



# York Regional Council Highlights



Meeting held on  
Thursday, March 27, 2008



The Regional Municipality of York

## **York Region celebrates local winner of provincial Business Plan Challenge**

York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch, Town of East Gwillimbury Mayor Jamie Young and Town of Newmarket Mayor Tony Van Bynen today presented a Pickering College student with a book to commemorate his achievement in the provincial Business Plan Challenge.

Winner David Wilkings is an East Gwillimbury resident and York Region Small Business Centre client. David developed a business plan for a motorcycle race track and e-retail accessories business as a Grade 12 student last year at Pickering College in Newmarket.

David won first place at the York Region, Central Region and Provincial levels, winning a total of \$3,500.

## **York Regional Council endorses 2008 workplan for small business centre**

York Regional Council today approved a staff report of the 2007 achievements and outline of 2008 activities of the York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre. The Centre provides assistance to new businesses and developing enterprises in the early stages of growth located in the northern six municipalities of Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

As a result of the Centre's efforts, 104 businesses were registered, 132 new businesses were started, 14 businesses expanded operations and 114 jobs were created.

The Centre responded to 8,385 general enquiries and provided 240 consultations. It held 10 seminars and workshops, a Bridges to Better Business Conference and partnered in an Enterprising Women's Conference. It also processed 31 Summer Company applications resulting in seven approvals, and 60 Business Plan Challenge submissions resulting in three that went to the provincial finals.

The Centre will continue its successful programs in 2008, including a high school Business Plan Challenge, seminars, small business workshops and community outreach.

For more information about these and other activities of the Small Business Enterprise Centre, please visit [www.yorksmallbusiness.ca](http://www.yorksmallbusiness.ca) or contact Sharon Végh, Program Manager, Economic Strategy, at (905) 830-4444, Ext. 1517 or email [sharon.vegh@york.ca](mailto:sharon.vegh@york.ca)

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## **York Region recognizes Administrative Professional Week, April 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>**

York Region will recognize Administrative Professional Week between April 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

Administrative Professional Week, and Administrative Professional Day, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, recognizes the contributions of administrative professionals – through project co-ordination, event planning, marketing and other important roles that keep Canadian businesses running effectively.

York Regional Council's recognition follows a request from the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP), with 1,500 members representing 34 chapters across Canada.

## **York Region appoints representatives to Source Protection Committees**

York Regional Council has appointed Erin Mahoney, Commissioner of York Region Environmental Services, as the municipal representative for York Region and our nine municipalities to the South Georgian Bay-Lake Simcoe Source Protection Committee.

Council has also appointed Neil Garbe, Executive Director of York Region Strategic Initiatives and Administration, as the municipal representative for York Region and the nine municipalities to the Credit Valley, Toronto Region and Central Lake Ontario Region Source Protection Committee.

As part of the *Clean Water Act* passed by the Government of Ontario in 2007, Source Protection Authorities are mandated to provide source protection plans and establish source protection committees. These committees must have one-third municipal representation.

## **York Region to construct mixed broken glass clean-up system with Unical Inc.**

York Regional Council today authorized an agreement with Unical Inc. for the design, construction and operational support of a mixed broken glass clean-up system in the amount of \$609,000.

The installation of a mixed broken glass clean-up system will allow for the most cost-effective and efficient glass recycling process, and will in turn support York Region's ongoing blue box and waste diversion efforts.

Approximately 97 per cent of glass containers recycled in York Region's waste management facility are shattered during processing. Shattered glass is recovered as mixed broken glass, which contains a considerable amount of non-glass materials (both recyclable and non-recyclable). This creates contamination in the mixed broken glass and affects the Region's ability to effectively process the product.

Related to the clean-up system agreement, York Region and other GTA municipalities have entered into a mixed broken glass supply agreement with Unical Inc. that will result in the construction of a recycled glass processing facility in Brampton, Ontario in 2008.

