



York Regional Council Highlights



The Regional Municipality of York



June 21, 2007

York Region commits \$3 million for preliminary planning of Yonge Street subway extension

York Regional Council has committed \$3 million to begin preliminary planning for a TTC subway extension on Yonge Street to the Richmond Hill Centre.

The investment was made following the unveiling of the Province's Move Ontario 2020 Plan last week, with the Ontario Government investment of \$17.5 billion to expand rapid transit across the GTA. A bulk of that work will be within York Region.

The extension of the TTC Yonge Street subway into York Region is in addition to work proceeding on the TTC Spadina subway to the City of Vaughan Corporate Centre and expansion of the Region's award-winning Viva Rapid Transit as Regional Council continues its work to address traffic congestion affecting both residents and businesses.

The \$3 million investment made today will be taken from capital reserves in the 2007 Business Plan and Budget. Staff will investigate ways to recover portions of the \$3 million from the provincial and federal governments.

York Region staff will be working with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) to develop an integrated and coordinated approach for the timely extension of the subway.

Council also directed staff to delay all expropriation plans in the City of Vaughan and the Town of Markham in conjunction with the development of Rapidways on Yonge Street for Viva Phase 2 until September's Rapid Transit Committee meeting. At this time, Committee will discuss progress on the plans for the Yonge Street subway and decide how progression for Viva Phase 2 construction will proceed.

All progress on the project will be reported back to Council in Fall 2007 to ensure that the project is progressing as efficiently as possible.

York Region Council receives 2006 Annual Report

York Regional Council today received The Regional Municipality of York's *2006 Annual Report*, entitled *Investing in our Region*.

The 2006 Annual Report is a 65-page document that highlights information on York Regional Council and the goals and accomplishments of Regional Committees and staff. A report from the Regional Treasurer is included, in addition to financial statements, a statistical review and reports from auditors.

The report also includes a pullout section at the back of the publication that features the Housing York Inc. Annual Report, *Building Strong Communities*.

The 2006 Annual Report is available for pick-up at the Information Kiosk of the York Region Administrative Centre in the Town of Newmarket and other York Region facilities, including the South Services Centre at 50 High Tech Road in the Town of Richmond Hill and The Bales Drive Operations Centre at 90 Bales Drive East in the Town of East Gwillimbury. It will also be available online in July at York Region's website www.york.ca under "Important Links".

York Regional Council appoints Dr. Karim Kurji as Medical Officer of Health

York Regional Council has endorsed Dr. Karim Kurji's appointment as the Medical Officer of Health for York Region.

Regional Council's endorsement will be sent to the Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, urging the province to approve its recommendation, effective July 1, 2007.

Prior to joining York Region in January 2006, Dr. Kurji held senior positions with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Since 2003, he has been Ontario's Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, and from 1999 to 2003, he was Physician Manager, Population Health Services. During his time with the Province, he also served briefly as Chief Medical Officer of Health and Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Health.

York Region looks forward to working with Dr. Kurji and are proud to have him represent the Region on Public Health matters.

YRT's Dial-a-Ride pilot program approved by Council for Route 44 in Newmarket

York Regional Council today approved a Dial-a-Ride pilot program for York Region Transit Route 44 in the Town of Newmarket.

The Dial-a-Ride pilot program will be offered for one year and will replace evening service (7 p.m. to 11 p.m.) on Route 44 (Monday through Saturday), servicing the area bounded by Yonge Street to the west, Bristol Road to the North, Main Street North to the east, and Davis Drive to the south.

The Newmarket Dial-a-Ride program will operate with customers calling a central number and requesting a pick-up from their nearest conventional bus stop. Following the call, dispatchers will send out an accessible vehicle, within a specified time frame, to pick up the customer and take them to a common destination or bus stop where regular, conventional, fixed-route transit services are offered.

The Dial-a-Ride model is traditionally applied to routes where demand for transit is less than 10 passengers per hour and when destinations are common, such as a GO Station or a shopping mall.

The annual cost of operating conventional service on Route 44 during the evenings, from Monday through Saturday is currently \$124,068 per year and it is estimated that the new Dial-a-Ride program will cost \$40,548 each year, resulting in a potential savings close to \$84,000 annually.

The pilot program, successfully awarded to Scarborough City Cab, is scheduled to launch in September 2007.

York Region recognizes Pride Week

York Regional Council has recognized September 3rd to 9th as York Region Pride Week.

