



Friday, January 23, 2009

For Immediate Release

## **York Regional Council – January 22, 2009**

### ***York Region diversion ranks No. 1 among large Ontario municipalities***

A report released by Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO) this month ranks The Regional Municipality of York's 2007 diversion rate of 45.7 per cent as No. 1 among large Ontario municipalities. York Region's leadership in diversion is a result of the commitment of York Region residents following the continued investment of York Regional Council.

The 2007 diversion rate of 45.7 per cent marks a significant increase from the rate of 40 per cent in 2006. Increased diversion opportunity became available following region-wide implementation of the Green Bin program in 2007. York Region diverted 152,611 tonnes of waste from landfill through Green Bin, Blue Box and other diversion programs in 2007. An estimated 169,706 tonnes was diverted in 2008.

WDO diversion rates represent the amount of waste diverted after the removal of unacceptable residue. Large Ontario municipalities account for more than 48 per cent of Ontario's total population. York Region's overall ranking for 2007 is 17th from a total of 206 municipalities, an increase from 50th out of 201 municipalities in 2006.

York Region aims to achieve a 59 per cent WDO diversion rate in 2009. Considering energy recovery diversion methods such as Dongara, York Region will divert approximately 85 per cent of waste from landfill in 2009.

### ***York Region purchases forested property in Whitchurch-Stouffville***

York Regional Council has approved the purchase of a forested 29-hectare (71-acre) property in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville to protect it from future development.

The property is on the Oak Ridges Moraine and contains ecologically-sensitive areas, including a portion of Mount Albert Creek that is habitat for several species, including the at-risk Jefferson Salamander, Least Bittern and Red Shouldered Hawk.

The property lies adjacent to the North Tract of the York Regional Forest and near the Bendor and Graves Tract. York Region intends to add the property to the York Regional Forest and join the three tracts with a nature trail for residents.

The property was purchased at a reduced price of \$360,000, which includes an \$80,000 contribution from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation. Funds from the Region will come from the Greenlands Property Securement Reserve of the York Region Greening Strategy, which was approved by Council as part of the 2009 Capital Budget in December 2008.

### ***Highway 404 Extension update***

As part of the Ministry of Transportation's (MTO) efforts to extend Highway 404 from Green Lane in the Town of East Gwillimbury to Ravenshoe Road in the Town of Georgina, York Regional Council has authorized:

- The procurement of engineering services from MTO for the detailed design of an interchange at Highway 404 and Doane Road at a maximum cost of \$445,000.
- An agreement with MTO to construct intersection improvements at Ravenshoe Road/Woodbine Avenue that will include a gateway feature to the Town of Georgina for approximately \$1 million.

York Region continues to work closely with MTO staff to meet their 2012 Highway 404 extension deadline.

Funds for the Doane Road interchange and the Ravenshoe Road/Woodbine Avenue improvements will come from the Region's 10-Year Roads Construction Program, approved by York Regional Council as part of the 2009 Capital Budget in December 2008.

### ***York Region's Water for Tomorrow expands to include new mail-in rebate initiative for water efficient fixtures***

Building on the success of York Region's *Water for Tomorrow* program, York Regional Council today approved a *Water for Tomorrow* mail-in rebate program for a variety of water efficient fixtures, in addition to instant rebate sales events for rain barrels, free pre-rinse spray valves for commercial kitchens and industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) water audits.

The rebate program will launch in March with simple ways to apply for rebates, including mail-in and Internet applications.

### ***York Region Employment and Industry Report 2008***

York Regional Council received the *Employment and Industry Report 2008*, which provides a snapshot of economic and employment trends in York Region.

