



Thursday, December 17, 2009

For Immediate Release

## York Regional Council – Wednesday, December 16, 2009

### **Three members of York Regional Council honoured for service recognition**

King Township Mayor Margaret Black, City of Vaughan Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio and York Regional Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch were recognized by York Regional Council for their contributions of 15 years of public service as members of Regional Council.

The three were among seven current members of Council who were present at the time Regional Council held its first meeting in the Council Chambers in the York Region Administrative Centre in Newmarket in 1994.

The other four members present at the 1994 meeting were Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson, Town of Georgina Mayor Robert Grossi, Town of Markham Regional Councillor Gordon Landon and Town of Georgina Regional Councillor Danny Wheeler.

The Regional Municipality of York was established by Provincial legislation in 1970 and the first Council meeting was held in early 1971.

### ***York Regional Council adopts new Regional Official Plan***

York Regional Council has adopted the Regional Official Plan – December 2009. This plan represents the outcome of the *Planning for Tomorrow* initiative, a growth management planning exercise conducted over the past five years by The Regional Municipality of York to address the requirements of current Provincial legislation.

Since 2005, York Region has held more than 80 growth management meetings as part of the *Planning for Tomorrow* public consultation. In addition to these meetings, Regional staff have undertaken public information sessions and public meetings in addition to consultation and meetings with local municipalities, chief building officials, municipal engineers, provincial ministries and agencies, conservation authorities and school boards, environmental groups and special interest groups, including the Building Industry Land Development group (BILD).

During the final round of consultations ending September 30<sup>th</sup>, York Region received more than 160 submissions pertaining to the draft plan that was released in June.

The new Regional Official Plan – December 2009, along with the background studies and reports, are available on the Region's website. Click on the Official Plan banner on the home page at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

### ***York Region renews greening securement partnerships***

The Regional Municipality of York will extend its greening securement partnerships with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust (ORMLT) for a further three years.

Under the terms of the partnerships, NCC will receive a maximum of \$100,000 per year to help secure key environmental properties from development and ORMLT will receive a maximum of \$40,000. NCC has further agreed to match the Region's contribution with \$40,000 of its own funds.

To date, the partnership with NCC has secured 14 separate properties comprising 297 hectares (733 acres) of land. The partnership with ORMLT has secured seven separate properties comprising 267 hectares (660 acres) of land.

## **York Regional Council approves \$4.9 billion 2010 Business Plan and Budget**

York Regional Council approved The Regional Municipality of York's \$4.9 billion 2010 Business Plan and Budget which includes more than \$3.5 billion for capital projects and \$1.4 billion to maintain and operate York Region services.

The budget includes no tax increase for 2010. The operating budget also contributes nearly \$23 million to the Region's capital asset replacement reserves for future repairs to infrastructure, plus \$12 million towards paying down the Region's debt. Additionally, the budget makes possible no fare increases for YRT and Viva Rapid Transit in 2010.

The 2010 Capital Budget will be paid through a combination of Provincial and Federal government support as well as Development Charges (DCs), which are one-time fees charged for developing a property.

The operating budget was supported by \$13.2 million in additional savings from GTA Pooling (money collected by the Province of Ontario to help pay for Social Assistance and Social Housing programs in the City of Toronto) as well as 2.7 per cent in assessment growth (an increase in tax base resulting from new residential and commercial buildings).

All budget information is available by clicking on the budget banner at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

### ***York Region shares 2009 Cordon Count information with neighbouring municipalities***

York Region will share the results of the 2009 Cordon Count with area municipalities, neighbouring Regional municipalities, the City of Toronto and Greater Toronto transit agencies. The Cordon Count identifies changes in travel patterns and commuting behaviours across municipal boundaries over a period of several years. The last count was conducted in 2006.