The 7th annual celebration commemorates the contributions of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities living and working in York Region. The event is organized by the York Pride Fest Committee under the auspices of The York Region Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community Outreach Project and is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

York Region Park and Ride Strategy gets go ahead at Council

York Regional Council endorsed today the development of a comprehensive park and ride strategy and implementation plan for York Region.

The strategy and plan will be designed to support the growth and health of the rapid transit network that is quickly developing across the Region with programs such as Viva Rapid Transit, the Spadina Subway extension to Vaughan Corporate Centre and the proposed extension of the Yonge Street subway to the Richmond Hill Centre.

Staff will work on completing the strategy and forward for Council's consideration in 2008.

Council approves purchase of new Viva vehicles

York Regional Council today approved the purchase of 11 new 18-metre articulated rapid transit buses to accommodate future ridership growth while enhancing current service levels on the Viva Rapid Transit system.

The new vehicles, which cost approximately \$9.6 million, were approved for purchase in York Region's 2007 Business Plan and Budget.

Delivery of the new vehicles is slated for July 2008.

YRT/Viva ridership grows more than 10 per cent in April 2007

York Regional Council received a report today outlining a 10.1 per cent increase in ridership growth for York Region Transit (YRT) / Viva during the month of April 2007. More than 1.4 million people chose to take transit during the month of April.

More than 5.9 million riders have travelled on YRT / Viva this year (January to April) compared to 5.4 million passengers for the same time period in 2006.

YRT's Mobility Plus door-to-door service is also enjoying ridership gains in 2007 with more than 96,000 individuals using the service (January to April) – a 9.8 per cent increase over 2006.

YRT and Viva operate as a single system, with Viva operating rapid transit service in four key corridors along Yonge Street and Highway 7. YRT transports passengers throughout the Region and acts as a feeder service to Viva. YRT also operates the door-to-door Mobility Plus service for individuals with disabilities

York Region Transit certified through National Quality Institute's Excellence Program

York Regional Council today announced that York Region Transit (YRT) has achieved Level One Certification from the National Quality Institute's Progressive Excellence Program. The National Quality Institute (NQi) is an independent, not-for-profit organization and is the leading authority in Canada on workplace excellence based on quality systems and healthy workplace criteria.

YRT submitted an application for the Excellence Program and was commended specifically for:

- Mission/Values statements and Strategic Planning Guide
- Client definition and orientation on customer service core competency
- Commitment to quality methods/practices

YRT is now working towards meeting criteria necessary in achieving Level Two in the Excellence Program.

York Regional Council receives *Water for Tomorrow* Master Plan draft

York Regional Council received a draft of the *Water for Tomorrow* Water Efficiency Master Plan, outlining a 10-year strategy to help conserve water. Among the recommendations of the draft plan are:

- Rebates for the purchase of water efficient toilets, washing machines, central air humidifiers, rain barrels and irrigation sensors
- A continuation of the free water efficient landscape assessments
- Water efficient home assessments to inspect for leaks
- The installation of kitchen faucet aerators

The *Water for Tomorrow* program has been very successful, saving approximately 20.3 million litres of water each day since 1998 – enough to supply a community of 77,000 people. The program has also been successful in cutting greenhouse gas emissions, including more than 3,800 tonnes of carbon particulates and 14,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year.

The draft Water Efficiency Master Plan will be forwarded to York Region's local municipalities for comment and then brought back to York Regional Council for approval this fall. Once fully implemented, the 10-year plan will increase daily water savings from the current 20.3 million litres to 23.4 million litres each day.

The Regional Municipality of York conducts bio diesel pilot project for works vehicles

The Regional Municipality of York's Fleet Services will conduct a six-month study beginning this summer to determine if using bio diesel in its vehicles will cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Under current fuel regulations set by the Government of Canada in October 2006, low-sulphur fuel is used in all of the Region's fleet of vehicles. While this move has cut vehicle emissions, the bio diesel study is being conducted to determine if levels can be further reduced.

Bio diesel – a fuel that is produced by plants or animal renderings – has been identified as a cleaner substitute than low sulphur diesel; however, it is slightly more expensive, has been shown to produce higher nitrous oxide emissions, and has lower overall fuel economy.

The trial will run through the summer and conclude in October. York Region's Roads Transportation branch will compare emission levels between the bio diesel and low sulphur diesel and report back to York Regional Council in late fall.