Canadian Solid Waste, which was the first company to collect blue box materials in 1988 in Montreal, Quebec created Unical in 1992 to develop markets for glass collected curbside. Unical established early alternative markets for mixed glass other than bottle to bottle, such as fiberglass insulation. This early work positioned Unical, located in Quebec as a processor of post consumer mixed glass.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **Income support programs assist residents in need**

York Regional Council today approved staff reports outlining two separate ongoing reviews of social assistance allowances, subsidized child care and social housing benefits and eligibility conducted by the Region to meet follow-up and investigative functions mandated by the province.

The province requires York Region to regularly review the eligibility of residents who require assistance and to ensure participants receive adequate income. Single parents currently make up 37 per cent of participants in the Ontario Works social assistance program.

The Region's Family Support Team works with Ontario Works and Housing York Inc. participants to ensure that benefits and eligibility are appropriately delivered. The team works closely with sole support parents to pursue child and spousal support income on participants' behalf by negotiating private support agreements or assisting with court applications for support.

In 2007, the Family Support Team completed 2,086 reviews. It obtained 371 court orders and private agreements for support income to be delivered to families. In addition, it found 137 overpayments and terminated 59 cases for reasons such as refusal to pursue support, reconciliation with spouses, or participants had obtained a support order in excess of their benefit entitlement.

The Eligibility Review Team also works with Ontario Works participants as well as residents who receive rent-geared-to-income housing assistance and child care fee assistance to ensure compliance with the programs, investigate suspected fraud and recover overpayments.

The Eligibility Review Team completed 1,118 investigations resulting in 127 participants having their assistance terminated due to changes in eligibility. Another 25 participants had the amount of their assistance reduced and 10 cases (fewer than one per cent) in which fraud was alleged to have occurred were referred to York Regional Police and are under investigation.

The Eligibility Review Team either recovered or avoided ongoing costs totalling \$2.1 million while the total for the Family Support Team was \$1.8 million. Of the \$3.9 million total of recovered or avoided costs, 80 per cent would be returned to or saved by the province. Twenty per cent of the total, or approximately \$780,000, represents the savings to York Region taxpayers in 2007.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **More affordable housing needed in every York Region community**

York Regional Council received a report outlining two studies recently released by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) entitled *Trends and Issues in Affordable Housing and Homelessness* and *Sustaining the Momentum: Recommendations for a National Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness*.

The findings show that York Region needs more housing options. Despite many positive steps taken by York Region to address our needs, some of our residents continue to face serious challenges in finding affordable housing:

- York Region has the lowest level of rental housing completions (0.1 per cent of all housing completions, 2001 to 2006).
- The gap between house price and income is greater in York Region than most other participating communities. York Region experiences the greatest gap between housing cost and income for non-family persons than any other participating community.
- The average vacancy rate for private rental units between 2001 and 2006 was about one per cent in York Region – one of the lowest rates reported by participating communities.
- York Region had the third highest average rent for a two bedroom apartment in 2006 at \$1,039 per month, surpassed only by the cities of Vancouver and Toronto.
- In York Region, the gap between monthly income from social assistance and income needed to afford a two bedroom apartment was about \$1,900, the third highest among all participating communities, surpassed only by the City of Vancouver and Peel Region.
- In 2006, York Region had the second lowest number (22) of social housing units per 1,000 households, surpassed only by the City of Laval.

Both reports emphasize the need for a comprehensive strategy on housing and homelessness and call for reinvestment in both the private and social housing stock in Canada. They reiterate the stance of the FCM and provincial municipal associations that the property tax base alone cannot address these needs.

There is a need for more affordable housing in all York Region communities to accommodate a growing workforce and lessen the numbers of commuters on the roads.

York Region will write to the federal Minister responsible for housing and homelessness and to the provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to express the Region's support for the two reports.

## **York Region invests \$2.4 million in 40 community projects**

York Regional Council today received a report of the 40 community social services purchased in 2007 through the Community Development and Investment Fund (CDIF).

In all, 40 projects across York Region received a total of \$2.4 million, helping 38,000 low-income residents.

All of these projects addressed at least one of three priority areas:

- Child and family supports
- Homelessness services and homelessness prevention programs
- Employment skill development

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **York Regional Council approves social housing building repair funding plan**

York Regional Council today authorized a strategy to make funding available to social housing providers through an advance of up to \$500,000 for repairs or through a secured loan for repairs over \$500,000. All funds are to be returned to York Region.

