



Thursday, May 19, 2011

For Immediate Release

York Regional Council – May 19, 2011

York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch recognizes retiring Treasurer Lloyd Russell

Speaking on behalf of York Regional Council, York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch thanked retiring Commissioner of Finance and Regional Treasurer Lloyd Russell for his 37 years of public service, including five years with the Region. Lloyd announced his retirement at the [December 2010 session of Council](#).

Chairman Fisch credited Lloyd's strong business acumen with helping York Region during a critical growth period characterized by major investments in water, wastewater and transit infrastructure, while maintaining a sterling AAA credit rating by Moody's Investors Service and Standard and Poor's.

Lloyd will be succeeded by [Bill Hughes](#), who assumes the position on June 13.

Greater Toronto Airports Authority update

York Regional Council received an update on the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) in a presentation by GTAA representatives Toby Lennox and Scott Cole.

The presentation focused on Pearson International Airport's new strategic direction to maximize the facility's economic potential by concentrating on efforts to improve operations and focus on the growing 60-million Asian passenger market.

Pearson International Airport now has more international travel than domestic, suggesting that Greater Toronto is an increasingly attractive location to invest and conduct business.

To help build upon this international success, Pearson is focusing on four goal areas to improve its operations:

- A drive to improve passenger capacity
- A focus on sustainable transportation, including road access to the airport
- Improving passenger facilitation throughout the facility
- Improving security without compromising customer service

The GTAA presents to York Regional Council on an annual basis.

Invasive Species – Giant Hogweed update

York Regional Council received an update on Giant Hogweed, an invasive plant that has been found in several locations throughout the Region. Giant Hogweed can pose a serious health risk to those who come into contact with it, as the sap can cause severe skin reactions or blindness if contact is made with the eye.

Giant Hogweed is creating a negative ecological impact on native plants and ecosystems in Ontario and is now designated as a noxious weed under the *Weed Control Act*.

To address the impact of Giant Hogweed on Regional property, York Region has developed a protocol to identify and remove the plant, where appropriate. Under the terms of the *Weed Control Act*, plants found on private property are the responsibility of the homeowner.

For information on identifying and managing Giant Hogweed, please visit www.york.ca

Greening Strategy – York Natural Planting Partnership Agreements

York Regional Council authorized a formal partnership with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority to continue the York Natural Planting Partnership Program, an initiative that has overseen the planting of 550,000 trees and shrubs on public and private property.

Following years of informal agreements, the Region will allocate \$40,000 in 2012 to each Conservation Authority for the York Natural Planting Partnership. This will help ensure more consistent program delivery, more accountability and potentially increased program participation through improved promotion.

Urban Boulevard Grass Cutting Service Levels

York Regional Council endorsed a revised standard for urban roadside grass cutting and debris pick-up, increasing the amount from 11 to 14 cuts per season. The new standard begins this year.

A standard of 14 cuts per season will help keep Regional corridors within each municipality well maintained and visually pleasing. Shrub and flower beds on Regional Road boulevards will continue to be maintained by local municipalities. The \$260,000 to increase boulevard cuts and debris pick-up will be funded by the Region's Transportation Services budget.

Speed Limit Revisions on Regional Roads

Following the approval of a new speed limit policy for Regional roads in April, York Regional Council authorized a speed limit change to the following roads:

- Jane Street from Lloydtown/Aurora Road to Davis Drive West lowered to 70 km/h from 80 km/h
- King Road from King/Caledon Town Line to 200 metres east of the 11th Concession lowered to 60 km/h from 80 km/h
- Lloydtown/Aurora Road from 700 metres west of Weston Road to 1.3 kilometres west of 7th Concession lowered to 60 km/h from 80 km/h
- King Road from Yonge Street to 850 metres west of Bathurst Street lowered to 60 km/h from 80 km/h
- Ninth Line from south of Hillsdale Drive to north of Cedarvale Boulevard lowered to 40 km/h from 60 km/h

Richmond Hill/Langstaff Centre-Wide Transportation Study

York Regional Council endorsed the recommendations of the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Centre-Wide Transportation Study.

The Centre is a provincially-recognized urban growth centre and mobility hub. The centre will support 48,000 residents and 31,000 business employees over the next 25 years and will be served by five transit facilities; the Yonge Street Rapidway, the Highway 7 Rapidway, the Highway 407 Transitway, the Richmond Hill GO Rail line and the Yonge Street subway extension.

The transit and transportation infrastructure in support of the Centre will be implemented in a phased approach linked to growth with the Yonge Subway extension. It will include road widening, new signals at intersections, double left and right turn lanes at key intersections, an indoor pedestrian concourse, bicycle lanes and a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane on Bayview Avenue.

Provincial bed bug control initiative

York Regional Council authorized additional funding of up to \$340,000 for education and outreach related to bed bug infestations. These funds represent a one-time investment from the Government of Ontario, which has committed \$5 million to Ontario's 36 public health units to assist with the increase in bed bug infestations across the province.

In recent years, there has been an escalation in the number of bed bug infestations in most countries around the world. Once an infestation occurs, it is difficult to eradicate.

In 2010, York Region's Health Connection public telephone line received 111 bed bug-related calls, up from 12 in 2008. While evidence suggests that bed bugs are already a concern for some York Region residents, a survey has been sent out to local community partners and stakeholders to help determine the extent of the problem.

Transit Enforcement 2010 Annual Report

York Regional Council received the Transit Enforcement 2010 Annual Report, highlighting revenue protection activities in 2010.

In September 2010, YRT/Viva Enforcement and Security section began a campaign designed to raise awareness among secondary and post-secondary school students on the consequences of fare evasion on YRT/Viva services.