The 2009 Cordon Count noted the following changes since 2006:

- Overall traffic has increased in conjunction with the 10 per cent population growth and eight per cent growth in employment in York Region
- Traffic on 400-series highways increased by one per cent to 39 per cent of all traffic travelling in and out of York Region
- Traffic moving northbound and southbound across the York Region/City of Toronto border increased 10 per cent during the morning peak period
- Traffic across the Simcoe County boundary increased two per cent and across the Durham boundary by 16 per cent
- Passengers per vehicle increased at almost all times per day (reversing an ongoing trend towards fewer people per vehicle), likely due to rising gasoline prices, the recession and carpooling programs

Information provided in the Cordon Count is essential to providing the accurate data required for sound transportation planning.

### ***Consultant selection for closed-circuit television inspections of sanitary sewers***

York Regional Council awarded a contract to Andrews Infrastructure for the closed circuit television (CCTV) inspection of 24.6 kilometres of sanitary sewer. As part of Environmental Services' infrastructure management program to monitor infrastructure performance, the CCTV inspections will help enable timely maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement of aging pipes.

### ***York Regional Council receives Intelligent Transportation Systems update***

York Regional Council received a report detailing a number of new Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) programs that the Region's Transportation Services Department is undertaking to provide better traffic management tools and information to travellers.

Some of the new ITS initiatives underway include:

- Road closure, travel speed and other real-time information provided by closed circuit television cameras at major intersections
- PRESTO Smart Cards for transit travel across Greater Toronto
- Advanced traffic signal timing tools to better manage traffic movement during periods of varying road conditions

Advances in ITS allow for reduced traffic congestion, improved efficiency of transit systems and better response to changing road and traffic conditions.

### ***New resource guide to assist small to medium-size businesses in accessing capital***

York Regional Council approved the draft Guide to Capital Sources for York Region Entrepreneurs. This comprehensive guide will assist small and medium-sized enterprises in accessing sources of capital and enabling them to obtain investment in their business growth and job creation efforts.

The Guide will be officially launched at the annual York Region Small Business Conference on Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at the King Valley Golf Club on Dufferin Street in King Township.

### ***Regional staff to ensure local municipal Official Plans conform to Provincial Plans***

York Regional Council endorsed a plan outlining the role of The Regional Municipality of York as the approval authority for the Official Plans of the Region's nine local municipalities. York Region will ensure that local Official Plans conform to Provincial plans as well as to York Region's new Regional Official Plan.

The report summarizes the current status of each local municipal Official Plan review and identifies the process and next steps for the local Official Plan reviews, including anticipated timelines, milestone events and the required communication and consultation prior to York Region issuing decisions on the new local Official Plans.

### ***Survey captures useful data about York Region's manufacturing sector***

York Regional Council received a report detailing the Manufacturing Sector Survey results and the resulting plan of action.

Highlights of the survey include:

- The majority of the survey respondents are small, locally-owned firms
- Future facility expansion plans and lease expiry is expected within the next three years
- Manufacturers indicate high satisfaction with local and Regional municipal services and have few barriers to business growth

York Region will circulate the survey by mail and electronic format to the 2,300 York Region manufacturers that were invited to participate in the survey. The Region will also host two workshops with manufacturers to present the results and discuss future actions.

### ***Work in 2009 and 2010 boosts pedestrian and cycling facilities across Region***

York Regional Council received a report of the progress made in 2009 on the implementation of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan and a work plan for 2010.

To date, York Region has allocated \$1.4 million through the Municipal Partnership Program to local municipalities for the implementation of cycling facilities. Annually, York Region invests \$500,000 which is matched by participating local municipalities. A total of 27.4 kilometres of cycling facilities were completed in 2009 and another 54.2 kilometres will be constructed in 2010.

York Region staff are developing a dedicated cycling website that will act as a “one-stop” resource for all cyclists in the Region, providing information on safety, new cycling facilities, cycling events and maps. Discussions will continue with the City of Toronto regarding a proposed Lake-to-Lake cycling route that would stretch from the shores of Lake Simcoe to the shores of Lake Ontario.

