



# Council Highlights



Thursday, January 26, 2012

## York Regional Council – January 26, 2012

### ***York Regional Council approves \$2.8 billion budget for 2012 focusing on services and contribution to reserves***

York Regional Council today approved The Regional Municipality of York \$2.8 billion 2012 Business Plan and Budget which includes \$1.2 billion in additional funding for capital projects and \$1.6 billion to maintain and operate York Region services.

The 2012 Business Plan and Budget includes a 1.8-per cent tax levy increase, which represents a \$38 increase for a home assessed at \$450,000, and is below the rate of inflation.

The process for the 2012 Business Plan and Budget began last spring with York Region departments and staff developing, revising and submitting draft budgets to York Region's Finance department for evaluation and identifying efficiencies.

The draft Budget was tabled at York Regional Council November 17, 2011 and referred to Regional committees throughout December for debate and discussion. It was brought back to the Finance and Administration Committee earlier this month and recommended to Regional Council.

York Region will contribute \$8.6 million towards a new Fiscal Stabilization Reserve to stabilize tax rates once GTA Pooling is fully phased out, and a total \$38 million towards the Capital Asset Replacement Reserve for future infrastructure replacement needs.

Highlights of the **2012 Operating Budget** include:

- \$274 million for York Regional Police, including 34 new sworn officers and 12 civilian staff, adding to more than 1,900 officers and staff
- \$175 million for YRT/Viva, to provide approximately one million hours of transit service
- \$84 million to provide Employment and Financial Support programs to economically-marginalized families and children; fund and administer approximately 6,000 social housing units; and provide financial assistance to 6,180 households through Ontario Works
- \$59 million for Waste Management to process approximately 360,000 tonnes of solid waste
- \$53.5 million to manage approximately 3,500 lane kilometres of Regional roads

Highlights of capital projects approved in the **2012 Capital Budget** include:

- \$275 million for the construction of Spadina Subway Extension into York Region
- \$140 million for the construction of York Durham Sewage System (YDSS) Southeast Collector
- \$73 million for water and wastewater cost-shared work program (Peel Region and City of Toronto)
- \$31 million for the construction of 140 affordable housing units in Richmond Hill
- \$30 million for the construction of an Energy From Waste facility in Durham Region
- \$13 million for land acquisition for a transit vehicle garage in the Town of Newmarket
- \$13 million for the widening of Stouffville Road from Highway 404 to McCowan Road

Standard & Poor's and Moody's investor services have consistently awarded York Region AAA credit ratings, partly in recognition of York Region's policy of allocating funds annually to reserves. The Region has maintained consistent AAA ratings with both credit agencies since 2000. The Region's high credit rating allows it to finance its debt at more favourable interest rates and translates into savings for Regional taxpayers.

***York Regional Council appoints Town of East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson to Police Services Board***

York Regional Council has appointed Town of East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson a member of The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board for the remainder of the term of Council.

The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board is a seven-member civilian board that governs the York Regional Police. Four members are appointed by Regional Council and three by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

***York Region awards new contract to TOK Transit Limited to restore North Division YRT/Viva service***

York Regional Council today awarded a new operations and maintenance contract to TOK Transit Limited for the operation of YRT/Viva's North Division starting February 4 with a complete phased-in return of service over the coming weeks.

Starting Saturday, February 4, Route 98 on Yonge Street between the Towns of Newmarket and Richmond Hill and Route 55 on Davis Drive in the Town of Newmarket will begin operating. Additional routes will be phased-in over the following weeks.

The four-year contract was awarded to TOK Transit Limited based on experience, cost competitiveness and ability to begin immediate reintroduction of North Division service. York Region will lease its transit facility at 18106 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket to TOK Transit Limited for the duration of their contract and invest up to \$750,000 on facility improvements. Total estimated contract costs are \$46,055,925, excluding fuel and taxes, with up to an additional \$1 million contributed by the Region over the life of the contract for vehicle maintenance.

TOK Transit Limited is a subsidiary of Tokmakjian Inc., service provider for YRT/Viva's Southwest Division between 2003 and 2010, and operator for Vaughan Transit prior to YRT amalgamation in 2001.

To begin restoring service options to riders during the ongoing dispute, York Region terminated its contract on January 16 with First Canada, operator of 29 YRT/Viva routes in northern York Region. First Canada was awarded the North Division contract in June 2003 with its current contract set to expire June 27, 2012.

***York Region Abuse Program hosts 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Children's Champion Gala on April 14<sup>th</sup>***

York Region Abuse Program will host its 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Children's Champion Gala at Roman Palace in Newmarket, on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

York Region Abuse Program is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to eliminating abuse and the barriers associated with abuse. The program offers hope and healing to those affected by childhood sexual abuse and is the only agency offering specific treatment for childhood sexual abuse in York Region.

