



September 2006

# York Regional Council Highlights



The Regional Municipality of York



## **York Region authorizes \$1 million towards purchase of property in Township of King**

York Regional Council today authorized the contribution of \$1 million towards the acquisition of the Slokker property in the King Township community of Nobleton.

York Region increased its initial contribution of \$750,000 towards the acquisition in 2004, with a further \$250,000. The contribution is contingent upon the Region managing a 38-hectare (95 acres) plateau (tableland) of the overall 69-hectare (170 acres) property as part of the York Regional Forest.

The Slokker property purchase was arranged by the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust (ORMLT) and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) in 2003, contingent upon their ability to raise \$2.85 million for the sale, stewardship of the property and associated costs of the transaction.

York Region originally authorized \$750,000 for the purchase of the property, but increased its commitment to \$1 million when some anticipated funding did not come through. The funding partnership includes: the Regional Municipality of York (\$1 million), the City of Toronto (\$1 million), Slokker Canada (\$760,000 in price reduction on property), the Foundation of Greater Toronto (\$37,000), the Township of King (\$25,000), the ORMLT (\$25,000) and private donations (\$3,000).

The TRCA will assume ownership of the property, ensuring its protection from development. York Region will aid in the rehabilitation of the property to help restore it to its natural state.

To date, York Region and our partner organizations have secured 235 hectares (580 acres) of environmentally-significant land for rehabilitation and protection from development as part of a goal to increase Regional forest coverage to 25 per cent.

## **York Regional Council acknowledges generous contribution of property by Dunlap and Rogers families**

York Regional Council today recognized the generous donation of Peggy's Woodland, a 22 hectare (54 acre) property donated by the Dunlap and Rogers families in the Towns of East Gwillimbury and Newmarket.

Peggy's Woodland lies in close proximity to existing natural heritage lands that are protected from development by East Gwillimbury and Newmarket. The addition of Peggy's Woodland will create a natural north-south corridor of heritage land for protection and use by the public.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is currently holding the property. Arrangements are underway to transfer ownership to York Region, as per the terms of the Natural Greenlands Conservancy Joint Venture agreement between NCC and the Region.

York Region is presently in discussions with the Towns of East Gwillimbury and Newmarket to arrange long-term protection and management of the site.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **York Region recognized for best practices in urban transit service expansion**

The Ontario Centre for Municipal Best Practices (OCMBP) has recognized York Region for best practices in the category of "Urban Transit - Service Expansion" in their October 2005 Best Practice Summary Report.

OCMBP explains that York Region is an excellent example of how service amalgamation, increased service levels and strategic investment can provide the opportunity for significant ridership gains over a period of time.

OCMBP was formed in 2002 as a partnership between the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The Centre's mandate is to identify the most efficient and effective practices among Ontario's municipalities and to prepare reports offering guidance and advice to municipal service practitioners interested in evaluating new ways to deliver their services to the public.

## **York Region reports on successful Hazardous Waste Campaign**

In the spring of 2006, York Region launched a successful Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) campaign aimed at educating residents about the dangers of HHW, the importance of disposing of them correctly and the locations in York Region that accept such items.

HHW consists of commonly used household products that are flammable, corrosive, poisonous and/or explosive, including all-purpose cleaner, motor oil, batteries, medications and nail polish remover. HHW can be very hazardous to human and animal health if products are stored inappropriately and dangerous to the environment if discarded improperly.

The campaign was in partnership with local paint stores, real estate agencies and the Welcome Wagon program. Promotional products involved newspaper advertisements, a brochure, paint can tags, exterior bus advertisements, an article in York Works (York Region's semi-annual Transportation and Works newsletter) and special events.

As a result of the campaign, the HHW depots in York Region experienced a 12-per cent increase in traffic from April to June 2006 compared to the same period in 2005. HHW tonnage collected this spring was 574 tonnes, an increase of 105 tonnes of HHW over the same period of time in 2005.

## **York Region announces support for Bill 124**

York Regional Council today announced its support for the proposed *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006* (Bill 124). The Bill will benefit the local economy by using the resources of newcomers more effectively.

