



Tuesday, April 26, 2011

For Immediate Release

**York Regional Council – Thursday, April 21, 2011**

***The Regional Municipality of York welcomes new Commissioner of Finance and Regional Treasurer***

The Regional Municipality of York announced the appointment of Bill Hughes to the position of Commissioner of Finance and Regional Treasurer. Mr. Hughes succeeds Lloyd Russell, retiring from York Region after five-plus years and 37 years working within the public sector.

Mr. Hughes joins York Region following a 22-year career with the provincial government in a variety of challenging and progressive portfolios including Assistant Deputy Minister of Infrastructure, Policy and Planning. As Assistant Deputy Minister, Mr. Hughes was responsible for the Province of Ontario's capital budget and Ten-Year Infrastructure Plan.

Mr. Hughes first day with York Region is June 13.

***Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, Bryan Tuckey, announces retirement***

York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch announced the retirement of Bryan Tuckey, the Region's Commissioner of Planning and Development Services.

Over the past 11 years, Mr. Tuckey has brought valuable insight and knowledge regarding planning challenges faced by growing communities. Among his many noteworthy accomplishments, he has successfully completed four infrastructure master plans, a new Official Plan and implemented web access to the Region's mapping information.

Mr. Tuckey will remain with York Region until the end of June.

***York Regional Council encourages residents to participate in 2011 Census and National Household Survey***

York Regional Council reminds residents to participate in the 2011 Census and the National Household Survey starting in early May. Council also encourages residents receiving the National Household Survey to provide answers that accurately reflect one's situation and needs.

Population estimates obtained through these two surveys are used to allocate transfer payments from the federal government to the province and from the province to municipalities. The answers assist York Region in identifying the appropriate level of response for our public programs and services.

Completing the 10 questions in the 2011 Census is mandatory. If a household is selected to receive the National Household Survey, a response is critical. Assistance completing the survey is available in 44 languages through the national Census Hotline at 1-877-777-2011. Visit [census.gc.ca](http://census.gc.ca) for more information.

***New standards adopted to help improve survival of “street” trees***

York Regional Council has approved key improvements to the Regional Street Tree program to benefit the health of trees in urban areas. The new program includes improvements to both soil quality and quantity along boulevards, as well as increasing the frequency of watering.

The new program increases watering from 10 times each year to 14 times each year and introduces the use of a soil trench along boulevards. The soil trench will provide a three-metre wide growing space with quality soil to better nourish the trees' growing root system and increase the health and vigour of newly planted trees.

***York Regional Council to develop a Regional Official Plan Amendment to coordinate long-term Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway development issues***

York Regional Council approved a policy framework to develop a Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) to guide the Region's review and approvals of the secondary plans for the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Regional Centre and Provincial Urban Growth Centre.

The policy recognizes the Centre's strategic importance as a major transit hub in the Greater Toronto Area and the complexity of issues across all government levels. The five modes of transit that will intersect this growth centre will be local YRT/Viva, GO trains, the proposed Toronto Transit Commission subway extension and the proposed Highway 407 Transitway.

A statutory public meeting to consider ROPA 4 will be held in accordance with the provisions of the *Provincial Planning Act* at the June 15, 2011 meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

***myRide travel training program helps individuals of all ages and abilities obtain the necessary skills to use YRT/Viva services***

York Regional Council received an update regarding the myRide travel training program after a full year of operation.

myRide travel training assists people of all ages and abilities who need additional knowledge and skills to use YRT/Viva services effectively. myRide responds to an individual's specific needs and abilities and provides services ranging from group sessions to intensive one-on-one training. The program also enables Mobility Plus riders and people with disabilities to access the entire family of transit services offered by YRT/Viva.

Interest in myRide continues to grow, with more than 22 agencies participating in 2010. Last year, 429 individuals participated in myRide, with more than 80 per cent now using YRT/Viva with increased confidence and greater independence and with 170 individuals now able to use the YRT/Viva system independently.

