

Thursday, September 18, 2008

For Immediate Release

## **York Regional Council – September 18, 2008**

### ***York Regional Council recognizes retiring managers for years of service***

York Regional Council praised three retiring senior managers today for their long service to York Region and our residents.

Retirements included Shawn Turner, General Manager of Long Term Care, who served 24 years, Tom Appleby, Director of Supplies and Services, who served 13 years and Elizabeth Wagle, Director of Family and Children's Services, who served 10 years.

### ***York Region to recognize Character Community Week***

York Region will recognize Character Community Week from October 27-31, 2008. The Character Community initiative is operated by the Character Community Foundation of York Region, whose philosophy emphasizes good character as the basis for a strong community.

### ***York Region to recognize Toastmasters Month***

York Region will recognize October 2008 as Toastmasters Month. Toastmasters is an international, nonprofit educational organization that operates clubs worldwide for the purpose of helping members improve their communication, public speaking and leadership skills.

### ***Stouffville Water Supply Project update***

York Regional Council today received an update on the Stouffville Water Supply Project to bring a blended groundwater/lake-based supply to service the community of Stouffville up to 2036. Construction to connect the York Water System with the current groundwater system is underway and it is anticipated the blending of groundwater and lake-based water in the community of Stouffville may begin as early as March 2009.

### ***York Region Receives award for 2008 Business Plan and Budget***

The Regional Municipality of York has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the 2008 York Region Business Plan and Budget.

In order to receive the budget award, York Region had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for an effective budget presentation, including how well our budget serves as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide and a communications tool.

This is York Region's fourth Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the GFOA.

### ***York Region to help acquire Perryman property on Oak Ridges Moraine***

York Regional Council has approved the allocation of \$762,000 towards the purchase of the 33-hectare (83-acre) Perryman property on the Oak Ridges Moraine in the Town of Richmond Hill, subject to successful fundraising efforts by partner organizations.

The property, located at 11751 and 11825 Leslie Street, will be jointly purchased by York Region, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), the Town of Richmond Hill and the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation.

The TRCA will take ownership of the property contingent upon confirmation from the TRCA and the Town of Richmond Hill that the property will be reforested. Maintenance of the property will be the responsibility of the TRCA or the Town of Richmond Hill, pending future discussions between both parties.

While the property is protected from development as part of the Oak Ridges Moraine, this purchase will allow naturalization efforts to take place.

For more details concerning the Perryman property acquisition, please view the [staff report](#).

### ***YRT Bus Procurement***

York Regional Council today approved the purchase of seven 30-foot York Region Transit (YRT) buses at a cost of \$2.5 million, plus GST.

The new vehicles will be used as both replacement and new vehicles in the YRT fleet. Currently, there are 307 YRT vehicles and 90 Viva vehicles in the York Region bus fleet.

### ***YRT/Viva assists residents in need with discount transit fares pilot program***

York Regional Council has approved a new YRT/Viva discounted fares pilot program to assist at-risk York Region residents. In partnership with local community assistance agencies focused on homelessness, York Region will provide discounted YRT/Viva tickets to enable travel for residents in need.

Discounted YRT/Viva tickets will be distributed to pre-selected community agencies through local municipal offices. Agencies will receive tickets at a 15 per cent discount, helping to affordably transport their clients and reduce the need for more expensive taxi travel.

Participating community agencies include Sandgate Women's Shelter of Georgina, Yellow Brick House, Leeder Place Emergency Family Shelter, Inn from the Cold, Newmarket Youth Shelter and The Welcoming Arms Ministry.

Results of the one-year pilot program will be evaluated in fall 2009.

## **Central LHIN**

York Regional Council has approved the participation of York Region Community and Health Services staff in a seniors falls prevention project with local community agencies.

This collaborative program is funded by the Central Local Integration Network in an effort to prevent the significant number of falls that are the leading cause of injury in those over 65 years old.

As part of the project, York Region staff will train service providers in the area of falls prevention and health promotion.