## **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**

York Regional Council is recognizing the United Nations International Day to Eliminate Poverty on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

The Poverty Action for Change Coalition (PACC) of York Region is planning a rally to commemorate the day and raise community awareness of poverty and income security issues facing economically-marginalized residents.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## YRT and Viva Ridership climbs 10.8 per cent in 2006

York Region Transit (YRT) and Viva Rapid Transit continue to enjoy significant ridership gains with an increase of 10.8 per cent in revenue ridership through the end of July. More than 936,000 additional YRT/Viva fares were purchased this year compared to 2005.

More than 9.6 million revenue riders have used YRT/Viva this year (January to July) compared to 8.6 million revenue riders for the same time period in 2005.

While ridership for July 2006 stands at over 1.2 million passengers, based on revenue ridership, total boarding numbers are much higher. The total boardings include revenue riders, transfers and individuals boarding the bus multiple times while utilizing the Region's 2-hour *Hop on-Hop off* policy. Total boardings for July 2006 surpassed 1.7 million and year-to-date over 12.8 million.

The following table illustrates Revenue Ridership and Total Boardings statistics for 2006, in comparison to 2005.

	Revenue Ridership			Total Boardings		
	2005	2006	% Change	2005	2006	% Change
<b>January</b>	1,229,281	1,387,864	12.9%	1,378,436	1,827,585	32.6%
<b>February</b>	1,195,652	1,316,781	10.1%	1,342,944	1,733,172	29.1%
<b>March</b>	1,350,844	1,495,804	10.7%	1,506,102	1,987,658	32.0%
<b>April</b>	1,239,809	1,287,272	3.8%	1,405,529	1,726,475	22.8%
<b>May</b>	1,237,569	1,385,761	12.0%	1,410,368	1,858,842	31.8%
<b>June</b>	1,316,928	1,481,381	12.5%	1,464,126	2,000,324	36.6%
<b>July</b>	1,106,482	1,258,373	13.7%	1,264,697	1,762,736	39.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,676,565</b>	<b>9,613,236</b>	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>9,772,202</b>	<b>12,896,792</b>	<b>32.0%</b>

## Child Care Worker and Early Child Educator Appreciation Day

York Regional Council is recognizing Child Care Worker and Early Child Educator Appreciation Day on October 25<sup>th</sup>.

Sponsored by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), the day recognizes the influence, dedication and commitment of child care workers to children, their families and the quality of life of the community.

## National Biotech Week: IMAGENEATION September 23-30, 2006

Regional Council today recognized September 23-30, 2006 as *National Biotech Week: IMAGENEATION*. York Region recognizes the importance of biotechnology as a creator of wealth and employment and in contributing to a healthier tomorrow for the community.

York Region is committed to encouraging the development and nurturing of the biotechnology sector together with the three YORKbiotech founding partners, including York University, the National Research Council/Industrial Research Assistance Program and the Town of Markham.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **2006 Business Plan and Budget Mid-Year Progress Report**

York Regional Council approved the 2006 Business Plan and Budget Mid-Year Progress Report. The Report provides a comprehensive status review of the resources used to complete service objectives identified in the 2006 Business Plan and Budget.

As of June 30<sup>th</sup>, total net expenditures for Regional operations are 91 per cent on target, for a \$2.3 million surplus.

Year-end projections indicate that total net expenditures will be \$616 million or 101 per cent of budget resulting from extraordinary items of \$11.4 million for GTA Pooling and Insurance, for a forecast deficit of \$7.9 million.

The financial projections and program highlights contained within the 2006 Mid-Year Progress Report will provide the foundation for the Region's 2007 Business Planning and Budget process.

## **Highways 50 and 427 extensions studied and principles approved**

York Regional Council adopted a set of guiding principles for transportation planning and environmental assessment studies in the York/Peel boundary area.

Council agreed to ask the Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of the Environment to expedite the environmental assessment process and construction for the northerly extension of Highway 427 to at least Major Mackenzie Drive, or beyond in the vicinity of Mayfield Road.