The program is delivered through partnerships, including The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), Ontario March of Dimes, Community Living York South, Epilepsy York Region and both public and separate school boards.

### ***The YorkLink Directory marks its 12<sup>th</sup> year in service***

York Regional Council received an update on the 2011 edition of YorkLink, an effective community resource that provides residents, school boards, other levels of government and community agencies with up-to-date information about local community services.

To serve York Region's culturally diverse population, YorkLink includes a phone number for translation assistance in Arabic, Cantonese/Mandarin, Farsi, French, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Urdu and Vietnamese.

YorkLink is an important complement to York Region's recently launched 211 service - a three digit phone number and website ([www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca)) that provides information on community, social health and government services in Ontario. York Link, a printed directory, serves as a familiar resource for residents as 211 moves through its early implementation process.

YorkLink has more than 700 community agencies and organizations to-date and is available in printed format or online at [www.yorklink.org](http://www.yorklink.org)

### ***New Fact Sheet outlines projections on the diversity of residents living in York Region***

York Region Community and Health Services Department has released a new Fact Sheet: *Projections on the Diversity of Residents Living in York Region from 2006 to 2031*.

Using Census data and forecast models developed by York Region's Planning and Development Services Department, the Fact Sheet includes projections on how York Region's population will change by 2031 in terms of immigration, ethnicity and visible minority status.

The Fact Sheet, produced by York Region Community and Health Services Department with input from the York Region Consortium and Community Reference Group, will be made available in the three most commonly spoken non-official languages in York Region - Chinese, Russian and Farsi.

### ***York Regional Council approves partnership approach for King City local works***

York Regional Council approved a partnership between York Region and the Township of King to undertake the King Road watermain replacement, the construction of Regional pressure valve chambers and the resurfacing of King Road as one contract.

In addition to minimizing inconvenience to King City's businesses and residents, cost savings will be realized in the areas of contract administration, inspection services and other economies of scale associated with combining three related projects into one larger construction contract

## ***Enhanced Employment Services changing the lives of vulnerable residents in York Region***

York Regional Council approved the recommendation to encourage the province to continue supporting Enhanced Employment Services for vulnerable individuals in York Region.

The Community and Health Services Department provides mandated financial and employment assistance to eligible residents under the provincial Ontario Works program. In July 2009, the province announced new, time-limited 100 per cent employment service funding for Ontario Works delivery agents. Under the Enhanced Employment Services initiative, York Region was allocated \$1,064,000 in one-time funding over a two-year period ending in 2011.

The Enhanced Employment Services program provides key resources to help improve the level and type of employment assistance available to the Region's most vulnerable residents. In 2010, more than 1,300 Ontario Works program participants found employment.

Continued investment in services such as Enhanced Employment Services is important to all municipalities. Funding loss will compromise the Region's ability to provide the supports and programming needed to meet the adverse needs of our most vulnerable residents. Should provincial support stop at the end of 2011, it will result in an annual loss of \$530,000 in funding to the Region.

### **Social Housing update in York Region**

York Regional Council received an update regarding York Region's 2010 housing provider performance management activity.

The Region monitors housing providers' performance through a variety of measures. These include a review of annual financial information packages every three to five years in compliance with the *Social Housing Reform Act 2000*, rent-geared-to-income (RGI) program administration, waiting list compliance and operational assessments.

York Region's 7,626 applicant waiting list is subdivided into three categories: families, singles/couples and seniors. Almost half of the applicant households are seniors.

The need for RGI units continues to increase and the shortage of affordable renting housing in general creates financial pressures in many areas. The Region is working to address these needs through the Affordable Housing Program (AHP) and the Regionally-funded rent supplement program.

To address affordable housing needs in the Region, Regional Council requested York Region Chairman and CEO write the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing encouraging the province to continue to provide funding to support the development of affordable housing.

