

Council Highlights

March 25, 2004

York Regional Council approves \$1.7 billion 2004 Business Plan and Budget

York Regional Council today approved its \$1.7 billion 2004 Business Plan and Budget that includes service enhancements for York Regional Police, York Region Transit, significant capital infrastructure for Regional roads, water and wastewater, health care and social services.

The 2004 budget has been re-worked since January, with the changes resulting in savings to York Region taxpayers. The proposed 2004 Regional tax impact has been reduced from 8 per cent to 6.3 per cent – representing a savings of 1.7 per cent equivalent to \$8.2 million.

The increase can be separated into three categories:

- 0.9 per cent increase to directly controlled Regional programs, such as transit, roads, solid waste management, public health, long-term care, social services and Emergency Medical Services.
- 0.4 per cent increase to indirectly controlled special purpose bodies, including GTA Pooling, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), Court Services and Conservation Authorities.
- 5 per cent increase to York Regional Police Services to hire 110 new officers and 35 civilians for a total staff compliment of 1,095 police officers and 335 civilian support staff.

Based on an average assessed residential property of \$332,205, the 2004 budget will result in an average household tax increase of \$91, a savings of \$25 since the January budget submission to York Regional Council.

- **York Regional Police**
 - Deploy 1,095 Police Officers and 335 Civilian staff to focus on:
 - Police visibility
 - Traffic enforcement
 - Community Policing
 - Criminal activity investigation
 - Response time for emergency calls
- **Directly controlled programs**
 - \$178.3 million for Regional roads – construction, operation and maintenance
 - \$169.2 million for Social Assistance, Family and Children’s Services and Housing Services
 - \$103.4 million for Health Services – public health, EMS and long-term care
 - \$88.8 million for York Region Transit
 - \$82.1 million for the York Rapid Transit Plan Quick Start program (contingent on final agreements with the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario)
- **Special Purpose Bodies:**
 - \$79.5 million in GTA Pooling costs
 - \$11.1 million in MPAC costs
 - \$7.3 million in continued hospital capital funding
 - \$5.9 million in funding to Conservation Authorities
 - \$2.7 million in funding to GO Transit

<p>York Region condemns acts of hatred</p>	<p>Members of York Regional Council today voted unanimously to condemn all forms of hatred and racism in our community. The motion was brought forward in response to acts of vandalism and anti-Semitism suffered by the Jewish community in York Region and Toronto over the last week.</p> <p>Several York Regional Councillors joined more than 2,500 people, including Premier Dalton McGuinty, at a rally in Toronto last night for the Greater Toronto Area's (GTA) Jewish Community. At Regional Council today, they too spoke out against intolerance.</p> <p>The York Region Police Services Board is offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible</p>
<p>York Region secures funding for Energy Feasibility studies</p>	<p>York Regional Council entered into Grant Agreements with the Federation of Canadian Municipal Green Municipal Enabling Fund (GMEF) and the Office of Energy Efficiency Energy Innovators Initiative (EII). Under the combined grants the Region will be able to access up to \$700,000, leveraging up to 100% of costs for Building Energy Feasibility Studies (BEFS).</p> <p>Under the combined grants York Region will be able to investigate ways to lower its energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change and support a large number of technical and environmental studies and pilot projects.</p> <p>Building Energy Feasibility Studies (BEFS) will help the Region make informed decisions about the integration of high performance building technologies as well as maximize the implementation of energy and environmental measures. Reports will be made back to Council at the end of each calendar year between 2004 and 2006, outlining actual feasibility cost-avoidance and energy savings.</p>
<p>York Region offers tax relief to seniors</p>	<p>York Regional Council has reinstated the policy that provides interest-free deferral of reassessment property tax increases for senior homeowners, age 65 and older.</p> <p>Council reinstated the policy after the Provincial government repealed its <i>Ontario Home Property Tax Relief for Seniors Act</i> in December 2003.</p> <p>York Region has more than 28, 000 seniors which own their own home and could be eligible for a deferral under the reinstated policy.</p>
<p>Marketing initiative replaces Arts and Culture Tourism Grant program</p>	<p>Regional Council approved a recommendation that a co-operative arts and culture marketing initiative replace the Region's Arts and Culture Tourism Grant Program.</p> <p>Staff recently evaluated the effectiveness of the three-year grant program and determined it was not as successful as it could be in increasing the economic sustainability of the events and the arts and culture tourism sector as a whole.</p> <p>A marketing initiative would see the Region working with a broad cross-section of the arts and culture community to develop a broad-based, region-wide marketing program to position York Region as home to a thriving and growing arts and culture industry.</p>

