

<p><b>2004 Business Plan &amp; Budget Submission to York Regional Council</b></p> <p><b>Directly Controlled Regional Programs = 2.1% tax levy</b></p> <p><b>Indirectly Controlled Special Purpose Bodies (York Regional Police, MPAC and Conservation Authorities) = 5.9% tax levy</b></p> <p><b>Total proposed Regional tax levy = 8%</b></p>	<p>York Regional Council received a presentation from Chief Administrative Officer Michael Garrett on the 2004 Business Plan and Budget Submission.</p> <p>Mr. Garrett divided his preliminary report on the \$1.6 billion budget into three separate submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 10-year Capital Plan (2004-2013) worth \$5.5 billion, including \$513.5 million for 2004, plus another \$357.1 million in 2003 commitments for a \$870.6 million total</li> <li>• A 2004 Rate Supported Budget with \$70.4 million in water service costs and \$66.8 million in wastewater service costs</li> <li>• A 2004 Tax Supported Budget worth \$521.7 million, including \$276 million in directly controlled Regional programs and \$245.7 million from indirectly controlled Special Purpose Bodies (York Regional Police, GTA Pooling, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), Court Services and Conservation Authorities)</li> </ul> <p>Drivers affecting the 2004 budget include the cost of capital programs, including debt repayment charges, the cost of wages and benefits, including an increase in the OMERS contribution rate, and increases in purchased services, such as Hydro and insurance rates.</p> <p>Within directly controlled Regional programs, staff has already identified \$9.2 million in efficiencies and cost savings from their base programs. In addition, staff identified 14 Regional priority enhancements worth \$12.2 million, primarily in the roads, transit and health portfolios. Together, this represents a 2.1 per cent increase on the tax levy.</p> <p>In the indirectly controlled Special Purpose Bodies, York Regional Police have requested an approximate \$26 million increase to its 2004 budget, which represents a 5.6 per cent increase on the tax levy. Other factors include a 0.3 per cent tax increase for MPAC and Conservation Authorities.</p> <p>In total, the proposed 2004 Regional tax impact is 8 per cent, which represents an average household tax increase of \$116, based on an average assessed residential property of \$332,205.</p> <p>The 2004 budget submission will now be reviewed at the February Standing Committees, with all reviews consolidated at the March 4<sup>th</sup> Finance and Administrative Committee, where public input on the budget will be welcomed. Additional meetings may be required, however, the Business Plan and Budget is expected to be submitted to Regional Council for approval on March 25<sup>th</sup>.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>York Region to continue aggressive tourism program</b></p>	<p>York Regional Council adopted York Region Tourism's 2004 Marketing Plan that will continue to aggressively promote and market York Region as a safe and vibrant tourism destination.</p> <p>The 2004 Tourism Marketing Plan builds upon industry research and foundation of the 2003 plan. Overall goals for 2004 are to position York Region as a viable four season tourism destination for tourists; motivate new tourists and to encourage repeat visitation and overnight stays; and to create an environment for the development of the Region's tourism industry.</p> <p>In a separate report received by Council regarding an update of SARS Emergency Marketing and Recovery Initiatives, it noted that provincial research estimates it will take at least two or more years for the Greater Toronto Area to reach occupancy and revenue levels prior to SARS.</p> <p>Although the Regional Council allocation of \$250,000 last May to implement a SARS Emergency Marketing and Recovery Plan for the tourism industry has showed success to date, the journey to recovery will take at least another year.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>York Region begins second phase of Economic Strategy consultation</b></p>	<p>York Regional Council has agreed to convene a workshop in March to review and discuss results of consultations on the Economic Strategy. Phase two of consultation sessions with small business, retail, technology and manufacturing, tourism and agriculture industries is currently underway until February.</p> <p>The Region began consultation in the development of an Economic Strategy last fall. The goal of the strategy is to develop an action plan that will result in the Region being a more competitive location for business. First phase of consultation included Regional staff-led workshops with economic development partners, which include area municipal economic development staff and the Executive Directors and Presidents of the local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade.</p> <p>A final report and draft strategy will be reviewed by the Region's Planning and Economic Development Committee and Regional Council in late June.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>York Region Transit to pursue business sponsorship opportunities</b></p>	<p>York Regional Council gave the "go ahead" to York Region Transit (YRT) to pursue annual business sponsorships for their popular Route Map publication.</p> <p>The YRT route map is one of the most important printed pieces for customers, and will have three print runs in 2004 of 40,000 copies each. The total run costs \$78,000.</p> <p>By attracting sponsors, YRT hopes to create a savings of \$20,000.</p>