## **Work on Places to Grow continues**

Regional staff will continue consultation and discussions with area municipalities, the Province and other stakeholders on implementation of Places to Grow, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, including proposed modifications to the boundary established by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, when it becomes available.

The ongoing work includes establishing population and employment forecasts, intensification expectations and anticipated municipal obligations that need to be achieved within the context of the plan.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **York Regional Council approves cost share arrangement with City of Toronto for subway extension**

The University-Spadina Subway extension to the City of Vaughan Corporate Centre in the Regional Municipality of York passed a major milestone today with York Regional Council approving a 60:40 (Toronto:York Region) capital cost share arrangement between the Region and the City of Toronto.

The total York Region/City of Toronto portion represents one-third of the estimated \$2.1 billion capital cost. One third will come from the Ontario Government and the remaining third is expected to be matched by the federal government.

The Ontario Government announced in March 2006 that it would cost share the extension of the University-Spadina subway line to the Vaughan Corporate Centre under the *Move Ontario Trust*.

Highlights of the agreement include:

- York Region pays everything north of Steeles Avenue – tunnel construction and surface infrastructure such as bus bays and parking (representing 40 per cent of the total capital costs)
- The City of Toronto pays everything south of Steeles Avenue – tunnel construction and surface infrastructure such as bus bays and parking (representing 60 per cent of the total capital costs)
- Costs for trans-boundary infrastructure at Steeles Avenue will be equally shared between York Region and the City of Toronto (representing 50:50)
- Costs for subway cars and associated infrastructure, such as yard storage, will be shared at 60:40 (Toronto:York)
- All property costs, such as subway stations, become the responsibility of the individual municipality (estimated at \$50 million for York Region)
- Recognition of other existing TTC subway system assets that will benefit York Region represent a one-time cost to York Region of \$29.98 million

The University-Spadina subway line currently terminates at Downsview Station (located at Sheppard Avenue West and Dufferin Street) in Toronto. Approximately six kilometres of track tunnel will be in Toronto, while approximately three kilometres of track tunnel will be within York Region.

## **Public engagement regarding the Region's Growth Management Initiative**

York Regional Council received an update on the first phase of public engagement and discussions regarding the Region's Growth Management Initiative that took place this past spring and summer.

Further technical work is underway to support future growth scenarios and area municipalities are being consulted on the distribution of forecasted population and employment.

Additional work, including growth scenarios, will be brought to Council for consideration early in 2007.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **York Regional Council acknowledges two awards for innovation and sustainability**

York Region was presented with the Peter J. Marshall Municipal Innovation Award from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) for combining sound planning with new technology on its Viva Rapid Transit system, in an effort to manage future growth and promote better traffic flow.

The Peter J. Marshall Municipal Innovation Award recognizes municipal governments that demonstrate excellence through innovative improvements to capital and/or operating efficiency, and effectiveness through alternative service delivery initiatives and partnerships.

York Region was also presented the Transportation Association of Canada's (TAC) Sustainable Urban Transportation Award for Viva.

The annual TAC award recognizes exemplary contributions by association members in the area of sustainable urban transportation. TAC recognized Viva for meeting the challenge of communicating to diverse stakeholder groups and launching a transit model that can be adopted by other municipalities.

## **Watershed plans for moraine lands are on track for completion by spring 2007**

York Regional Council received a semi-annual progress report on watershed planning studies from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA).

Council approved the ongoing work of regional staff with conservation authority staff to ensure the timely and cost-efficient delivery of the watershed plans required under the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) by April 22, 2007.

Conservation authorities and regional staff are working together to provide a comprehensive five-year work plan to fulfill the requirements of the ORMCP. Conservation authorities have historically undertaken watershed plans and are undertaking updates to existing watershed plans and new plans to the higher ORMCP standards. The work is on time and on-budget for completion within the Province's timeframe.

## **York Region participates in 2006 Transportation Tomorrow Survey to keep on top of trends in residents' travel patterns**

The Regional Municipality of York is one of 20 regional, county and local municipal governments across south-central Ontario participating in the 2006 Transportation Tomorrow Survey. The survey will engage more than 140,000 households from St. Catharines to Barrie and Peterborough and assist planners to understand and meet the future transportation needs of residents.