Town of East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson, a board member of the York Region Abuse Program, promoted the event and invited Regional Council members to attend.

### ***YRT/Viva service plans set future direction***

York Regional Council has approved the YRT/Viva 2012 Annual Service Plan and the 2012 to 2016 Five-Year Service Plan, charting the course for transit development over the next five years. The plans will match service levels with demand, improving on-time service and preparing for integration with future rapid transit options.

The five-year service plan also provides a framework for addressing ongoing YRT Mobility Plus challenges in the area of demographic changes and ridership growth, as well as the implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Upcoming 2012 YRT/Viva service changes include:

- The creation of a north-south route to connect the Towns of Georgina, East Gwillimbury and Newmarket
- Restructuring of Route 58A, serving the Towns of East Gwillimbury and Newmarket, to provide direct connections to the 404 Town Centre, Southlake Regional Health Centre, Newmarket GO Train Station, the Tannery Mall, Newmarket GO Bus Terminal and Upper Canada Mall during weekday non-rush hour periods
- Extending Route 86 in the Town of Richmond Hill to Richmond Hill Centre Terminal, to increase connections with other transit routes
- Straightening Route 20 in the City of Vaughan to improve routing along Jane Street on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays
- Introduction of a new express route in the Town of Markham to provide direct service to Finch GO Bus Terminal

YRT/Viva will begin consultations for the 2013 service plan in April with a variety of Public Information Centres throughout the Region. Session dates and times will be promoted.

### ***Business Directory promotes regional economy***

York Regional Council has released an update of the York Region Business Directory, a listing of approximately 28,000 businesses within The Regional Municipality of York. In addition to supporting business activities such as sourcing local trades and suppliers, it also assists residents with locating specific products and services within York Region and when conducting job searches.

The 2011 York Region Business Directory is based on information collected from the 2011 York Region Employment Survey, a door-to-door survey conducted last year between May and August.

The 2011 employment trends appear positive. The following business and employment trends were observed for mid-year 2011:

- Estimated 515,800 jobs in York Region
- A net increase of 14,800 jobs from mid-year 2010 to mid-year 2011, compared to 8,000 jobs during the same period between 2009 and 2010
- Total number of businesses captured in this survey has remained relatively stable at approximately 28,000 (home-based and farm-based businesses were not included in the survey)
- Four largest industry sectors by size in York Region are business services, manufacturing, personal services and retail trade
- Approximately 75 per cent of York Region employment is full time

To access the directory online, go to [www.york.ca/businessdirectory](http://www.york.ca/businessdirectory) This link can also be found on the Region's homepage.

***The Regional Municipality of York to refine economic development strategy***

York Regional Council has adopted a work plan to develop an Economic Action Plan Update in 2012. The Regional Municipality of York needs to facilitate the creation of 280,000 jobs in the Region by 2031 – a target set out in the provincial Growth Plan.

An update to the 2005 Economic Strategy will be developed in seven phases. The first four phases will overlap to complete the plan within the year. A number of emerging themes have been identified by stakeholders and partners. Chief among them is the belief that to foster economic growth, York Region must focus on developing an innovation network.

Staff will explore the emerging themes and refine them into actionable items through further discussions with stakeholders and additional research and analysis.

***The Regional Municipality of York provides ventureLAB with \$100,000***

The Regional Municipality of York will provide ventureLAB with \$100,000 in funding in 2012 to enhance ventureLAB's delivery of business support services across the Region.

Based in the Town of Markham, ventureLAB serves as a research innovation hub for multi-sectoral companies across all nine York Region municipalities. It acts as a catalyst to harness the wealth of intellectual and technical resources needed to commercialize products and services and help form and grow innovative businesses in York Region.

YORKbiotech and Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham merged in December 2010 to form ventureLAB and serve as York Region's Regional Innovation Centre, part of the Ontario Network of Excellence.

***The Regional Municipality of York to consult residents on guidelines for new communities***

York Regional Council has endorsed the draft New Communities Guidelines, a policy for developing new communities in a sustainable way, and directed regional staff to consult with stakeholders, local municipalities and the development industry to confirm the draft guidelines.

The New Communities Guidelines will assist local municipalities and the development community in ensuring that new communities in the Town of East Gwillimbury, the City of Vaughan and the Town of Markham will be designed with a priority on people and liveability.

Regional staff will conduct consultations from January to March 2012 and incorporate feedback in a revised document for approval by Planning and Economic Development Committee and Council by the end of 2012.

