2 million of which \$179.9 million is fully funded by senior levels of government)** including construction of the TTC Spadina subway and Yonge Street subway extension and dedicated bus rapid transit lane along Davis Drive in the Town of Newmarket
- **York Region Transit (YRT) (\$63 million)** including the purchase of 49 new YRT conventional buses (including 18 replacement buses) and purchase of six YRT Mobility Plus specialized buses (including four replacement buses)
- **Wastewater Projects (\$270.8 million)** including expansion of the Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant (Phase 3)
- **Water Projects (\$109.8 million)** including development of water supply projects with Peel Region to meet York Region's future needs
- **Roads (\$110.9 million)** including road resurfacing and maintenance for more than 180 lane kilometres
- **York Regional Police (\$47.1 million)** including a York Regional Police Investigative and Support Services Facility in the Town of Aurora and the acquisition of 12 new York Regional Police vehicles, 103 replacement vehicles and one specialized Tactical Support Vehicle
- **Information Technology (IT) (\$13.8 million)** including development of a New Data Centre Disaster Recovery facility
- **Housing Services (\$10.3 million)** including construction of an 85-unit seniors' housing project as part of the new Vaughan Civic Centre campus
- **Property Services (\$9 million)** including continuation of Energy Conservation projects for York Region buildings
- **Solid Waste Management Projects (\$4.2 million)** including construction of a new Source Separated Organics Facility (location to be determined)
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS) (\$2.9 million)** including construction of three EMS stations, two in the Town of Georgina and one in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- **Court Services (\$1.4 million)** including the addition of a new courtroom at the Tannery Mall in the Town of Newmarket and renovation of court space in Richmond Hill to improve customer service
- **Long-term Care Services (\$600,000)** including recreational activity area expansion for clients in wheelchairs with caregivers at Newmarket Health Centre and Maple Health Centre

York Regional Council receives a proposed \$1.3 billion Operating Budget plan

York Regional Council also tabled a proposed \$1.3 billion Operating Budget. The Operating Budget proposes some growth and enhancements required to maintain existing service levels for York Region residents and businesses. The draft Operating Budget proposes a 2.5 per cent tax levy increase that represents a \$49 increase for a York Region home assessed at \$400,000.

The 2009 Operating Budget will be forwarded in January to the following committees for review:

| Date | Committee |
|------------------|--|
| January 7, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transportation & Works Committee• Planning & Economic Development Committee |
| January 8, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finance & Administration Committee (includes Police budget)• Health & EMS Committee |
| January 14, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solid Waste Committee• Community Services & Housing Committee |
| January 15, 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rapid Transit Committee• Transit Committee |

Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives and Administration Neil Garbe to assume Chief Administrative Officer role in Town of Aurora

York Regional Council thanked Neil Garbe, Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives and Administration, for his 11 years of service to the Region, including positions with the Office of the CAO and Planning and Development department. Neil is leaving the Region after being appointed CAO for the Town of Aurora beginning next month.

York Regional Council approves policy directions based on feedback from public and stakeholders

Based upon participant input from the third phase of Planning for Tomorrow consultations, York Regional Council today approved new policy directions guiding how the Region will manage future growth.

This phase of consultations focused on the preferred growth scenario of 40 per cent intensification endorsed by Regional Council in May as the basis for the Region's growth management plan to 2031. It also reviewed the policy directions that emerged from the previous phases, including a breakdown of population, jobs and new residential units by local municipality.

The provincial growth plan forecasts York Region's population to reach 1.5 million people by 2031. Adding 500,000 more people in two decades is comparable to adding the population of our two largest cities, Markham and Vaughan, combined.

Progress Report on Opening Doors: York Region's 2008 Accessibility Plan and the Development Framework for the 2009 Accessibility Plan

York Regional Council today received an update on the implementation of *Opening Doors: York Region's 2008 Accessibility Plan* as required under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* along with an update on the development framework for York Region's 2009 Accessibility Plan. Since 2003, York Region has spent approximately \$69 million on accessibility initiatives.

Over the past year, much progress has been made to make York Region both more inviting and inclusive of people with disabilities. Integrating accessibility into business practices and processes is now more commonplace across all Regional departments, creating greater independence for those living with disabilities in York Region.

York Region residents encouraged to bio-bag it

York Regional Council today approved the development of an education and promotion program to encourage residents to make the switch from plastic to biodegradable bags in the Green Bin program.

York Region's Green Bin program currently accepts plastic in the form of bags, diapers and sanitary products. Allowing plastic liners or bags in the Green Bin provides a cleaner and safer collection process for residents and collection staff. Accepting bags, diapers and sanitary products also contributes to a higher participation and diversion rate; however all plastic creates processing and residue issues during the composting process.

In the short-term, the introduction of a voluntary biodegradable bag program is anticipated to reduce plastic bag waste by an estimated three per cent, with the potential to reduce York Region's cost per diverted tonne of organic waste from \$137 to \$133. York Regional Council has endorsed the long-term goal of eliminating plastic bags from the Green Bin program.

York Region approves cost-sharing for traffic signals at Davis Drive West and Keele Street in the Township of King

York Regional Council has approved a cost-sharing agreement with the Township of King for construction of traffic signals at the intersection of Davis Drive West (formerly Highway 9) and Keele Street.

Contingent upon an installation request from the Township of King, York Region has agreed to pay 60 per cent of the installation costs, with the remaining 40 per cent to be paid by King Township.

In April, York Regional Council approved the installation of traffic signals at Davis Drive West and Keele Street to improve safety and movement of traffic from side streets, although the road did not meet the traffic warrants necessary for the Region to install the signals.

In an effort to assist rural municipalities in instances where traffic signals are agreed upon without these warrants, Regional Council also asked transportation staff to return with alternate funding options.

