



October 2006

York Regional Council Highlights



The Regional Municipality of York



York Region selected as one of Top 100 Employers in Canada; Top 50 in the GTA

The Regional Municipality of York has recently been named as one of the top 100 companies to work for in Canada and one of the top 50 companies to work for in the Greater Toronto Area by Mediacorp Canada Inc.

The listing of “Canada’s Top 100 Employers” appeared in *Maclean’s Magazine* and was included in a special editorial feature in *The Toronto Star*. York Region will also be featured in the 2007 edition of the *Canada’s Top 100 Employers* book available this fall in major book retailers across Canada.

York Region’s selection for “Canada’s Top 100 Employers” was based on outstanding performance in several key areas: physical workplace, work and social atmosphere, health benefits, continuing education and professional development, financial benefits and compensation, family-friendly benefits, vacation policy and time off, internal communications, performance management and community involvement.

York Region commits \$250,000 toward purchase of Bayview Oakridges Estates as part of Greening Strategy

York Regional Council today committed \$250,000 toward the purchase of the 10-hectare (25 acres) Bayview Oakridges Estates property in the Town of Richmond Hill. The purchase is a partnership arrangement with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to protect and manage the property, contingent upon the TRCA fundraising \$750,000 towards the acquisition.

The Bayview Oakridges Estates property is situated on the environmentally-sensitive Oak Ridges Moraine, and lies immediately west of the Jefferson Forest. The forest is jointly owned by the TRCA, York Region and the Town of Richmond Hill. Combined with several other adjacent properties owned by the TRCA, the Government of Ontario and the Town of Richmond Hill, it forms an ecological corridor to which the Bayview Oakridges Estates property provides a natural extension.

Due to the proximity of other forested areas under the jurisdiction of the TRCA, York Region has agreed to relinquish ownership of the Bayview Oakridges Estates property to the TRCA in an effort to better unify the management of the corridor. York Region will remain a key participant in the development of a management plan for the property.

York Regional Council Highlights

York Region committed to 65-per cent waste diversion by 2010

York Regional Council today committed to diverting at least 65 per cent of the Region's waste from landfills by 2010.

Additionally, in partnership with our nine local municipal councils, York Region released today the *Joint Waste Diversion Strategy* - a report outlining how the Region will increase its current diversion rate of 34 per cent to a goal of 65 per cent over the next three years.

Some of the initiatives outlined in the *Joint Waste Diversion Strategy* and identified for immediate implementation include:

- **A Source Separated Organics Program** – diversion of household compostable wastes and other items, including fruit and vegetables, coffee grounds, meat, diapers and other kitchen waste.
- **An updated Blue Box Program** – increasing program to include weekly collection, expanding program to include more materials and using alternative collection containers.
- **Community Environmental Centres** – convenient and accessible depots where residents can drop-off reusable and recyclable materials and waste that cannot be set out for curbside collection.
- **Bag Limits/Financial Incentives** – restriction of the number of bags of garbage permitted to be set out for collection with the potential of additional payment required for any additional bags.
- **Diversion of Textiles** – working with not-for-profit organizations such as Goodwill to divert clothing and other goods from landfills.
- **Advocacy** – continuous lobbying of organizations and governments responsible for policy decisions that affect waste, including “Over Packaging”.

Viva awarded for being most innovative public transit service in North America

York Regional Council today received the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Award recognizing Viva Rapid Transit as the most innovative public transit service in North America.

The APTA nominating committee praised Viva as the first rapid transit bus service of its kind, adding Viva's unique partnership between the public and private sectors and its rapid implementation of the project's first phase make it a new model for carrying out major transit projects.

It is the first time a Canadian transit service has won the APTA Innovation Award since 1984.

York Regional Council Highlights

York Region to proceed with construction of wetlands from decommissioned wastewater lagoons

York Regional Council today endorsed the concept of creating wetlands from decommissioned wastewater lagoons as a means of increasing overall wetland coverage under the Greening Strategy.

In 2004, York Region staff investigated the potential to convert water and wastewater lagoon facilities into wetlands. Following the completion of that investigation, three current lagoon sites in Mount Albert, Sutton and Schomberg were identified as candidates for conversion.

- Design and construction of the wetland is set to proceed after a detailed environmental monitoring study has been conducted at the Mount Albert site to confirm potential wetland features.
- Design and implementation of a constructed wetland for the Sutton site is set to proceed.
- Design and implementation of a constructed wetland for the Schomberg site is set to proceed, pending the completion of the construction of the new Schomberg Water Pollution Control Plant.