***Orthophotography strengthens organizational capacity across York Region***

York Regional Council received an update of the Orthophotography Project, an initiative that purchases detailed aerial images and elevations for use by the Region as well as by YorkInfo Partners. YorkInfo Partners include York Regional Police, local municipalities, conservation authorities and school boards.

Used to visualize the changing landscape of the Region, the aerial images assist organizations in making informed decisions in our rapidly changing area and help to strengthen the organizational capacity of organizations within the Region. The Region has used the imagery to depict the Viva expansion along Highway 7 and Davis Drive, for example. The images are accessible to the public through the Internet.

The orthophotography allows users to visualize an area where development, utility and other permit applications are submitted for review. The images enable staff to provide better feedback when commenting on applications. Also, they are useful in the visual verification of alignments of roads, assets, pavement markings, property edges and rights.

The Region receives updated orthophotography every two years. The YorkInfo Partners will contribute one half of the \$500,000 cost over a six-year contract that expires in 2014.

### ***York Regional Council approves bold new vision for south Yonge streetscapes***

York Regional Council has approved a new streetscape design along Yonge Street from Steeles Avenue to Bantry Avenue. The cost of capital elements included in the South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan Study is approximately \$45 million over the 20-year timeframe of the Streetscape Master Plan.

The Towns of Markham, Richmond Hill and the City of Vaughan requested The Regional Municipality of York undertake a streetscape study to develop a vision for the corridor. Building on several land use studies carried out by these local municipalities over the years, the Region collaborated with them and stakeholders to develop a bold, sustainable and achievable streetscape vision.

Five distinct districts along the Yonge Street corridor are featured in the new plan, including the Yonge-Steeles Gateway, Clark Station, Old Thornhill Village, New Thornhill Village and the Richmond Hill Centre.

The higher-density character of the Yonge-Steeles Gateway and the Richmond Hill Centre will be emphasized with special paving and median treatments, street trees and plantings. The Clark Station and New Thornhill Village districts are urban transit station areas that will include street trees, speciality lighting and attractive entrances to the subway stations. The Old Thornhill Heritage district will use the streetscape to integrate and enhance the heritage character through street tree and specialty plantings, special paving treatments, interpretative signage, speciality lighting and the provision of mid-block crossings.

Implementation of the master plan will be activated primarily by development and will involve coordination and contributions from a range of partners.

### ***The Regional Municipality of York manages traffic congestion***

To reduce the impacts of congestion, The Regional Municipality of York continues to work towards making its transportation system as intelligent as possible.

Effective traffic management processes and systems reduce traffic congestion, such as rush-hour traffic. York Region uses the following traffic engineering tools and procedures to manage traffic on Regional roads:

- The Centralized Traffic Signal Control System is used to set signal timings, operate signals in a coordinated fashion, manage signal timing plans by time of day, provide priority to transit and emergency vehicles and monitor conditions on the roadway through traffic detectors
- Computer simulations model the effects of changing signal timing and allow changes to be optimized before installation on the street
- Pro-active assessments of how the road operates are conducted and the efficiency of signal timings are evaluated to optimize traffic flow
- Urban Informatics Corporation's commercially-available traffic flow information uses cell phone location data and will be used to identify congestion hotspots for review
- vivaNext will use a new traffic control system to provide priority to transit vehicles on Regional roadways

York Region also manages the impacts of incidents, road work and special events by:

- Understanding the operational procedures governing the roles of impacted agencies and personnel
- Monitoring the ongoing operations using road patrols, traffic cameras and data services
- Responding to changing operational needs during an event using traffic signals, barriers, signs and traveller information
- Using intelligent programming and scheduling tools to minimize the impacts of capital construction and road maintenance projects

The capital expenditure tools associated with congestion management are funded out of the ITS Strategic Plan approved by Regional Council in December 2007. The 10-year strategy included approximately \$27 million in capital investments for roads and traffic initiatives aimed to managing congestion.

### ***The Regional Municipality of York improves safety of Richmond Hill intersection***

Following concerns raised by a resident, The Regional Municipality of York has implemented pedestrian crossing improvements at Yonge Street and 16th Avenue/Carville Road in the Town of Richmond Hill.

York Regional Council has approved measures to help educate and promote pedestrian safety, such as an audible pedestrian warning system pilot project on YRT/Viva buses.

Additional safety measures and pedestrian crossing improvements were also implemented at the Yonge Street and 16th Avenue/Carville Road intersection to increase pedestrian safety. They include:

- A revised speed limit policy
- High-visibility zebra crosswalk markings at intersections
- Pedestrian countdown signals
- Increased pedestrian crossing time at traffic signals
- Audible signals for pedestrians with low vision

On November 7, York Regional Police and York Region Transportation Services teamed up and launched, at this intersection, a new pedestrian safety campaign, entitled Motorists and Pedestrians ... Let's work on our Relationship. In addition, an upcoming pedestrian safety campaign will focus on creating awareness around key safety issues affecting motorists and pedestrians in the winter.