<p>York Region EMS receives three-year certification award</p>	<p>York Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS) received a three-year certification standing by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care(MOHLTC), based on an Ambulance Service Review conducted last fall.</p> <p>Conducted every three years, the Ambulance Service Review is a peer-orientated, quality-based process that assesses the success of each operator in meeting the requirements of the <i>Ambulance Act</i>, its regulations and the standards issued by the MOHLTC when providing ambulance services. It evaluates a number of areas of EMS, including level and type of ambulance service provided; patient care; documentation and security of patient care information; employee qualifications and documentation; policies and procedures; vehicles, and communication.</p> <p>The Ambulance Service Review report found that York Region EMS was extremely dedicated to achieving excellence and was commended for its hard work and efforts in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent working relationship with the Central Ambulance Communication Centre • Patient care was rated by the hospital emergency departments as very good to excellent • Detailed auditing system for Ambulance Call Reports • Proactive effort towards training and education in the service • Above average involvement with allied agencies • Excellent communication skills with patients and families
<p>York Region EMS forms steering committee to help improve response times</p>	<p>Regional Council received a report from its Health and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Committee that provided an update on increasing ambulance response times in York Region. The report cited several factors that negatively influence the ability of York Region EMS to maintain balanced emergency coverage and response time reliability throughout the Region. These included health care system pressures, transfer of care/ambulance redirection and ambulance communications.</p> <p>In effort to address these problem areas, York Region EMS is facilitating an EMS/Hospital/Stakeholders Steering Committee, whose objective is to improve communications, share data and information, and to discuss and implement local strategies that will improve patient movement in the local hospital environment.</p> <p>The MOHLTC will also be requested to establish standards, which will allow for the timely transfer of patients from the care of paramedics to hospital emergency department staff so that ambulances can return to active service almost immediately.</p>
<p>York Region continues high standard of care at Maple Health Centre</p>	<p>Regional Council received a Health and EMS Committee report that advised that the Region's Maple Health Centre in Vaughan was found to be in substantial compliance with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) Standards and Guidelines for Long Term Care Facilities.</p> <p>The MOHLTC Compliance Review of the Maple Health Centre, conducted each year, audits nursing and medical care, dietary and nutritional programs, activation and rehabilitation services, environmental services and conditions, financial and administrative practices.</p> <p>The results of the 2003 Compliance Review confirmed that York Region continues to deliver high-quality long-term care services.</p>