The six-month pilot study is one of a number of cleaner fuel initiatives that Fleet Services has undertaken over the past several years, including:

- The purchase of seven hybrid vehicles
- The implementation of an anti-idling policy
- A move to reduce vehicle size where possible
- Adding 10 per cent cleaner-burning ethanol to vehicles fuelled with unleaded gasoline

York Region employment growth matches population growth over the past eight years

York Regional Council today released the *Employment and Industry Report 2006*, which provides a detailed snapshot of economic and employment trends in York Region, including national and provincial overviews, an outlook for the economy in 2007, sector breakdowns and area municipal profiles.

Over the past eight years, York Region has maintained a level of employment growth that exceeds both national and provincial averages.

According to the report, York Region has succeeded in recent years in attracting a number of large corporations to the area while facilitating the growth of existing firms. There were approximately 29,000 businesses employing 460,000 people in York Region in 2006.

Strong employment growth was evident in a number of sectors, with the business services, retail trade, public administration, and health care and social assistance sectors each recording growth rates in excess of five per cent annually since 1998.

The manufacturing industry remained the primary employer in York Region (19.8 per cent of total employment) and grew at a healthy 24.1 per cent between 1998 and 2006.

For 2007, the business outlook appears positive for York Region. A number of projects are currently under construction across the Region, with industrial and commercial construction valued at \$697 million in 2006. This project will provide local employment opportunities both in the construction phase and upon completion.

York Regional Council approves expansion of “Best Start” Child Care Service

York Regional Council announced it will expand child care services across the Region as a result of an increase in provincial Best Start funding of up to \$1.6 million in 2007. This money does not require the usual 20 per cent municipal contribution.

In our role as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), York Region will develop a plan for expanded services, allocate the funds to service providers for the expanded services and perform due diligence activities relating to the services and the expenditures.

York Region receives \$9.7 million from the Government of Ontario under the Developing Opportunities for Ontario Renters (DOOR) initiative

York Regional Council today approved a set of principles to guide the use of \$9.7 million in funding, recently received from the Government of Ontario, for Developing Opportunities for Ontario Renters (DOOR). These principles include:

- Increasing/extending affordable housing supply
- Using funds for housing-related purposes not allowed under other very proscriptive programs
- Distributing funds to extend and complement existing housing investments
- Using funding through use of Regionally-owned land and equity contributions
- Increasing access to those who are disabled, where possible

The provincial/federal DOOR initiative provides a unique opportunity to address a variety of affordable housing needs across the Region. Council directed staff to investigate potential initiatives for DOOR funding and report back to Committee and Regional Council with specific project budgets and program plans this fall.

York Regional Council releases Vision 2026 annual report on the indicators of progress for 2006

York Regional Council approved *Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable Region, Fifth Annual Report on Indicators of Progress for the Year 2006*; the fifth in a series of annual reports that detail The Regional Municipality of York's progress towards implementing Vision 2026.

Successes in 2006 include:

- Continued high quality of life rating by residents
- Acquisition of an additional 563 acres of Greenland through Greenlands Property Securement Strategy
- 460,000 jobs in York Region as of December 31, 2006
- 17.1 million transit trips provided by York Region Transit/Viva

In 2006, the Region was named one of the top 100 companies to work for in Canada, and one of the top 50 in the GTA. This achievement fulfills a Vision 2026 goal of "being responsive by building high-performance teams."

Issues from residents include traffic congestion, growth management, public transit and the environment. Residents support the Region's efforts in areas such as rapid transit and compact urban growth to address these issues. York Region is further addressing resident's concerns through:

- The York Region Draft Sustainability Strategy, which outlines 80 action items
- The Planning for Tomorrow growth management workplan
- The Transportation Master Plan update
- The Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan study

Employers in York Region have noted that diversity, mix and affordability of housing are important for continued economic growth and employment.

The updated version of Vision 2026 is available at www.york.ca under Planning and Development Services.

York Region's Maple Health Centre delivers excellent overall standards of care

A report to York Regional Council today provided the results of the 2006 Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Compliance Review of the Maple Health Centre.

The overall standards of care were found to be excellent. The Maple Health Centre continues to provide high quality care and services that are in substantial compliance with MOHLTC Standards and Guidelines for the provision of Long Term Care programs and services.

The efforts of all Health Services staff and volunteers were commended for the excellent quality of care provided to their residents/clients.

Proposal for a three-year pilot dental treatment program for seniors approved by York Regional Council

York Regional Council endorsed a proposal for a three-year pilot dental treatment program for seniors in York Region, subject to 100 per cent funding by the Government of Ontario at an annual cost of \$539,010. Staff was authorized to submit the proposal to the Ministry of Health Promotion and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

This program is for low-income seniors in York Region. It is a pilot program that could be expanded later to all health units in Ontario.