Constructed or engineered wetlands are designed to emulate the functions of natural wetlands. They are complex, integrated ecosystems where plants, animals, micro-organisms and the environment interact. They provide a natural habitat for wetland plants and animals, help to conserve the natural environment and can be used to improve the quality of wastewater effluent with minimal environmental impacts.

Costs are estimated at \$250,000 to \$650,000 for each site, depending on the extent of the design. Annual operating costs are estimated at less than \$5,000 per site.

York Region will pursue partnership opportunities with environmental groups, including Ducks Unlimited and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, for long-term operation and maintenance.

York Regional Council remembers William Lazenby

York Regional Council today remembered the late William Lazenby who passed away earlier this month. Council stood for a moment of silence to remember the former Mayor of Richmond Hill. Mr. Lazenby was a well-known pharmacist for many years, a Richmond Hill Councillor and member of many boards and associations.

York Regional Council Highlights

York Regional Council applauds Ontario's road construction plan but agrees that more specifics are needed

York Regional Council received a staff report analyzing the Ontario Government's Southern Ontario Highways Program 2006-2010. This five-year, \$3.4 billion highway construction plan for Southern Ontario includes \$1.4 billion for expansion projects and \$2 billion for rehabilitation projects. Council applauded the provincial ministers of Public Infrastructure Renewal and Transportation for initiating this important first step towards multi-year infrastructure planning.

However, Council agreed that the province's capital plan falls short in meeting York Region's infrastructure needs that are required to support the growth projections as contained in the provincial *Places to Grow* land use plan. In particular, no target completion date was provided for the extension of Highway 404 to Ravenshoe Road.

Council directed staff to ask the province to confirm a construction completion date for the Highway 404 extension to Glenwoods Avenue. In addition, Council directed staff to ask the province to extend the Southern Ontario Highways Program to correspond with the 30-year timeframe of the *Places to Grow* provincial growth plan by producing 10-year capital plans and 30-year transportation master plans that cover highways, local and rapid transit funding, cross-boundary and boundary road funding, transportation demand management funding and GO Transit.

The plan is timely and necessary because traffic congestion is an important issue for residents of York Region and the Greater Toronto Area. York Region and the Greater Toronto Area is home to 90 per cent of Ontario's population and is expected to grow by 3.7 million people over the next 25 years, an increase of almost 50 per cent from the 2001 population of 7.8 million people.

York Regional Council to approach Government of Ontario to allow digital camera technology to be used for automated speed enforcement

York Regional Council today approved a motion to request the Government of Ontario to enact legislation to allow provincial and municipal police services in Ontario to use digital camera technology for automated speed enforcement.

York Region conducted a speed study in 2005 that revealed 62 per cent of drivers exceed posted speed limits. High speeds, particularly in school areas, pose a significant safety risk to young children. The use of automated speed enforcement would allow for more efficient deployment of limited enforcement resources.

Automated speed enforcement was approved for use by the Ontario Provincial Police in 1994, but its use was discontinued in 1995. Studies from Australia found that the use of automated speed enforcement reduced traffic collision fatalities by 46 per cent and reduced major injuries by 36 per cent.

Should the request for automated speed enforcement be approved by the Province, York Region will establish a detailed site selection process and public awareness strategy prior to implementation.

York Regional Council Highlights

York Region endorses update on Residential Intensification in York Region

York Regional Council today endorsed a staff report outlining the current level of residential intensification occurring across the Region. This information will be used as a basis for local municipal consultations that determine the Region's capacity to accommodate the Provincial Growth Plan target of 40 per cent intensification by 2015. Additionally, Council directed staff to distribute the report to local municipalities for consultation.

Although the Region has made advances in intensification efforts, many challenges lie ahead in meeting the targets of the Growth Plan while maintaining a sustainable, coordinated and collaborative approach. The target of 40 per cent residential intensification by 2015 translates into 81,000 new habitable units. Preliminary analysis suggests that the Region's rate of intensification has increased to 18.4 per cent between 2001 and 2005, which is significant compared to the increase of 16.7 per cent between 1990 and 2003.

In addition, Council approved a plan to measure intensification, consult with local municipalities regarding the Provincial Built-Boundary and the distribution of 40 per cent intensification to local municipalities. Council also approved marketing, monitoring and reporting activities that would include an annual intensification monitoring model.

Pedestrian and cycling infrastructure projects are focus of new municipal partnership

York Regional Council approved, in principle, a plan to develop the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program – a partnership with local municipalities and conservation authorities. The Partnership Program was the first major outcome of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Study adopted in 2006.