Following a discussion of alternate funding models, York Regional Council decided to keep the current system of warrants and consider the installation of signals at Davis Drive West and Keele Street as a special exemption.

York Region to continue successful partnership with Nature Conservancy Canada

York Region will extend its three-year agreement with Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC) by one year to assist NCC in their efforts to secure environmentally-significant properties from development.

This one-year extension will allow for a continued partnership between York Region and NCC until a new agreement can be reached to reflect improvements to the Region's Greening Securement program.

York Region has worked with NCC since 2001 and reached a formal agreement in 2006. Since 2001, York Region and NCC have protected 227 hectares (560 acres) through conservation easements, donations and purchases.

York Region expands Dial-a-ride program

York Regional Council today approved the extension of two short-term contracts to operate Dial-a-Ride service until the introduction of the expanded program and new contract in April 2009.

In May 2008, York Regional Council approved the expansion of the York Region Transit (YRT) Dial-a-Ride program following a successful pilot project on Route 44 – Bristol London in the Town of Newmarket. Effective April 2009, Dial-a-Ride service will continue on Route 44, as well as expand to Routes 32, 34, 40, 41, 57 and 84.

Dial-a-Ride is an on-call contracted taxi service that replaces regular YRT/Viva vehicles during hours of low ridership. By calling a toll-free number 30 minutes in advance of a trip, customers can request to be picked up and dropped off at stops along a Dial-a-Ride route.

The expanded Dial-a-Ride program will be promoted to residents through a variety of print and web communications, including a campaign defining Dial-a-Ride as a unique new option within the YRT/Viva family of services.

York Regional Council approves purchases of \$4.2 million in community services for 2009

York Regional Council today approved Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF) allocations to purchase \$4.2 million in services from community-based social services agencies for York Region's low income and vulnerable residents.

Effective January 2009 and for up to three years, proposals totalling more than \$2 million will receive funding under the Renewable Funding Stream of the CDIF Strategy. This funding will enable agencies to create improved efficiencies of service, attract and retain high calibre staff and deliver enhanced service in a more consistent manner. York Regional Council also approved community service projects for one-year funding under the CDIF Strategy of more than \$2.2 million.

Last year, 38,000 York Region residents from all municipalities directly benefited from community services purchased through the CDIF Strategy.

A Review of Emergency Shelter Sustainability in York Region

York Regional Council today approved the concept of increasing the amount of funding required to address financial pressures for York Region emergency shelters, subject to approval of the 2009 Business Plan and Budget.

York Region funds 75 beds in four emergency shelters through service agreements with Blue Door Shelters and the Salvation Army of Canada. Three of the four shelters are Regionally owned and each serves a specific client group: youth (males and females), families or single men.

Emergency shelters are funded through a per diem cost-shared 80:20 with the Province of Ontario. The Province sets the maximum daily rate, currently \$41.60, with the per diem paid to the operator for each adult or child occupying a bed. These shelters are a critical component of York Region's homelessness service system and are at financial risk due to the inadequacy of the provincial per diem and pressures associated with inflation, fixed costs and shelter scale.

Transportation infrastructure estimated at \$19 billion by 2031

York Region has estimated the cost to implement the draft recommendations in the Region's Transportation Master Plan Update to be approximately \$19 billion by 2031.

The estimated construction costs for the various transportation projects in the original 2001 Transportation Master Plan was approximately \$6.4 billion. In today's dollars, that plan would cost approximately \$11.7 billion to implement.

The cost increase is largely due to the 2008 draft transit network being double the size of the 2002 draft transit network. The update study recommendations include rapid transit service on Yonge Street and Highway 7 as well as two new east-west and three new north-south rapid transit lines.

The 2002 Master Plan provided a foundation for York Region's projects included in Metrolinx's Big Move initiative. The current best estimate is for York Region's share of the capital cost to be approximately \$1.9 billion and is based on assumptions that must be discussed and negotiated in future with Metrolinx and the Province of Ontario.

York Region approves \$23,000 towards Streetscaping improvements in Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

York Region will contribute \$23,000 to the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville for Streetscaping improvements to the intersection of Stouffville Road (Main Street) and Highway 48.

The improvements will feature an entry marker pier 300 metres west of Highway 48, a gateway feature on the southeast corner of Stouffville Road and Highway 48 and associated landscaping. The entry marker will be granite with an inset plaque and the gateway will feature a granite wall with lettering welcoming travellers to the Community of Stouffville.

The features will form a distinctive entrance into the Community of Stouffville along its busiest commercial road.

2008 Waste Promotion and Education Update

York Regional Council today received a report on the 2008 promotion and education activities of the Solid Waste branch of the Environmental Promotion and Protection Department. All education and promotion activities aim to inform and engage residents, with the goal of achieving 65 per cent waste diversion from landfill by 2010.

2008 Activities and achievements included:

- Launch of the Plastic Bag Take-Back Program
- Earth Day activities
- School Board Litter Round-Up
- Public Works Week
- Three-stream "Make the Drop" Parks Pilot
- Family Day during Waste Reduction Week
- Three Reuse/Recycle events in partnership with Goodwill and Habitat for Humanity
- Federal election sign recycling program
- Household Hazardous Waste depot promotion

The "Cause and Effect" Household Hazardous Waste education campaign recently won a 2008 Silver Promotion Award from the Recycling Council of Ontario.

Next meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, January 22nd at 9:30 a.m. at the York Region Administrative Centre Council Chambers, located at 17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket.

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Council Highlights compiled by:

Barbara Moss, Corporate Communications, York Region
Phone: 905 830-4444, ext. 1237 or Cell 905 505-5775
Email: barbara.moss@york.ca