The report suggests that York Region employment growth has outpaced both the national and provincial averages over the past decade. Between 2007 and 2008, employment in the Region grew by more than 13,000 jobs. Highlights include:

- Service-oriented jobs accounted for 74 per cent of total employment with a year-over-year growth of 4.6 per cent since 1998
- Employment growth in health care and social assistance, F.I.R.E. (finance, insurance and real estate), business services, retail trade and education, all more than doubled their employment totals since 1998
- Residential building activity fuelled a 6.7 per cent increase in construction employment between 2007 and 2008
- Manufacturing employment in York Region declined four per cent but remained the primary employer in the Region
- The number of large businesses increased 42 per cent and very large firms in York Region increased 82 per cent since 1998

### ***York Regional Council receives Draft Long Term Tourism Destination Development Strategy***

York Regional Council received the draft Long Term Destination Development Strategy in order to commence stakeholder consultations.

The Region is developing the Strategy for a 10-year period commencing from 2009 and will spend the next four months consulting with local municipalities, tourism industry associations, Regional tourism businesses, academic institutions and other stakeholders for input into the final document.

### ***York Regional Council receives Progress Report on Tourism Customer Service Program***

York Regional Council today received an update on the Tourism Customer Service Program. This report provides an update on program milestones, enhancements and proposed next steps to establish an ongoing training initiative for the tourism business community.

The program was designed specifically for small to medium-sized tourism businesses that may not have the resources to provide customer service training to their employees.

### ***York Region to revise population estimates in Official Plan***

The York Region Official Plan will be updated to incorporate new population and employment estimates. The Region's Official Plan contains population forecasts of 1.28 million residents and 696,000 jobs by 2026. New forecasts for the year 2031 suggest the Region will have 1.5 million residents and 780,000 jobs.

As part of this new forecast:

- All of York Region's area municipalities will experience population growth, with 70 per cent occurring in Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan
- The number of households in York Region will increase to approximately 510,000 with a shift to a higher percentage of townhouses and apartment units
- All of York Region's local municipalities will experience job growth, with 77 per cent occurring in Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan

Employment and population forecasts are used by York Region and our local municipalities to help plan long-term land use, infrastructure and financial planning. The new forecasts suggest that additional lands will be required for residents and businesses, including urban boundary expansion.

### ***York Region 2031 Land Budget***

York Regional Council received a report describing additional lands will be required for residential and commercial development based on revised population and employment forecasts.

The report proposes that more than 2,800 hectares (approximately 7,000 acres) of Whitebelt lands – lands not currently in designated settlement areas – are required for residential and employment uses. This includes more than 1,700 hectares (approximately 4,200 acres) for community land development and retail uses) and more than 1,000 hectares (approximately 2,500 acres) for development.

### ***Small Business conference draws more than 125 entrepreneurs***

York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch thanked staff for their efforts to help organize the *Entrepreneurs, Innovation and the Green Economy* conference, which attracted more than 125 potential entrepreneurs at the Cardinal Golf Club in King Township. The Chairman also endorsed the new *Guide to Greening Your Business* resource produced by the York Region Economic Development Branch of the Planning and Development Department.

The event was hosted by the York Small Business Enterprise Centre and focused on adapting environmentally-friendlier (green) practices for small businesses and featured a discussion panel on “Generation Y” entrepreneurs.

For more information on greening your business or other seminars for small businesses, please visit [www.yorksmallbusiness.ca](http://www.yorksmallbusiness.ca), e-mail [ysbec@york.ca](mailto:ysbec@york.ca) or call 1-877-464-9675 extension 1572.

### ***York Region to continue successful partnership with Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust***

The Regional Municipality of York will extend its agreement with the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust (ORMLT) for another year at a cost of \$40,000.

York Region has partnered with the ORMLT since 2002 to help secure environmentally-significant properties from development. Since the partnership began, the Region and the ORMLT has successfully secured six properties comprising 267 hectares (660 acres).

### ***Water and Wastewater Master Plan Update public consultations***

York Regional Council received a report today outlining the progress of York Region’s Water and Wastewater Master Plan update.

The Water and Wastewater Master Plan update is a 40-year planning blueprint for water and wastewater services in York Region that will allow the Region to effectively and sustainably create and maintain facilities that will be required to service our growing communities.