During the next four months, approximately 15,000 randomly-selected York Region households will be contacted by professional telephone interviewers and asked about their recent travel choices and preferences. This will represent a sample completion rate of five per cent of York Region households.

More information can be found at the Transportation Tomorrow Survey Web site: [www.transportationtomorrow.on.ca](http://www.transportationtomorrow.on.ca)

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **York Region develops response to the recommended growth option of the Intergovernmental Action Plan for Simcoe, Barrie and Orillia**

York Regional Council received a report outlining the concerns that York Region has pertaining to the Recommended Growth Option of the Intergovernmental Action Plan study for Simcoe, Barrie and Orillia that was released in July.

York Region has a vested interest in Lake Simcoe. Protecting Lake Simcoe water quality and carefully managing growth in the Lake Simcoe watershed will contribute significantly to sustaining the future quality of life for York Region residents who live on or near the lake. York Region has invested approximately \$2.5 million over the past five years in the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy.

Council and Regional staff will continue to participate in discussions and seek solutions to the Region's concerns. The Region has already made the case that in keeping with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, development in Simcoe County should undergo the same formal, comprehensive reviews and processes that are in place across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which include all of the elements found in the Greenbelt Plan. York Region has asked the province to prevent "leap-frogging" of development north of the Greenbelt Plan into Simcoe County.

## **Regional Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines approved**

York Regional Council endorsed the final version of the Regional Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines. These guidelines are designed to make the Region more pedestrian-focused through a variety of initiatives, including getting people out of cars and onto transit and alternative modes of transportation such as car pooling, creating better streetscapes for cyclists and walkers and strengthening linkages between residential areas and commercial centres.

The guidelines outline planning and design concepts that will shape the community in a way that meets the needs of existing and potential transit riders to generate a more frequent and, ultimately, higher quality transit service.

The Region's planned urban structure calls for regional centres linked by regional corridors and served by rapid transit. The guidelines are consistent with provincial, regional and local policies and programs that prioritize public transit and the creation of complete, compact and well-designed communities.

## **Best Start Strategy modified as a result of funding reduction**

York Regional Council directed staff to modify the implementation of the Best Start Strategy to provide services consistent with the revised funding from the provincial and federal governments.

The Child Care Best Start Strategy, which initially provided \$67.1 million at 100 per cent provincial funding over three years, has been reduced to \$39.9 million over four years to York Region.

This reduction in the provincial funding approval will result in a reduction in the service targets in child care services, for children from birth to five years of age, which were proposed in the Child Care Service Plan and approved by Council in September 2005. It also reduces the opportunity to address long standing wait lists and service issues in child care.

# York Regional Council

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### **Population growth, construction activity, employment point to York Region's continuing economic strength**

York Regional Council today received the *Economic and Development Review Mid-Year 2006* and approved its distribution to stakeholders, including area municipalities, Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, libraries and the public via a print version. It is also available online via the Region's Web site at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

The Review is a semi-annual document that reports and analyzes several key economic and demographic indicators for York Region. Highlights include:

- As of June 30<sup>th</sup>, York Region was home to 933,400 people, an increase of 15,000 people since December 31, 2005. Viewed as attractive place to settle, York Region continues to expand at a relatively rapid pace. Over the last five years, York Region has grown by approximately 35,000 people per year and is forecasted to be over 1 million people by the end of 2008.
- York Region's unemployment rate in June 2006 was estimated at 5.3 per cent, approximately one per cent lower than the GTA rate of 6.3 per cent.
- There were 5,162 building permits issued for new residential units in York Region during the first half of 2006, the largest in the GTA after Toronto, representing a 12.6 per cent increase over the first half of 2005.
- House prices from January to June were up 5.7 per cent over the same period last year.
- The Region's total estimated construction value for the first six months of 2006 was \$1.47 billion, 20.6 per cent higher than the same timeframe in 2005.
- The value of industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) construction increased by 16.7 per cent.

