



Thursday, October 22, 2009

For Immediate Release

## York Regional Council – October 22, 2009

### ***The December meeting of York Regional Council will be held on Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>***

York Regional Council will hold its meeting in December one day earlier than originally scheduled as the Region welcomes the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games Torch as it is carried through York Region.

The December meeting of Regional Council will be held on Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, at 9:30 a.m. at the York Region Administrative Centre Council Chambers, located at 17250 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket.

### ***Lupus Awareness Month raises awareness of Lupus, a serious but little-known disease***

York Regional Council recognized October as Lupus Awareness Month in support of the Lupus Foundation of Ontario, an organization that raises awareness of systemic Lupus and provides information to individuals and parents of young children and adolescents who have been diagnosed with the disease.

### ***United Way of York Region Update***

United Way of York Region CEO Daniele Zanotti provided Regional Council with an update of the 2009 campaign to date. He thanked York Region staff for their efforts in raising more than \$240,000 so far as part of the employee campaign, which wraps up on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Memorandum of Understanding approved for capital funding of hospitals***

York Regional Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide capital funding for York Region's hospitals – the future Vaughan Campus of Care in the City of Vaughan, York Central Hospital in the Town of Richmond Hill, Southlake Regional Health Centre in the Town of Newmarket and Markham Stouffville Hospital in the Town of Markham.

The funding will help the Region's hospitals meet the needs of a growing population. The MOU includes the following measures:

- York Region will provide \$12 million annually to its hospitals for eligible capital construction costs from 2010 to 2031
- Funding is subject to each hospital making improvements in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) offload times, which is the time it takes for hospitals to assume care of patients transported by ambulance and allow the ambulance to return to service
- The hospitals agree to support York Region's request that the Ontario Government restore Development Charges (one-time fees charged to the development industry) for hospital capital funding
- York Region reserves the right to adjust its funding with one year's notice in response to changes such as funding becoming available to the hospitals from other sources and amendments to the *Development Charges Act* restoring hospital capital funding

### ***Viva to add new vehicles to its fleet***

York Regional Council today approved the purchase of 15 new Viva rapid transit vehicles from Nova Bus, a division of Volvo Group Canada Inc. The 18.2-metre buses will be added to the existing fleet of 101 Viva buses. By 2014, the Region will add a total of 51 new Viva vehicles, expanding the Viva system to accommodate ridership growth and increased travel demands.

The cost of the 15 new buses will be approximately \$14 million, which will be funded equally by The Regional Municipality of York and the Government of Canada. They will arrive next year.

### ***York Regional Council approves municipal pedestrian and cycling project funding in 2010***

York Region will provide \$135,200 to the Town of East Gwillimbury and \$150,260 to the City of Vaughan for 2010 projects under the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program.

The Town of East Gwillimbury will use the funds to upgrade a portion of the Nokiidaa Trail from Green Lane to 2nd Concession. Once a short section in Aurora is completed, the Nokiidaa Trail will be a continuous path from the Holland River in East Gwillimbury through the Town of Newmarket to the southern part of the Town of Aurora.

The City of Vaughan will use the funds to create a trail between Jane Street and Keele Street and to put signs on local cycling routes. The project will enable cyclists and pedestrians to travel easily between numerous community centres, schools, shopping centres, York Region Transit stops and GO stations.

These projects help implement York Region's 2008 Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan. The plan promotes alternate forms of travel, such as combining walking and cycling with public transit to help the Region reach sustainable transportation objectives.

### ***Economic and Development Review Mid-Year 2009 highlights Region's strengths***

The Regional Municipality of York today released its *Economic and Development Review Mid-Year 2009*, which provides information on regional development activity as well as economic and demographic trends.