<p>Expanded residential summer camp program a success</p>	<p>Regional Council received a Community Services and Housing Committee report that advised on the successful expanded Adolescent Residential Summer Camp Program in 2003. The pilot program enabled 60 adolescents from ages 13 to 16 years, living in social housing communities in York Region to participate in constructive activities, which support their healthy development.</p> <p>York Region will continue to support and fund this program in 2004, which will continue to allow adolescents to benefit from the overnight experience.</p>
<p>Region makes recommendations for a more effective <i>Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i></p>	<p>Regional Council received a Community Services and Housing report about recommendations presented by York Region to the provincial government to improve the effectiveness of the <i>Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)</i>, 2001.</p> <p>York Region has demonstrated its commitment to the <i>ODA</i> by adopting a strategic approach to implementing the <i>ODA</i>, which is grounded in <i>Vision 2026</i>, the Region's 25-year strategic plan. <i>Understanding Barriers: York Region's First Annual Accessibility Plan</i> was successfully developed with collaboration from all of the Region's corporate departments as well as York Regional Police and public input, and is recognized as a province model in terms of style and content.</p> <p>The Region's recommendations will enhance the <i>ODA</i> and the ability of York Region to implement the <i>ODA</i> to remove and prevent barriers for all York Region residents. The recommendations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need for a funding framework to assist municipalities in implementing the <i>ODA</i> • clear timelines that are flexible, which allow for a phased approach to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers • base standards to ensure a consistent approach across the Province; standards should be developed in consultation with the municipal sector and other stakeholders • amend legislation to allow for annual accessibility planning to be integrated with municipal annual business planning cycle • amend the <i>ODA</i> to include additional definitions to clarify language in the <i>Act</i> • expand the <i>ODA</i> to the private sector, to be overseen by the Province • stronger provincial support and guidance for the <i>ODA</i>
<p>Region allocates \$50,000 in "seed funding" for replanting trees in Asian Long-horned beetle affected area of City of Vaughan</p>	<p>York Region Council approved \$50,000 of "seed money" to assist in replanting efforts for trees cut down in the Asian Long-horned beetle eradication efforts in the City of Vaughan.</p> <p>It is hoped that the efforts of Council will spur other organizations to put funds forward to help with the replacement effort. Approximately 14,000 trees in the City of Vaughan are being cut down in an effort to eliminate the infestation of the Asian Long-horned beetle.</p>

<p>York Region to increase road rehabilitation budget to \$10 million by 2007</p>	<p>York Region will add an additional \$2 million per year for the next three years to a total of \$10 million in 2007 for road resurfacing.</p> <p>The new funding will be added to the existing \$3.4 million road resurfacing budget as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2003 budget \$3.4 million • 2004 revised budget \$5.4 million • 2005 revised budget \$7.4 million • 2006 revised budget \$9.4 million • 2007 revised budget \$10.0 million <p>Over the past few years, the Region has made use of a computer-based pavement management system to determine necessary rehabilitation techniques for sections of Regional roads. Forecast models suggested that the current good condition of Regional roads would deteriorate by 2013 without this additional funding for maintenance.</p>
<p>York Region Transit to acquire purchase 40 new buses in 2004</p>	<p>York Region Transit (YRT) will add 35 new buses to its conventional transit service and five to its Mobility Plus specialized transit service. Council also approved a number of route enhancements to expand service to new areas.</p> <p>Six of the new conventional buses will be used to replace older buses currently in operation, with the other 29 to assist with route expansion. Three of the five new Mobility Plus buses will be used to replace older models, while the remaining two will be used for expansion.</p> <p>As part of YRT's ongoing review of route operations, a service rationalization project was completed in 2003. The analysis recommended service changes to routes not meeting their minimum ridership targets. These modifications, representing less than one per cent of the transit budget, will begin to take effect in May 2004. A promotional campaign to educate residents about new services and modified existing services will begin in April 2004.</p>
<p>Region accepts \$100,000 in federal funding for YorkExplorer project</p>	<p>Regional Council accepted \$100,000 from the federal government's GeoConnection grant program to improve and advance YorkExplorer, an IT program that provides geospatial information and maps to the public through the Region's Web site.</p> <p>In 2003, YorkExplorer had more than 6,000 visitors and 48,930 maps were downloaded. Enhancements to YorkExplorer is an ongoing activity in order to create access to more geospatial information and maps, while improving business processes to internal clients, partners and public access.</p> <p>The Advancing YorkExplorer Project, estimated at a total cost of \$200,000, will enable new ways of information discovery and access, leveraging the value of geographic information held by the Region and its YorkInfo partners, of which the nine area municipalities are members.</p>

Next York Regional Council Meeting	The next York Regional Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 25, 2004 at the York Region Administrative Centre in Newmarket, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the Council Chamber.
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