Lack of access to dental treatment, particularly by low-income and marginalized groups, is a growing concern in all communities in Ontario. Seniors exhibit a high level of dental needs and those with low income have the least access to care. Providing essential and emergency care to these seniors through a treatment program would assist in keeping them free of oral pain and infection. It may also result in other improved health outcomes and improvements in quality of life.

York Region releases proposed walking and cycling trail routes announcing \$500,000 each year for local partners to build trails

York Regional Council today approved a Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program to assist local municipalities, conservation authorities and other agencies in the development of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure projects that match Regional priorities and goals. The program will be funded \$500,000 each year.

In addition, Council approved a preliminary draft of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan that includes proposed routes of pedestrian and cycling trails across York Region, and invited stakeholders and the public to review the draft and provide comments. Council also approved a study that will investigate the creation of a regional network of Natural Heritage trails.

The Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan focuses primarily on the provision of sidewalks, bike lanes and trails to encourage commuter cycling and walking.

The Natural Heritage Trails study will explore opportunities for new trails to link protected green spaces and give residents and visitors more access to York Region's natural heritage.

The preliminary draft Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan also recommends:

- Integrating walking and cycling infrastructure with public transit by connecting trails with transit stops and stations and providing bike racks at key bus stops
- Enabling bikes to be carried on racks on transit vehicles that cross municipal boundaries, as provided for under new regulations of the *Ontario Public Vehicles Act (PVA)*

A shift to alternate forms of transportation, such as walking, bicycling, public transit and carpooling can greatly reduce vehicle greenhouse gas emissions that are a major source of poor air quality. Poor air quality adversely impacts our health and can cause illness in people with heart and lung conditions. Those at particular risk include young children, the elderly, asthmatics and those with existing respiratory or coronary conditions.

The Regional Municipality of York moves to protect areas of employment

York Regional Council today endorsed a report that re-affirms provincial policy and legislation that protects areas of employment from non-employment uses, and outlines steps at a Regional level to implement these policies.

Municipalities across the GTA have long identified the importance of maintaining a sufficient supply of employment lands, which are constantly under competing pressures to be converted to other uses that may be in greater immediate demand, such as residential land uses.

In response to this issue, the Government of Ontario has approved and legislated a number of policies and provisions in the form of provincial plans, bills and regulations to protect areas of employment from being converted to non-employment uses.

The Regional Municipality of York proposes a strategy to protect natural heritage and integrate it into communities

The Regional Municipality of York today proposed an eight-item action strategy to protect and enhance the Region's natural heritage and integrate it into new and existing communities across the Region. The action areas were identified in the "Natural Heritage Discussion Paper," a document that provides a complete context for natural heritage protection and planning in York Region.

The Natural Heritage Discussion Paper is an important component of *Planning for Tomorrow*, the Region's growth management strategy, and complements the Region's preliminary draft Sustainability Strategy, which outlines a new approach to decision-making to better integrate economic, community and environmental objectives.

The discussion paper provides background on the changing provincial and local policy context and focuses on current approaches to natural heritage planning and protection. It identifies eight potential natural heritage action areas, as follows:

- Update our Natural Heritage system
- Connect trail systems in new communities
- Incorporate the Greenbelt Plan into the Regional Official Plan
- Restore and strengthen the Natural Heritage system
- Adopt a new approach to infrastructure
- Establish a Regional trail network
- Advance the Greening Strategy
- Foster further awareness and dialogue around York Region's natural heritage strategy

Members of the public and stakeholder groups are invited to provide their input. A report on the discussions will be presented to York Regional Council this fall.

Please contact York Region at futureyork@york.ca, call 905 895-1231, ext. 1532 or send your comments by mail to:

The Regional Municipality of York
Planning and Development Services Department
17250 Yonge Street, 4th Floor
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

York Regional Council endorses framework to enhance transit implementation

York Regional Council today endorsed a framework to enhance the Region's existing transit-related policies through a future Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA).

This framework will bring the Regional Official Plan into conformity with recent changes to Provincial legislation and provide a higher level of detail with respect to the approved plans for conventional and rapid transit improvements, including Viva Phase 2 and the extension of the Spadina subway into York Region.