The review is a semi-annual report and analysis of several key economic and demographic indicators for York Region. Highlights include:

- York Region's unemployment rate of 8.8 per cent was lower than the Provincial and Greater Toronto Area (GTA) rates of 9.4 and 9.8 per cent respectively and slightly higher than the Canadian rate of 8.4 per cent
- York Region's estimated value of construction totalled \$1.02 billion by mid-year 2009, the fourth highest in Canada
- York Region's building permits issued during the first half of 2009 totalled 2,379, the fifth highest across Canada
- Despite a very slow start in the first quarter, 2009 remains among the top recorded years in residential resales (7,876 worth \$3.37 billion) due to an increase in second quarter sales.

To obtain copies of the *Economic and Development Review Mid-Year 2009*, please call York Region's Planning and Development Services Department at 905 895-1231, ext. 1550 or toll-free at 1 877 464-9675, or email [strategicplanning@york.ca](mailto:strategicplanning@york.ca) An online version is available at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca) under publications.

### ***York Region plans 2010 tourism marketing and development***

In partnership with the tourism industry, York Region will deliver a range of marketing and promotional initiatives throughout 2010 with the goal of attracting more visitors to the Region and encouraging tourism industry stakeholders to work together to develop new products, tour packages and visitor services.

Initiatives will include a direct mail campaign to residents, promotions at Toronto's Union Station and Viva Bus Terminals, a travel showcase at the York Region Administrative Centre, a media tour and a one-week York Region Tourism Week promotion to celebrate all that York Region has to offer visitors.

In addition to the 2010 Tourism Marketing Program, York Regional Council approved two new initiatives, including the York Region Tourism Industry Partnership Development Program and the Long Term Tourism Destination Development Strategy 2009-2019.

This strategy will be released to the tourism industry at the Annual Tourism Industry Conference on November 10<sup>th</sup> at the Tuscany Event Centre, 222 Edward Street in the Town of Aurora.

### ***York Region to expand waste electrical and electronics recycling***

York Region will expand the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Program offered by the Ontario Electronic Stewardship, a not-for-profit organization formed by retail, information technology and consumer electronic companies to manage electrical and electronic equipment waste under Ontario's *Waste Diversion Act*.

Implemented in April, the first phase outlined the approved types of electronic waste that could be recycled at York Region depots, including desktop computers, portable computers, computer peripherals, monitors, televisions and printing devices.

Commencing April 1, 2010, the second phase will expand the types of materials that can be recycled at York Region depots to include modems, copiers, scanners, typewriters, telephones and accessories, cellular phones, PDAs and pagers, audio and video players, cameras, equalizers, amplifiers, radios, receivers, speakers, tuners, turntables, video players/projectors, video recorders and personal hand held computers.

All materials are currently accepted for drop-off at all York Region depots, including the McCleary Court community Environmental Centre in Vaughan. Lists of retailers accepting electronic waste returns can be found at [www.dowhatyoucan.ca](http://www.dowhatyoucan.ca)

York Region began electronics recycling for residents in 2001 and to date, more than 2,500 tonnes of e-waste material has been diverted from landfill.

### ***York Region to implement additional \$1 million Ontario Works services for vulnerable people***

York Regional Council approved a plan to implement the new Ontario Works Enhanced Employment Services for Vulnerable Persons initiative. This initiative will enable York Region to provide enhanced services to support the needs of vulnerable social assistance recipients who have limited experience in the labour force and who have multiple barriers to employment.

The program is funded by the Government of Ontario, which will provide \$532,000 annually for two years.

### ***York Regional Council supports source water protection***

York Regional Council endorsed staff comments pertaining to implementation of the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. Staff will advocate for more funding needed to implement source water protection measures. Quarterly meetings will be held with local municipalities to share information as source protection plans are developed over the coming years.

### ***York Region provides input to Ontario's long-term affordable housing strategy***

York Regional Council endorsed a detailed staff response to the Province of Ontario's consultation on its long-term affordable housing strategy that will guide social housing policy over the next 10 years.

As the Service Manager for housing and homelessness programs, the Community and Health Services Department identified key priorities for the provincial strategy to support regional government in improving housing for low and moderate income households in York Region.

The final strategy is slated for release in the spring of 2010.