### ***York Regional Council updated on accessibility implementation***

York Regional Council endorsed a mid-year update on the implementation of ACCESS-Ability: York Region’s 2009 Accessibility Plan as well as an update on the development of a 2010 plan.

The Region’s 2009 plan details how individual departments, including York Regional Police, are working together to identify, remove and prevent barriers in their core businesses.

Planning is underway for the 2010 plan, the Region’s seventh accessibility plan. Advice from the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, along with feedback from the public, will help with this development. Residents may provide information on barriers and issues faced by people with disabilities in York Region via comment forms that are available online.

### ***York Region donates decommissioned ambulances to St. John Ambulance***

York Regional Council approved the donation of two York Region Emergency Medical Services ambulances, decommissioned from service on October 1<sup>st</sup>, to St. John Ambulance York Region Branch.

York Region’s donation supports a not-for-profit community affiliated partner which will continue to serve York Region residents.

### ***Regional staff anticipate the impacts of the Accessible Built Environment Standard***

York Regional Council endorsed a report on the proposed Accessible Built Environment Standard under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

Once approved by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, the standard will establish mandatory requirements for York Region and other public service organizations to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in the built environment. At this time, the proposed standard would apply to all new construction and buildings undergoing major renovations.

The proposed standard sets out technical requirements for building elements such as doorways, ramps, stairs, pedestrian crossings, street furniture, signage, public address systems, washrooms, shower areas, drinking fountains, interior lighting, parking and passenger loading areas.

### ***GTA Fare System (Presto) Update***

York Regional Council received a report that the GTA Fare System (“Presto”) project has a revised implementation schedule of early 2011 for York Region only.

The Presto project is the Greater Toronto Area’s (GTA) smart card solution to integrating the transit fare payment across various service providers. The Presto fare card will allow riders to experience seamless transfers between systems. York Region staff continue to work on amalgamating the Presto system with existing YRT and Viva fare equipment.

### ***York Region updates Joint Waste Diversion Strategy***

York Regional Council approved an update to the Joint Waste Diversion Strategy (2006) completed in partnership with the Region’s nine local municipalities.

The updated strategy identifies a short-term goal of achieving 65 per cent waste diversion from landfill and a goal of more than 70 per cent by 2016. The strategy identifies successes to date, new initiatives, clarification of responsibility between the Region and municipalities and a guideline to review the strategy every four-to-five years.

Initiatives include the expansion of Community Environmental Centres (CEC) across York Region, implementation of multi-residential Blue Box and Green Bin and increased waste diversion in public places.

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

### ***Certified Compostable Bags to become mandatory in Green Bin program***

York Regional Council endorsed mandatory use of certified compostable bags in the Region’s Green Bin program by May 2011 to decrease plastic waste, improve organic waste diversion from landfill and continue its leadership role in waste management.

The results of York Region’s compostable bag pilot program indicated an overwhelming number of participants supported a mandatory compostable bag program to help improve the Region’s Green Bin program.

In 2010, York Region will undertake a promotional campaign to educate and encourage residents to make the switch from plastic to certified compostable bag liners in their Green Bins. During this year-long voluntary phase, plastic bags will still be accepted in York Region Green Bins as local municipalities amend local waste collection bylaws to enforce a mandatory program.

Transition to the mandatory use of certified compostable bags is anticipated to begin in January 2011, with enforcement beginning May 1, 2011.

### ***Vaughan Mills to open Family Day***

York Regional Council approved a request by Vaughan Mills Shopping Centre to open on Family Day, Monday February 15<sup>th</sup>. An amendment was made to the Regional bylaw that allows businesses located within two kilometres of tourist attractions to open throughout the year except on Christmas Day, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

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

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at the York Region Administrative Centre Council Chambers, located at 17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket.

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***Council Highlights compiled by:***

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