This report introduces an approach to the proposed future ROPA, based on the following three principles:

- i) Employ new implementation tools under the *Municipal Planning Act*
- ii) Clarify the intent of Regional policies and related schedules
- iii) Implement the transit-focus of the Government of Ontario's *Growth Plan*

Regional staff will draft the ROPA this summer in consultation with staff from the local municipalities, and staff from York Region Transit and Viva. The draft ROPA is subject to a statutory public meeting under the *Planning Act* and will be held as part of the September 2007 meeting of the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee.

Vehicle traffic crossing into and from York Region continues to increase

York Regional Council today received a report, *2006 York Region Cordon Count Program - Travel Crossing Regional Boundaries*, which provides information on the total traffic volume on an average weekday crossing municipal boundaries and highways (also known as cordons) and classified by type of vehicle and occupancy.

The report provides a strategic snapshot of travel behaviour and changes in travel patterns across the north/central part of the Greater Toronto Area, and is done in conjunction with the Regions of Durham and Peel and the City of Toronto.

Cordon counts are conducted every five years and timed to coincide with other programs such as the Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) and the Federal Statistics Canada Census. The last full cordon count was conducted in 2001. Since the last full cordon count program in 2001, York Region has continued to experience rapid growth.

Among the 2006 report's findings:

- Peak period traffic continues to increase despite high congestion levels at the York-Toronto boundary
- There have been 13,600 new northbound trips crossing the Toronto boundary during the morning rush period compared to an increase of a total 18,400 southbound morning peak period trips since 2001

York Regional Council receives an update on source protection committees under the proposed Clean Water Act, 2006

York Regional Council endorsed a report outlining the draft regulations posted by the Ministry of the Environment on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry. The report describes potential implications of the proposed regulations to York Region and represents York Region's comments that were submitted by staff to the registry. Staff comments focused on four primary concerns:

- The need for adequate municipal representation on the *Source Protection Committee*
- The need for the Province to provide further detail regarding roles and responsibilities and funding obligations associated with the inclusion of non-municipal drinking water systems in the source protection planning process
- The need for sustainable funding
- The need to establish reasonable timelines for public consultation, with specific consideration of the municipal process

Considerable time and effort is required by Regional staff in order to participate fully with two Source Protection committees and several working groups. An internal multi-department steering committee has formed with Transportation and Works, Planning and Health to help disseminate information, knowledge, roles and responsibilities.

The Regional Municipality of York takes steps to encourage sustainable urbanization

York Regional Council received a report today that sets out principles to guide the formulation of a Regional policy regarding Sustainable Development through LEED™ and to provide the basis for consultation with the local municipalities and the development industry.

LEED™ is an acronym for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design. It is a voluntary, consensus-based, market-driven building rating system that evaluates environmental performance from a whole building perspective over a building's life-cycle, providing a definitive standard for what constitutes a green building.

This new policy will provide an incentive for high density residential development in Regional Centres and Corridors (areas identified for urban intensification along Highway 7 and Yonge Street) and promote more energy-efficient green buildings. It will also fulfil one of the actions of York Region's draft Sustainability Strategy.

The benefits of this initiative include:

- Using key resources like energy, water, materials, and land much more efficiently
- Creating healthier work, learning, and living environments
- More natural light and cleaner air
- Contributing to improved health, comfort and productivity
- Long term cost savings

York Regional Council directed staff to consult with local municipalities and other stakeholders on a policy that would provide a 20-35 per cent increase in servicing allocation for development proposals that meet the following criteria:

- Greater water conservation
- Location is served by Viva rapid transit or other major YRT, GO and TTC operated transit routes
- Site is within a Regional Centre or Regional Corridor, or Local Centre
- Building meets Regional Transit Oriented Development guidelines
- Three stream waste reduction is incorporated into the building, and
- A minimum LEED™ Silver certification is achieved
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York Region will meet with the local municipalities, the development community and other stakeholders to confirm a set of principles and implementation strategy for Council's consideration this fall.

Findings of the new Job Hiring Index presented to York Regional Council

York Regional Council received the findings of the new Job Hiring Index, which identifies and analyzes trends in York Region's employment market. This first report covers the first quarter of 2007.

The Index is a database of employment opportunities in the nine municipalities classified by criteria such as location, job classification, duration of employment and experience.

In the first quarter of 2007, 13,800 jobs were posted in published employment websites and corporate websites of major employers in the Region. The number of job postings in York Region for the first quarter was quite consistent, ranging from 4,725 in January to 4,565 in March.