### ***The Regional Municipality of York anticipates future transportation needs in north Markham***

York Regional Council has endorsed a transportation analysis for Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 3 and approved changes to the Transportation Master Plan Update (2009).

The changes identify Woodbine Avenue, Warden Avenue and Kennedy Road between Major Mackenzie Drive and the future Donald Cousens Parkway extension as roads part of the Regional Transit Priority Network as identified in ROPA 3.

Transit priority improvements, such as queue jump lanes, transit signal priority and HOV lanes, require Planned Basic Street Widths of up to 43 meters so they may accommodate improved transit service and network connectivity.

These changes will ensure York Region delivers and sustains critical infrastructure while at the same time providing for effective, efficient and environmentally-sensitive transportation system, including a convenient and accessible transit service for residents and workers.

### ***York Region Accessibility Plan identifies 154 new initiatives***

York Regional Council has approved Reaching a New Standard for Accessibility: York Region's 2011-2012 Accessibility Plan. The wide-sweeping plan includes enhanced access to housing and forest trails, and addresses communications issues by improving access to web-based communications and providing sign language interpreters at York Regional Police events.

Including initiatives from 2011, the current annual plan features 154 accessibility planning initiatives from across all Regional departments, York Regional Police and York Region Transit/Viva.

Some initiatives within this plan include:

- Continuing to modify existing housing for people with disabilities within Regionally-owned affordable housing properties
- Reviewing additional sites in the York Regional Forest for future accessible trails
- Improving access to web-based communications through customized approaches, including audio-based files, upon request
- Continuing partnerships with disability organizations, including the Canadian Hearing Society, to provide sign language interpreters at meetings, forums and events hosted by York Regional Police

Download a copy of Reaching a New Standard for Accessibility at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca) The plan is available in print or alternative formats such as large print and on CD, upon request.

### ***The Regional Municipality of York strengthens infectious disease control***

York Regional Council received a report which outlines Public Health's plans to strengthen its Infectious Disease Control Division over the next several years to better prevent and respond to infectious diseases.

Reportable diseases such as measles, tuberculosis, zoonotic diseases and emerging or re-emerging infections are all examples of infectious diseases that may have a serious impact on the health of a population. These diseases are likely to spread and can potentially be controlled through public health action. The Infectious Disease Control Division has developed a multi-year strategy that will develop staff proficiency, improve business practice through ongoing monitoring and partner with other organizations to reach a broader population.

While some measures to boost local infectious diseases control have already been put in place, others will be ongoing, or will be phased in over future years.

### ***The Regional Municipality of York to invest \$500 million in water and wastewater infrastructure in 2012***

York Regional Council received an update on the status of key water and wastewater infrastructure projects. Throughout 2012, approximately \$500 million in new Environmental Services capital projects will be delivered.

Project highlights for the next six months include:

- Tunnelling Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer Project
- Tender Leslie Street pumping station upgrade
- Complete construction of Joe Dales Pumping Station upgrade
- Submit the first Inflow and Infiltration Reduction Strategy annual report to Ministry of the Environment
- Advance construction on Durham-York Energy Centre
- Advance Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant Phase 3 Expansion
- Continue work on Upper York Sewage Solutions Individual Environmental Assessment

Timely delivery of water and wastewater projects is essential to ensure sufficient capacity is available to service planned and approved growth across York Region.

### ***The Regional Municipality of York helps protect 175 hectares of conservation land***

The Regional Municipality of York will work with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the Town of Richmond Hill to protect and restore 175 hectares of land located on the Oak Ridges Moraine, in the headwater regions of the Humber River and Rouge River watersheds, in Richmond Hill.

The Oak Ridges Corridor Park East Management Plan outlines what will be undertaken to make this happen over the next five years. This initiative complements the TRCA's 428 hectares of parkland immediately west of this site. Together, these lands will be known as The Oak Ridges Corridor Conservation Reserve.

The five-year management plan will focus on protection, preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the Oak Ridges Corridor Park East, including more than 10 kilometres of public trails, all of which is owned by the TRCA.

The estimated cost for the project is \$1.6 million. The TRCA will apply for a grant of up to 50 per cent of the cost through the York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program. The Town of Richmond Hill has committed \$420,000, subject to the TRCA raising the remaining funds.

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

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, February 16 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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Founded in 1971, The Regional Municipality of York is made up of nine municipalities and provides services to more than one million residents, 29,000 businesses and 495,000 employees.