## ***York Region to develop coordinated management strategy to lessen impacts of the Emerald Ash Borer***

The Regional Municipality of York will develop a management strategy in partnership with local, provincial and federal partners in an effort to slow the spread and mitigate the impacts of the Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive beetle species that kills all types of ash trees.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) discovered the Emerald Ash Borer in York Region in 2008 and has been working with staff from York Region to help slow the spread, including establishing a quarantine zone that restricts the movement of ash trees.

CFIA has predicted a significant spread of the Emerald Ash Borer in 2011, which requires strategies to manage its impact. With eradication of the beetle not viable, York Region has organized a technical working group to make recommendations to York Regional Council in June.

### ***New speed limit policy***

The Regional Municipality of York has adopted a new speed limit policy to better reflect the changing nature of our communities and Regional road network. The new policy will have speed limits lowered in urban areas in an effort to better improve safety and provide consistency for drivers.

The Regional policy focuses on minimizing injuries common in collisions by recommending the following speed limits:

- 60 km/h – Urban areas, towns, villages and hamlets
- 70 km/h – Roads on urban/rural borders
- 80 km/h – Rural areas

The new policy also incorporates suggestions received by local municipal councils, which call for further consultation on any proposed speed limit changes. With this recommendation, the new policy will follow a four-step process before any changes are implemented:

1. Identification of a section of road for potential speed limit change
2. A review of the road section by York Region staff
3. Consultation with the local municipal staff and York Regional Police
4. Approval by York Region Transportation Services Committee and York Regional Council

The new speed limit policy will be implemented immediately, however, only speed limit changes that are urgently required will be reviewed immediately. All other speed limits under consideration for change follow the four-step process and will be brought forward for Committee and Council consideration twice a year.

### ***York Region recognizes Administrative Professionals Week and Administrative Professionals Day***

York Region will recognize April 24 to 30 as Administrative Professionals Week and April 27 as Administrative Professionals Day.

Members of the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) include a wide variety of roles among administrative professionals – the largest segment of the office workforce. IAAP provides its member with education, networking opportunities, certification and other career-enhancing programs.

### ***York Region celebrates National Public Works Week from May 15 to 21***

The Regional Municipality of York will recognize National Public Works Week from May 15 to 21, 2011 with a number of events and activities, recognizing the contributions of the Region's Transportation Services and Environmental Services departments to the health, safety and quality of life that York Region residents enjoy.

The National Public Works Week celebration will begin with a free Family Fun Day Open House on Saturday, May 14 at the Bales Drive Operations Centre in the Town of East Gwillimbury. The Open House will feature a charity barbecue, educational displays, hands-on activities for children and a fleet of trucks for visitors to explore.

The celebrations will also include:

- A Paint-a-Plow contest and environmental poster contest for local schools
- Student tours of waste management, water and wastewater and transit facilities
- The Miller Cup skills competition for 10 staff teams representing all nine municipalities and the Region

National Public Works Week is recognized each May in Canada by the Canadian and Ontario Public Works Associations.

### ***York Region celebrates Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week***

The Regional Municipality of York is celebrating National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) week, May 15 to 21. This year's theme is EMS Everyday Heroes and recognizes the commitment that emergency medical personnel make on behalf of the communities they serve.

EMS week events will pay tribute to paramedics and individuals who provide lifesaving services and educate the public about injury prevention, safety, awareness and medical emergencies.

York Region EMS will host and participate in the following community outreach events:

- National Public Works Week's "Family Day"
- EMS Community Fun Day
- Lunch At My Place (LAMP)
- Paramedic for a Day
- 6<sup>th</sup> annual York Region EMS Recognition Night, *A Night of Stars*

More information about these events will be released in advance of EMS week.

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

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, May 19 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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**Compiled by:** *Barbara Moss, Corporate Communications, York Region*  
*Phone: 905-830-4444 Ext. 1237 / Cell: 905-505-5775*  
*Email: [barbara.moss@york.ca](mailto:barbara.moss@york.ca)*