The Program calls for York Region to fund local pedestrian and cycling infrastructure projects in the amount of \$500,000 per year. This proposed funding will be included in the 10-Year Roads Capital Plan of the draft 2007 Budget.

Council authorized regional staff to engage local municipalities and agencies in developing a policy for partnership, process, eligibility, ranking and administration.

Staff will report back to the Planning and Economic Development Committee in early 2007 and follow up with the selection of proposed pedestrian and cycling infrastructure works eligible for Regional funding in 2007 and 2008.

York Regional Council Highlights

York Region honours retiring Mayors with naming of structures

Today at York Regional Council, three retiring members of York Regional Council were honoured for their contributions.

York Regional Council acknowledged retiring Town of Richmond Hill Mayor Bill Bell today by announcing that the name of the Bayview Avenue bridge structure (located between Stouffville Road and Bloomington Road) in the Town of Richmond Hill be named the “William F. Bell Bayview Avenue Bridge”. The resolution, moved by Town of Richmond Hill Regional Councillor David Barrow, will remind residents of York Region of Mayor Bell’s dedication throughout his tenure, including 26 years of community service and 18 years on Regional Council.

Additionally, York Regional Council announced that the newly constructed Regional Road #48 (Markham Bypass) in the Town of Markham will be officially named the “Don Cousens Parkway”. This resolution honouring retiring Town of Markham Mayor Don Cousens, was moved by Town of Markham Regional Councillor Frank Scarpitti. Mayor Cousens is retiring from office after being the Mayor of Markham and member of Regional Council for 12 years.

Previously, at the York Regional Council meeting held in April, York Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch announced that the Board of Directors of Housing York Inc. approved the name “Tom Taylor Place” for the new affordable rental apartments to be built on the Stickwood-Walker Farm property in the Town of Newmarket. The naming honours Town of Newmarket Mayor Tom Taylor’s dedication to his community throughout his nine years as Mayor and 16 years as member of Regional Council.

Policy approved governing York Region’s Reserves and Reserve Funds

York Regional Council today approved a policy governing the management of the Region’s reserves and reserve funds. The policy allows for the creating and maintaining of adequate reserves and reserve funds, which will promote stability in the Region’s current and capital budget programs and provides flexibility to our longer term capital financing requirements. The Reserves and Reserve Funds Policy also includes funding the rehabilitation and replacement of major capital assets.

Procurement and Purchasing Policy updated by Regional Council

York Regional Council today approved updated Tendering/Proposal procedures to provide a clearer process and explanation of how bids are evaluated and on what basis bids may be rejected. The Region’s purchasing policy, as outlined in the purchasing by-law, meets or exceeds the requirements under the *Municipal Act*.

York Regional Council Highlights

Premier Ranked Tourist Destination Project final report received

York Regional Council received a final report for the Premier Ranked Tourist Destination Project, a research project that was undertaken in York Region between October 2005 and September 2006. The Project established a framework of data to assist York Region destinations to improve their viability and competitiveness as a place consumers want to visit.

The final report outlines the key findings and recommendations for enhancing the tourism experience in York Region, the process used to assess the current and future tourism potential and the increasing revenues generated from tourism.

The findings and recommendations will be used to direct current tourism programs and serve as the basis for the development of a long-range tourism strategy.

2007 York Region Tourism Marketing Program adopted

York Regional Council adopted, in principle, the components of the 2007 York Region Tourism Marketing Program, subject to the approval of the 2007 Economic Development Operating Budget.

The Tourism Program identifies tactical marketing and promotional initiatives aligned with the *2005 York Region Economic Development Strategy and Vision 2026*.

Tourism has the potential to enhance job and wealth creation within local municipalities while contributing to the quality of life for residents. In 2004, 3 million visitors to the region spent over \$209 million on tourism activities and services, generating approximately \$148.6 million in Gross Domestic Product and producing 2,646 jobs in York Region. These jobs generated \$76.5 million in wages and salaries and \$6.4 million in local municipal taxes.

The 2007 Tourism Marketing Program will be launched at the 5th annual tourism conference proposed for January 2007.

York Region recommends the Province of Ontario amend the Development Charges Act

York Regional Council today adopted a report recommending that the Province of Ontario be requested to amend the *Development Charges Act* so that the GO Transit Growth Capital Plan is fully recovered from development charges and not from property taxes.

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The next Regional Council Meeting will be held Thursday, November 23, 2006 at 9:30 a.m.
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 under Regional Government.