### ***York Region receives up to \$375,000 in provincial funding to help reduce Emergency Medical Services (EMS) off-load delays***

York Regional Council today approved the use of up to \$375,000 in provincial funding to hire dedicated emergency room (ER) nurses to address York Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS) patient off-loading delays at our hospitals.

As a result of the provincial funding, dedicated nurses will be staffed at Southlake Regional Health Centre, York Central Hospital and Markham-Stouffville Hospital during peak times of patient off-loading. They will treat, manage and care for patients with non-life threatening conditions. Nurses will take over patient care from EMS until the hospital ER is ready to accept the patients.

York Region has been working in partnership with all three York Region hospitals to ensure the successful implementation of dedicated ER nurses during the period of October 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009.

### ***York Region sends four-sided pool fencing report to local municipalities for review***

York Region will circulate a report to our local municipalities regarding the adoption of four-sided pool fencing for swimming pools. Currently municipal bylaws only include three-walled fencing, with a home serving as the fourth side.

The report states that four-sided pool fencing could prevent seven out of 10 drowning accidents in children under five years old. Drowning is the second leading cause of injury-related death in children between the ages of one and four in Canada.

For more information, please view the [staff report](#).

### ***York Region to improve efficiency of Material Recovery Facility***

York Regional Council has approved \$1,295,000 to increase the efficiency and capacity of the Waste Management Centre's Material Recovery facility.

The funds will be used to make upgrades to the existing technology as well as phase in a third employee shift to manage increased volumes of recyclables. By making the Material Recovery Facility more efficient, the Region expects to see an increase of materials diverted from landfills, resulting in increased provincial funding for recycling efforts.

### ***Alternative Blue Box container study continues***

York Regional Council today received the findings of a two-month alternative Blue Box container study conducted in Township of King and the Town of Richmond Hill, which examined ways to increase the volume of Blue Box recyclables while reducing neighbourhood litter from open and overfilled recycling bins.

Over the months of February and March 2008, residents tested a large, reusable, wheeled container with a lid as a recycling bin, and then tested clear blue plastic bags.

Study results showed that less than three per cent of the reusable containers had litter beside or near them and no litter was found near any of the clear blue bags.

Other study data concluded that 65 per cent of residents in both King and Richmond Hill preferred the reusable container, while collection staff preferred the clear plastic bag. Roughly half of all study participants reported a noticeable decrease in recycling related neighbourhood litter.

### ***Proposed sites for power generation***

York Regional Council reconfirmed the following principles to apply to a peaking power plant or any new electric power facilities that may be required in York Region:

- The legislative and regulatory authority for provision of electricity to York Region consumers rests with the Province and the local distribution companies
- The Ministry of the Environment must ensure proper environmental assessments are carried out to meet the highest standards set by the Ministry of the Environment for such facilities, and take into consideration, among other things:
  - Environmental, social and economic impacts on existing and future residential communities
  - Detailed analyses in respect to the Provincial Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan, if applicable
  - Visual impact and assessment of the potential economic impact on affected homeowners

Staff from York Region will prepare a further report for presentation to a future Planning and Development Committee meeting in autumn 2008 that provides an update on applications received. In addition, staff will be asked to report on the issue of exporting power to the United States and the health and environmental risks related to air emissions from electric power generation

### ***Planning for Tomorrow 2031 forecast and land budget***

To meet growth requirements over the next 25 years, staff from York Region will propose a series of Regional Official Plan amendments to expand urban boundaries and designate additional lands to meet forecasted needs by 2031. Currently, there is an available region-wide employment land supply to meet growth for the next 8.5 years.

### ***York Region holds public consultations on preferred growth scenario***

The Regional Municipality of York is holding a third and final phase of consultations for *Planning for Tomorrow*, York Region's growth management initiative, September 17<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>. A series of five open houses are being held to review a preferred growth scenario of 40 per cent intensification that was endorsed by York Regional Council in May as the basis for the Region's growth management plan to 2031.

The provincial growth plan forecasts York Region's population to reach 1.5 million people by 2031, an increase of approximately 577,000 people.