<p><b>Water use efficiency Industrial / Institutional Audit Program</b></p>	<p>York Regional Council recommended that York Region extend the Industrial/Institutional Water Usage Audit Program to December 31, 2004, and offer financial incentives to encourage large volume water users to implement cost-effective water saving measures.</p> <p>To date, 55 York Region industries have participated in comprehensive water audits. Three of these have implemented the recommendations, resulting in water savings of 426,000 litres per day. However, the capital costs pose a barrier for some industries.</p> <p>To offset this, the Region has instituted a “capacity buy-back” incentive for companies, which will provide a rebate of \$0.40 per litre per day for water saved, up to 50 per cent of the cost of the water efficiency upgrade.</p> <p>It is estimated that the incentive program will cost \$300,000 to implement; an amount available in the 2004 York Region budget from savings due to cost efficiencies found in the residential/commercial retrofit component of <i>Water for Tomorrow</i>.</p>
<p><b>Smart Commute Initiative</b></p>	<p>York Regional Council has recommended that the Regional Municipality of York lead the implementation of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Smart Commute Initiative.</p> <p>The GTA Smart Commute Initiative calls for the formation of a “Greater Toronto Area Travel Demand Management Program” to provide sustainable transportation alternatives such as transit, carpooling and other programs to reduce single occupant vehicle trips across the GTA. It includes the formation of two new Transportation Management Associations in York Region to help in its implementation.</p> <p>To fund the initiative, York Region and the City of Toronto made a joint submission to the Federal Urban Transportation Showcase Program (UTSP) in October 2001. The UTSP will finalize a funding agreement by the end of March 2004.</p>
<p><b>Anti-Litter Campaign</b></p>	<p>York Regional Council recommended that York Region staff work with the local municipalities, the City of Toronto and other municipalities in the GTA to combat the growing problem of litter.</p> <p>York Region and several other municipalities conducted surveys in 2003 and found that there are significant amounts of litter across various locations. The studies recommended a long-term campaign to change public attitudes towards littering.</p> <p>A follow-up report will be returned to Regional Council with a plan of action.</p>

<p><b>Region endorses Proposed GTA Agricultural Action Plan</b></p>	<p>Regional Council has endorsed in principle the proposed GTA Agricultural Action Plan. The Plan was developed by the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario – GTA Caucus (comprised of the Regions of Durham, Halton, Peel and York and the City of Toronto), and the GTA Federations of the Agriculture to promote agriculture in the GTA.</p> <p>The Plan is a road map to maintain and support a healthy GTA agricultural industry. It contains 34 specific action items, grouped under the themes of economic development, education/marketing, land use policy, and accountability and responsibility. Each action item assigns a lead agency and participants to carry it out. The Region’s support is conditional upon the development of a business plan for the action plan.</p>
<p><b>York Region allocates nearly \$75,000 to agencies serving homeless</b></p>	<p>York Region allocated a total of \$73,854 dollars in winter needs funding to 12 community agencies and organizations serving the homeless. The agencies include four organizations that operate Out of the Cold programs, the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region, Transit Georgina, Krasman Centre, Yellow Brick House, Transitional and Supportive Housing Services, Pathways for Children, Youth and Families, and Crosslinks Housing and Support Services.</p> <p>York Region’s 2003/2004 winter needs funding provides one of few opportunities for agencies serving the homeless to access funding of up to \$7,000 for minor capital items and improvements. This includes the purchase of supplies such as food, furnishings and appliances, as well as capital improvements to facilities, emergency shelter and transportation.</p>
<p><b>Region to seek funding to continue Small Business Enterprise Centre</b></p>	<p>York Regional Council has authorized staff to request funding assistance from the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade to continue the operation of the York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre (YRSBEC) to 2004/05.</p> <p>In its first six months of operation, York Region’s Small Business Enterprise Centre responded to more than 700 general inquiries, provided 75 private business consultations, organized five seminars and workshops and raised more than \$14,000 in cash and in-kind contributions through partnerships and sponsorships.</p> <p>Established in June 2003 at the York Region Administrative Centre in Newmarket, the YRSBEC is staffed by a Small Business Consultant who provides advice to potential entrepreneurs on business registration, writing business plans, market planning and financing options. Existing businesses are given advice on strategic planning, market penetration, expansion planning and human resource issues. Other outreach activities include making presentations, organizing seminars and workshops, and securing partnerships and sponsorships.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>York Region looking for operator of new youth shelter in Georgina</b></p>	<p>Regional Council approved the release of a Request for Expressions of Interest (REI) to identify qualified agencies interested in providing emergency shelter and transitional housing services for youth in the Town of Georgina.</p> <p>In December 2002, York Regional Council authorized the purchase of a surplus school on Dalton Road in Sutton from the York Catholic District School Board for the purposes of operating a multi-purpose centre for youth. York Region is contributing \$200,000 and the Town of Georgina is providing \$50,000 toward the purchase. The Region will own the facility and use a major part of the building for emergency shelter and transitional housing for youth between the ages of 16 and 25. The Town of Georgina will operate recreation programs for youth and children in another portion of the building, as well as serve as property managers for the entire facility.</p> <p>The REI is the first of a two-stage procurement process that will identify and pre-qualify potential operators who have the expertise and experience needed to provide services to a hard-to-serve client group. Submissions will be reviewed and evaluated by a team of staff from York Region and the Town of Georgina.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Region's 2003 WNV control activities proved to be successful</b></p>	<p>Regional Council received a report from the Health Services and EMS Committee that concluded efforts by the Region to control the spread of West Nile virus (WNV), combined with a number of external factors in York Region have contributed to minimal impacts to residents throughout the 2003 mosquito season. There were two positive human cases of WNV in 2003, compared to seven positive and four probable cases the year before.</p> <p>The 2003 WNV control plan included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased educational initiatives</li> <li>• increased surveillance in the mosquito, bird and human populations</li> <li>• use of larvicides to control mosquito populations in targeted areas such as catch basins and some standing water surfaces</li> <li>• contingency planning for adulticiding</li> </ul> <p>The WNV control plan has also raised the issue of current construction standards for catch basins and storm water retention ponds. Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch will be writing the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting these construction standards be reviewed in an effort to reduce potential mosquito breeding as an ongoing long-term preventative measure for WNV control activity in the Province of Ontario.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Next York Regional Council Meeting</b></p>	<p>The next York Regional Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 19, 2004 at the York Region Administrative Centre in Newmarket, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the Council Chamber.</p>

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