Among the identified locations, Markham had the highest number of job postings in the first quarter of 2007 at 5,715, followed by Vaughan at 2,007, Richmond Hill at 1,299 and Newmarket at 1,257.

Approximately 24 per cent of the jobs posted were for permanent positions, while 14 per cent of the jobs were temporary positions. The remaining postings did not specify the duration of employment. Of the 13,800 jobs advertised, about 56 per cent were for full-time positions, and 8 per cent were part-time with the balance not specified.

The majority of postings in the first quarter of 2007 were for Administrative and Legal positions (15.88 per cent), followed by General Help Wanted (11.67 per cent); Business, Finance and Accounting (11 per cent); Management (9.78 per cent); and Engineers, Architects, IT, Natural Science (8.59 per cent).

Today's economic growth is driven by knowledge, skills and innovation. The quality of the labour force is an essential element for sustained economic vitality to enable local firms to meet the challenges of global competition. Better forecasting of industry requirements, skills shortages and deficiencies within the Region has been identified as a key way to facilitate workforce development.

York Regional Council endorses a strategy to proceed with Environmental Assessment for the Donald Cousens Parkway link to Morningside Avenue in Toronto

York Regional Council endorsed a report on the progress of the Donald Cousens Parkway link to Morningside Avenue in the City of Toronto. The report presents a strategy to proceed with Environmental Assessment (EA) approval for the section of the corridor that is common to both York and Toronto's preferred alignment, while at the same time protecting the section where York Region's and Toronto's preferred alignments differ, until a final agreement can be reached.

Council endorsed recommendations to request:

- The Ministry of the Environment to expedite the approval of the section of the alignment from Highway 407 south to 9th Line, common to both York and Toronto's preferred alternative
- The Ministry of the Environment, through the conditions of approval for the common section, also protect the corridor west of 9th Line and south to the existing terminus of Morningside Avenue for both York and Toronto's preferred alignment until a final EA decision is rendered on the remainder of the corridor.

This road link remains a critical piece of the inter-regional transportation network in this York/Toronto/Durham boundary area and must be protected until a final EA decision is rendered on the remainder of the corridor. This road link is also a critical component for the management of sensitive conservation lands. The proposed road will keep traffic growth within the urban development areas, and reduce traffic growth through the Rouge Park, Bob Hunter Memorial Park and Greenbelt areas.

York Region Immigration Portal receives \$300,000 from the province

York Regional Council endorsed a report outlining the York Region Immigration Portal (YRIP), an initiative that received \$300,000 in funding from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration under the Municipal Immigration Information Online program.

As the sponsor of YRIP, the Region becomes a partner to an ever-growing network of organizations that share a common goal of using the internet to promote inclusivity and sustainable development based on shared visions and values.

The funding application was generated from local and Regional governments, businesses, public and Catholic school boards, Seneca College, United Way of York Region, community groups and immigrant service providers, including the new Welcome Centre. Letters of support were garnered from all partners demonstrating collaboration and cross-sectoral partnerships.

The YRIP's primary focus will include developing information and tools to provide social support, settlement information and other services to immigrants and support the integration of immigrants into the local labour force.

The secondary focus will promote municipalities in York Region to potential or recently arrived immigrants. This will be achieved mainly by translating and posting marketing materials developed by York Region, local municipalities and other community partners.

The top five languages spoken in the home for recent immigrants (1991-2001) in York Region are Cantonese, English, Chinese, Russian and Farsi.

York Region is Canada's sixth largest metropolitan centre. As of March 2007, it was home to an estimated population of 957,741. York Region has grown at a rate of approximately 3,000 people per month for the past five years, and is expected to reach a total population of 1.5 million in 25 years. Based on the latest census data, recent immigrants have accounted for 42 per cent of the Region's population growth. York Region has the highest proportion (11 per cent) of recent immigrants in the GTA who speak neither official language.

Meeting the needs of York Region's population growth and large demographic change requires coordinated action on many fronts. For the purpose of establishing an online immigration portal, York Region's Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC) and its Inclusivity Action Plan (IAP) have successfully engaged human service organizations in York Region who serve immigrant communities. A key IAP objective has been to create a coordinated, integrated, user-oriented and system wide response for newcomers settling and integrating into York Region communities. A partnership of five agencies that serve newcomers in York Region will launch a Welcome Centre in Vaughan next week.

Council Highlights compiled by Ken Turriff, Corporate Communications, Office of the CAO
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The next Regional Council meeting will be held Thursday, September 27, 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.