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For Immediate Release

## Transit-oriented development guidelines encourage urban developments to be transit user-friendly

**NEWMARKET** – The Regional Municipality of York is working to become more pedestrian-focused through a variety of initiatives, including getting people out of cars and onto transit and alternative modes of transportation such as car pooling, creating better streetscapes for cyclists and walkers, and strengthening linkages between residential areas and commercial centres.

An interim draft of the Regional Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines presented to Regional Council today outlines planning and design concepts that will shape the community in a way that meets the needs of existing and potential transit riders to generate a more frequent and, ultimately, higher quality transit service.

“As one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, York Region has a unique opportunity to shape our urban planning in a way that is more transit-supportive, pedestrian-friendly and well-designed,” said Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch. “Pedestrians using public transit – living, working, learning and shopping in close proximity – is our vision for safe, liveable and healthy communities.”

The Region’s planned urban structure calls for regional centres linked by regional corridors and served by rapid transit.

“Investments to improve the timely delivery of public transit services and rider comfort have proven to help increase ridership,” said Town of East Gwillimbury Mayor James Young, the Region’s Chair of the Planning and Economic Development Committee. “Similarly, creating more pedestrian-friendly commercial and residential development along transit corridors and around transit stations will make public transit even more accessible and convenient.”

The guidelines are consistent with provincial, regional and local policies and programs that prioritize public transit and the creation of complete, compact and well-designed communities.

Highway 7, West of Jane, Looking West, Vaughan Corporate Centre



1 Existing Conditions



2 Bus Rapid Transit | Streetscape Improvements



2 Street Related Development | Pedestrian Amenities



3 Light Rail Transit | Transit Supportive Development | Connection to TTC

The guidelines are organized into six key elements:

1. Pedestrians – Encourage access, safety and comfort
2. Parking – Provide well-designed, attractive facilities that put transit first
3. Land Use – Attract the right type, intensity and mix of land uses
4. Built Form – Address transit through appropriate massing, density and height
5. Connections – Link buildings and the spaces in between them to transit
6. Implementation – Apply TOD approaches throughout the planning process

Local municipal staff have been engaged in the development of the draft Regional TOD Guidelines and will be instrumental in the implementation process through the administration of local official and secondary plans, zoning by-laws and site plan control. The local municipalities have made significant strides in planning for and attracting development that is well-designed, pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive. The adoption of Regional TOD Guidelines will serve to assist local municipalities in these efforts.

Regional staff will continue public consultations and obtaining feedback from local municipalities and other stakeholders throughout the summer as they prepare a final version of the guidelines for the consideration of York Regional Council in September 2006.

Two additional current initiatives will contribute to the same goal of building liveable, healthy communities.

First, York Region is conducting a Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Study to better connect local pedestrian and cycling systems into a regional-scale network, improve connections to transit nodes and encourage walking and cycling to be combined with public transit. This initiative will lead to the development of a master plan, consisting of policies and guidelines, and will look at ways to implement cycling networks and make communities more pedestrian-friendly.

Secondly, York Region is updating its Transportation Master Plan. Its focus will continue to be on sustainable ways to move people and goods in York Region. Some of the key elements of the update will include transit strategies, travel demand management strategies, cycling and walking systems, road improvements and other opportunities to optimize York Region's infrastructure and encourage alternative modes of transportation other than automobiles.

Throughout these Master Plan projects, public consultations will be scheduled and York Region residents are encouraged to participate. The dates, times and locations of these meetings will be posted in local newspapers and on the Region's Web site, [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

"Over the next 25 years we are building a city-region to serve more than 1.5 million people," said Chair Fisch. "It is absolutely critical that we look at ways to develop new urban areas so they are better integrated with public transit."

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*For more information on the Regional Municipality of York and the services our Region offers, please visit our Web site at: [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)*

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