York Region is currently engaged in a third round of public consultations to discuss:

- Projected water and wastewater demands for York Region’s local municipalities to 2031 and 2051
- Water and wastewater infrastructure requirements and upgrades required for projected growth
- Alternative water and wastewater servicing solutions and their impact on existing agreements

Three sessions were held in January in the Towns of Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Whitchurch-Stouffville. A fourth consultation is scheduled for the Town of Aurora on February 4<sup>th</sup>, with a potential fifth consultation under consideration for Durham Region.

All feedback will be considered for the master plan update and will be shared with area municipalities and the Government of Ontario.

Residents who wish to participate in the process are encouraged to attend the next consultation at the Town of Aurora Council Chambers, 1 Municipal Drive, Aurora on Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will feature an open house at 6:30 p.m., presentation at 7:30 p.m. and facilitated discussion at 8 p.m.

***Federation of Canadian Municipalities Commits \$1 million to the City of Vaughan to Divert Waste from Landfill***

Town of Richmond Hill Regional Councillor Brenda Hogg, a Director with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), acknowledged the FCM contribution of a \$1-million Green Municipal Fund (GMF) grant to the City of Vaughan.

The City is investing the funds in the implementation of a comprehensive waste management plan called “Greening Vaughan” to divert waste from landfill.

Launched in September 2005, “Greening Vaughan” focuses on diverting waste from landfill through improved recycling and household organic waste programs.

***Bottled water banned from York Regional Council and Committee Chambers***

York Regional Council today banned the use of plastic water bottles in Council Chambers and Committee rooms in an effort to reduce waste, promote tap water and contribute to York Region’s sustainability goals.

York Region provides clean and safe drinking water to over 800,000 residents throughout nine municipalities, providing a cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternative to bottled water. Approximately 77 per cent of plastic beverage bottles are recycled in York Region.

Education and promotion materials will be developed to encourage staff to use tap water at Regional facilities.

***Best Practices for New Communities Workshop feedback to be used in developing new communities under Regional Official Plan***

Feedback from the *Best Practices for New Communities Workshop* held in December 2008 by staff from York Region’s Planning and Development Services will be considered for new community development criteria in the Regional Official Plan (ROP).

Feedback under consideration includes:

- More emphasis on mixed land use in neighbourhoods (residential, retail, commercial, places of work)
- Smaller linked parks should be distributed throughout communities
- Standards of a maximum five minute walking distance to transit should be enforced
- LEED standard for all new buildings

A review and update of the ROP is currently under way and will incorporate feedback from future consultations.

### ***York Region and area municipalities continue work to help prevent transmission of the rabies virus***

York Regional Council today approved a recommendation for each of York Region's nine area municipalities to review and consider the need to amend or develop their individual bylaws regarding the sale of birds and animals at local flea markets and farmers' markets.

Local municipalities have the ability to reinforce the provincial legislation mandating a rabies vaccination for all dogs and cats over the age of three months, as well as record keeping on the sale and purchase of all animals within their municipalities.

Rabies is a viral infection transmitted in the saliva of infected animals through a bite or a scratch, or if the saliva comes in contact with the moist tissues of the mouth, nose or eyes.

Last year, a rabid litter of puppies was sold at a Toronto flea market, which led to a large multi-agency and multi-health unit investigation into the potential human exposure to the rabies virus.

To report an animal bite or for more information on this or any other health-related topic, please contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653.

### ***York Region Industry Education Partnership taking shape***

Recommendations by education, government and business partners are being adapted for a York Region industry education council. The purpose of the council is to encourage educators and employers to work together in the planning for future workforce needs.

Recommendations include:

- Naming the council: *The York Region Industry Education Partnership*
- Adopting as the council's mission and goals:
  - Enhance community prosperity by advancing career connections and innovative partnerships among residents, educators and employers in York Region
  - Mobilize York Region educators and employers to implement workforce development strategies and services that anticipate future employment trends
  - Increase resident and employer awareness of current and future career related services in York Region

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

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, February 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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