Social housing buildings are located in all nine York Region municipalities. Thousands of York Region residents live in social housing communities and thousands more are on a waiting list. Well-maintained buildings are an important community asset. If housing providers aren't able to access the funds needed to maintain their buildings, vulnerable residents could find themselves living in substandard or unsafe housing and surrounding neighbourhoods could be negatively impacted.

York Region's social housing portfolio has an assessed value of approximately \$500 million and a replacement cost of approximately \$1 billion. To preserve these assets for long-term use, housing providers require additional funding for capital repairs.

## **Homelessness plan approved by York Regional Council**

York Regional Council today endorsed the 2008 update to *The York Region Community Plan to Address Homelessness*.

Completing a *Community Plan* was one of the requirements for participation in the federal government's Homelessness Partnership Initiative. The *Community Plan* identifies specific targets and outcomes for federal funding.

York Region will invite community representatives to a half-day forum on homelessness issues in York Region in 2008. This forum will serve as a venue to introduce the final updated *Community Plan* and offer an opportunity to discuss successes to date and future options for addressing the goals outlined in the document.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **Bradford Bypass urgently required to support forecasted growth**

The Regional Municipality of York will ask the province to include the Bradford Bypass in provincial plans as a critical infrastructure investment within the 2031 timeframe of the Growth Plan.

The province identified the need for a highway linking Highways 400 and 404 in the northern part of York Region in the late 1970s. It approved Environmental Assessments and protected the route from development, but omitted the Bradford Bypass from recent plans. Now, increased residential growth in Simcoe County and severe traffic congestion on the 404 have resulted in large volumes of cars and trucks using alternate routes on Regional and local concession roads not built to handle such traffic.

To address the situation, York Regional Council today authorized the Region to request the Ontario Government to:

- Include the approved Bradford Bypass alignment in Provincial Plans prior to the 2014 review date specified in the enabling legislation
- Direct provincial staff to work with York Region and other municipal jurisdictions to incorporate the Bradford Bypass into Regional and local municipal Official Plans
- Develop and commit to a schedule to move the Bradford Bypass towards implementation

By facilitating development of employment lands, this provincial infrastructure will enable York Region to attract more investment and nurture economic development necessary to sustain additional population growth forecast for York Region.

Left unchecked during the coming decade of planned growth, this situation will lead to more traffic congestion on Regional and local municipal roads in the Towns of Newmarket and East Gwillimbury and be a detriment to economic development in the communities.

## **York Region will better monitor and assess traffic patterns and congestion levels**

York Regional Council today endorsed a proposal for York Region to participate in the GTA-wide Travel Time Study led by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

The Region currently has comprehensive transportation monitoring programs, including the Annual Average Daily Traffic Volumes Program and the Cordon Count Program. These programs monitor the traffic volumes on specific roads in the Region, however, they do not measure travel speeds and travel times which have become primary evaluation indicators for traffic congestion.

Other participants include the City of Toronto and the regional municipalities of Durham and Peel.

This study will help provide a regular and consistent performance measure of York Region arterial roads. It will also assist staff to be more effective in implementing and monitoring traffic management strategies and transportation initiatives in major congested travel corridors of the Region.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **2008 York Region Business Directory is a useful business-to-business marketing resource**

York Regional Council today endorsed a staff report outlining the activities around the 2008 York Region Business Directory, which provides businesses and residents with up-to-date contact information to promote local businesses and assist in recruitment.

The 2008 York Region Business Directory contains approximately 26,500 business listings and is a resource guide for business-to-business contact, a convenient research tool for the general public and a showcase for the diverse nature of York Region's economy.

Consumers can access the Directory online free-of-charge through the York Region website at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca). Copies of the Directory are also available free-of-charge to non-profit organizations, local libraries and area municipalities.

Businesses can purchase the Directory database electronically on CD-ROM for a cost of \$175. To obtain a copy, please contact Anthony Lerullo, Planner, at 905-830-4444, ext. 1537.

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The next Regional Council meeting will be held Thursday, April 24, 2008 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](http://www.york.ca) under Regional Government.