To successfully implement the provincial growth plan, York Region must add 336,000 jobs for a total of approximately 800,000 jobs by 2031. In addition, York Region must add 234,000 households to our current stock of 276,000 households.

The findings from the Phase 3 *Planning for Tomorrow* open houses will be reported as part of the Region's growth management review in late 2008 and be used to assist infrastructure planning.

### ***Economic and Development Review – Mid Year 2008***

The Economic and Development Review – Mid-Year 2008 is now available, providing local municipal economic development and planning officials with highlights of York Region's economy.

Some highlights include:

- In the first half of 2008, York Region's population grew by 14,500 people to reach 997,600.
- The Region's unemployment rate in June 2008 was estimated at 5.8 per cent, lower than the GTA, provincial and national unemployment rates.
- With 4,669 permits, York Region was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> across Canada for the number of new residential units with permits issued during the first half of 2008.
- The Region's total estimated value of construction totalled \$1.5 billion by mid-year 2008, while ICI construction accounted for \$439 million.
- By mid-year 2008, there were 3,389 of housing starts and 4,764 housing completions.

For a full analysis, please view the [report online](#).

### ***York Region to add 166 fee-assisted child care spaces***

The Government of Ontario has increased Best Start funding to York Region effective April 1, 2008.

This program funding of \$1.6 million will increase the number of child care fee assisted spaces by 166, from 3,043 to 3,209.

### ***York Region accepted for a Local Immigration Partnership***

The federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada has appointed The Regional Municipality York to lead the development of a York Region settlement strategy.

Immigrants accounted for approximately 60 per cent of York Region's growth between 2001 and 2006. As of 2006 there were approximately 46,000 York Region residents who had immigrated to Canada within the last five years. This proportion is expected to increase.

A local settlement strategy will help new residents succeed at integrating both socially and economically.

York Region will work collaboratively with key community stakeholders to establish a "made in York Region" settlement strategy that is reflective of the unique needs of the Region and secure funding for settlement services.

Development of the strategy will be funded through the federal government's Local Immigration Partnerships initiative.

### ***York Regional Council approves \$2.9 million expansion of the Community Development and Investment Fund***

York Regional Council today approved the expansion of the Community Development and Investment Fund (CDIF) to enable The Regional Municipality of York to purchase important community services.

York Region will continue to purchase services through CDIF that provide results in one year. In addition, York Region will now fund core services for up to three years. The expansion will enable agencies to receive assistance with technical equipment, professional development and sustainability strategies.

The program enhancements are already included in the Region's operating budget. In 2008, York Regional Council approved budget enhancements totalling \$2.9 million for CDIF.

To be eligible for CDIF funding, community service agencies must address one or more of three priority areas:

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

Community service agencies interested in submitting a proposal to receive CDIF funding in 2009 should obtain a Purchase of Service Request (PSR-08-01) package that contains further information. The package is available online at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca) (click on the CDIF Purchase of Service banner), or by visiting the York Region Administrative Centre, Supplies and Services Branch, 1st Floor, located at 17250 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket.

An information session on the Purchase of Service Request package will be held on Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1:30 p.m. in the Seminar Room at the York Region Administrative Centre.

This Purchase of Service closes Thursday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1 p.m.

***“What if York Region were a village of 100 people?”***

The Regional Municipality of York, in partnership with the York Region Consortium, has prepared a brochure entitled, “What If York Region Were a Village of Just 100 People?”

This is the first in a series of six fact sheets that have been prepared to communicate the facts surrounding York Region’s diversifying and changing population.

The information will help York Region’s municipalities, community agencies and the business community to understand and assess community needs and improve services.

For a breakdown of the facts, please [view the brochure](#).

***Next meeting of York Regional Council***

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at the York Region Administrative Centre Council Chambers, located at 17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket.

- 30 -

***Council Highlights compiled by:***

*Michael Kemp, Corporate Communications, York Region  
Phone: 905 830-4444, ext. 1232 or Cell 905 251-6419  
Email: [michael.kemp@york.ca](mailto:michael.kemp@york.ca)*