### **\$237,434 in Provincial Rent Bank Program funding allocated to homelessness prevention**

York Regional Council approved the allocation of additional Provincial Rent Bank Program funding of \$237,434 from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to the Northridge Community Church of the Salvation Army and the Employment and Financial Support Branch of the Community Service and Housing Department to carry on the current delivery model of homelessness prevention.

This funding will supplement programs currently in place and enables York Region to continue to serve its most vulnerable residents by providing financial assistance to prevent evictions due to rental arrears and unforeseen medical emergencies or temporary loss of employment.

### **York Region to pursue a housing development opportunity at the Vaughan Civic Centre Campus**

York Regional Council approved a proposal to seek a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Vaughan to develop and build up to 85 affordable rental housing apartments in the Vaughan Civic Centre Campus.

Council also directed staff to proceed with issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a project architect to proceed with the design and development of this project and establish an interim funding mechanism.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **New Residential Tenancies Act impacts York Region**

York Regional Council received a report highlighting changes under the new *Residential Tenancies Act (RTA)* that received Royal Assent on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The new law, which repeals and replaces the *Tenant Protection Act, 1997*, will come into effect when it is proclaimed in early 2007. However, some transitional rules will be put in place prior to proclamation.

The report summarizes how legislation will change the operating practices of social housing providers and impact the Regional Municipality of York as a service manager and landlord.

Council authorized the Regional Clerk to forward the report to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and request that the Province adequately resource the Landlord and Tenant Board in order to achieve the intent of the legislation.

The new RTA is an overall positive step in the relationship between landlords and tenants. York Region, as a service manager, will benefit from new exemptions for social housing providers and a new eviction process for tenants that cause excessive or wilful damage.

The relationship between social housing and the rights of the tenant is a difficult balancing act. Some amendments, such as the removal of the eviction default process, will make certain processes for housing providers more complex and lengthy.

York Region will provide support to its housing providers in terms of program guidelines and training once the new legislation comes into effect and the relevant regulations are announced.

## **Housing York Inc. energy management strategy gets the green light**

York Regional Council approved a Housing York Inc. (HYI) proposal to borrow funds from the Social Housing Services Corporation's (SHSC) Green Light Loan Program to fund energy efficiency retrofits at two HYI buildings.

SHSC recently announced a comprehensive approach to energy management planning and funding for non-profit and co-operative housing corporations. SHSC approached a number of energy manager stakeholders, including the Ontario Power Authority (OPA), Natural Resources Canada (NRC), Enbridge Gas, and Hydro One, and has bundled various energy efficiency initiatives and programs into a one-stop shopping facility.

HYI's energy management strategy calls for energy efficiency retrofits at Founders Place (540 Timothy Street in the Town of Newmarket) and Elmwood Gardens (325 Elm Street in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville).

Council agreed that the Region would provide a necessary guarantee to support loans for these two pilot projects that are not to exceed \$110,000 in total. In addition, Council authorized the Region to provide loan guarantees not to exceed \$1 million for energy efficiency work to be performed at other Housing York Inc. (HYI) projects.

Implementation of a comprehensive energy management strategy is a priority for Housing York Inc. (HYI) and resources have been set aside to launch that work. The plan is to take advantage of funding and loan opportunities in order to stretch HYI's limited resources and make the most impact on the management of energy consumption. The Green Light Loan Program from SHSC provides such an opportunity and is complimentary to HYI's objectives.

# York Regional Council Highlights

## **Dental care for seniors reviewed**

York Regional Council received a report on the dental health of seniors and on the dental needs of seniors in York Region and Ontario.

The clinical needs of elderly are high and the need for organized oral healthcare for seniors is clearly evident. The provincial Mandatory Health Program and Services Guidelines are currently under revision. York Region's Health Services Department would support the reinstatement of a preventive dental program for seniors and the development of a dental treatment program for seniors in financial need, should it be funded 100 per cent by the provincial government.

## **Next Regional Council meeting**

The next meeting of York Regional Council will take place on Thursday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. in the Council Chambers of the York Region Administrative Centre, located at 17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket.

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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 Web site at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca) under Regional Government.