### ***York Region to partner with Habitat for Humanity York Region to deliver Canada-Ontario affordable housing program***

The Regional Municipality of York will partner with Habitat for Humanity York Region (HFHYR) to deliver the Affordable Homeownership Component of the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program.

HFHYR will be responsible for promoting the program, accepting applications, determining eligibility, client education and ongoing support and monitoring of the homeowners. York Region will maintain responsibility for the loans, legal agreements, allocation of funds and reporting to the Province on an annual basis.

The program will provide \$50,000 in funding for as many as six families in York Region to be used towards a down payment on the purchase of their first home.

### ***York Region partners with TRCA and Town of Richmond Hill to protect 16-hectare property in ecological corridor***

York Regional Council has committed up to \$470,000 from the Greening Land Securement Reserve to partner with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Town of Richmond Hill to acquire and preserve a 16-hectare (40-acre) property near Bathurst Street and Bayview Avenue in the Town of Richmond Hill.

Title for the property will belong to the TRCA, which has partnered with the Region and the Town to acquire, protect and enhance a number of significant properties in the area since 2001, including the Jefferson Forest, Bayview Oakridges Estates and Swan Lake. These properties form a natural ecological corridor within a core area of the environmentally-significant Oak Ridges Moraine.

The Region's commitment, which represents a third of the overall cost, is contingent upon successful fundraising by TRCA and approval by Richmond Hill Council.

### ***2009 York Region Transportation Fact Book***

York Regional Council received for information the 2009 York Region Transportation Fact Book, which highlights the major elements of York Region's extensive transportation system, including the road network, public transit and other sustainable modes of transportation such as walking, cycling and carpooling.

In addition to providing a comprehensive transportation overview, the third edition of the Transportation Fact Book acts as a central repository of statistics and facts that serve as helpful planning tools for the changing infrastructure needs of our growing communities.

### ***York Region to conduct public consultations for changing Highway 7 to Avenue 7***

York Regional Council has approved a series of three public consultation meetings later this year to discuss the renaming of Highway 7 to Avenue 7. Regional Council has proposed the name change to better reflect the role that the road will play as an integral link to several corporate centres and as a Viva rapidway.

The consultations, including an online component, will focus on the needs of affected residents, businesses and other stakeholders and may also include relevant information concerning other municipal and transit initiatives taking place in the community.

A report will be presented to York Regional Council after the consultations, outlining comments from participants and detailing the notification process for the name change.

### ***York Region enters new supply agreement for road salt as part of winter maintenance program***

York Region has entered into a three-year contract with Sifto Canada to provide road salt as part of the Region's winter maintenance program. The new contract contains provisions to cover a potential salt supply shortfall, which has occurred across North America over the past two years, following greater than average snowfall.

York Region's approved \$3.5 million salt purchase budget for 2009 includes an estimated quantity of 48,000 tonnes of road salt required for the Region's arterial road system.

Operational efficiencies implemented by staff from the Region's Transportation Services department over the past few years, including GPS tracking of salt trucks and the use of salt-brine solution as a salt substitute, have decreased reliance on road salt. However, with an expanding road system, it is anticipated that York Region's road salt needs will continue to increase in the coming years.

### ***York Regional Council supports amendments to the proposed Lake Simcoe Protection Plan***

York Regional Council endorsed a report outlining the implications of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan and a proposal to apply for a grant to aid in the development of a York Region corporate phosphorus management strategy.

The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan focuses on stringent controls for water pollution control plants, stormwater management, septic systems and construction activities, yet excludes opportunities for phosphorus reduction at a lower cost. York Region is advocating that phosphorous reduction must be pursued through a variety of means.

Costs to reduce phosphorous at the Water Pollution Control Plants are disproportionate to the environmental benefits. York Region will advocate for funds to be directed toward more tangible ways of improving the health of Lake Simcoe.

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

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at the York Region Administrative Centre Council Chambers, located at 17250 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket.

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### ***Council Highlights compiled by:***

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