The campaign was conducted in three phases: education, enforcement and an advertising campaign. During the two-week enforcement phase, 24,000 passengers were inspected and 350 charges related to fare evasion were issued.

In 2010, YRT/Viva's fare evasion rate was reduced to 1.6 per cent from 2.3 per cent in 2009.

Regional Council authorizes participation in joint procurement programs for the acquisition of transit buses and materials

York Regional Council authorized continued participation in joint procurement programs for the acquisition of conventional buses, specialized transit buses and associated products with Metrolinx and other transit agencies. This endorsement streamlines the procurement process and will reduce costs and improve delivery time and scheduling.

Joint procurement saves the Region approximately \$16,000 per conventional bus and \$3,000 per specialized bus.

York Region's ten-year capital forecast indicates a need for 421 conventional buses for expansion and replacement at an average cost of \$535,000 each and 61 specialized buses expansion and replacement at an average cost of \$300,000 each.

Eight low-floor specialized transit buses to help replace and expand Mobility Plus service

York Regional Council today authorized the purchase of eight low-floor specialized transit buses for York Region's Mobility Plus service, with the potential for further purchases in 2012 subject to funding availability.

There are presently 23 low-floor transit buses in the Region's Mobility Plus fleet. The addition of eight low-floor transit buses will replace six of these buses and provide two buses for service expansion.

The eight low-floor specialized transit buses will be ordered from Creative Carriage Ltd. at a cost of \$1.6 million, plus HST.

Metrolinx feasibility study of proposed Bolton rail line recommends only three stops

York Regional Council received an information update on the Metrolinx Bolton Commuter Rail Service Feasibility Study (December 2010).

The study recommended a route connecting Union Station to Bolton along with three station locations within the City of Vaughan, including:

- Woodbridge Station at Highway 407 and Islington Road
- Vaughan (Elder Mills) Station at Rutherford Road
- Kleinberg Station at Major Mackenzie Drive

York Region's plan identifies five stations within the City of Vaughan. As a result, York Regional Council will request Metrolinx assess and identify additional GO rail station locations in the Woodbridge and Nashville areas to accommodate travel demand on the future Bolton commuter rail service.

Rail service to Bolton is not contemplated in the next 15 years and will require funding from the province.

York Region Economic and Development Review 2010

York Regional Council approved the Economic and Development Review 2010, a report of the key economic and demographic indicators in York Region.

This year, economic indicators show that York Region's economy is relatively strong and has shifted from a phase of recovery back into expansion.

York Region is one of Ontario's major urban economic centres. In 2010, our population grew by 29,500 people to 1,062,100, maintaining our position as Canada's sixth-largest municipality in terms of population.

York Region issued the third-largest number of new residential building permits in the country, accounting for 22 per cent of new building activity in Greater Toronto. Total estimated construction value for residential, industrial, commercial and institutional construction in York Region was more than \$3 billion.

York Regional Council approves revised water and wastewater rates

York Regional Council approved an annual 10 per cent increase in the water and wastewater wholesale rates charged to local municipalities for 2012 to 2015.

York Region is a wholesale distributor of water and wastewater to our nine local municipalities, responsible for delivering clean drinking water to York Region residents and treating wastewater for release back into the environment.

The revised rate increase better reflects the Region's ongoing water and wastewater infrastructure requirements, which include \$2.3 billion for the expansion of the Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant in the City of Pickering, expansion of the York Durham Sewage System Southeast Collector and development of water supply projects with Peel Region and the City of Toronto.

York Region wants to hear what you envision for the future

Throughout 2011, The Regional Municipality of York will ask residents and stakeholders for ideas to update Vision 2026 and create a new vision for York Region for 2051.

A significant part of the consultation will be devoted to identifying a vision for York Region in 2051 and determining what we must do now to arrive at the outcomes we want for the future.

Community design, climate change, energy, transportation, water and waste management, demographic changes, economic vitality, housing demands, human services and the safety needs of our population are among the issues we will face over the coming years.

Social media tools, a Vision 2051 website and traditional advertising will be used to receive information from residents.

It is anticipated a draft of Vision 2051 will be brought forward for consideration to York Regional Council this fall and be circulated for comment before Council finalizes the new strategic document in early 2012.

Innovation project to stimulate York Region manufacturing

The Regional Municipality of York and economic development partners in local municipalities have implemented Innovation in Manufacturing, a project to support local manufacturing businesses by encouraging and fostering innovation and collaboration.

The project will assist innovative manufacturers and investors to identify competitive opportunities in York Region manufacturing and encourage new and sustained manufacturing investment in our local municipalities.

The Innovation in Manufacturing project will:

- Undertake research in innovation
- Produce a self-guided online resource for manufacturers to assess their capacity to develop research and promote innovation
- Co-host MedEDGE Summit 2011, a Life Sciences symposium with the Town of Richmond Hill, Employment Ontario and VentureLAB in June
- Host a manufacturer's conference within the next year
- Take a leadership role in developing a consortium of 50 manufacturers

For more information, please see investinyork.ca/existing-business/innovation

Making Ends Meet: A Model for Change

York Regional Council today endorsed the York Region's Human Services Planning Board's (HSPB-YR) *Making Ends Meet* initiative, its 2011 work plan and an update on the profile of low income residents.

Making Ends Meet in York Region is a call to action to address economic vulnerability throughout the Region. The report and work plan cited two priorities to address this vulnerability:

- Affordable Housing: A good mixture of safe and affordable housing options and programs throughout York Region
- Economic Self-Sufficiency: A strong combination of employment and human service supports

The HSPB-YR has 24 members that include leaders and decision-makers from the Region's hospitals, school boards and police department, as well as a cross-section of individuals from other human services organizations and networks, community leaders and senior levels of government.

A Profile of York Region's Low Income Population

York Regional Council received an updated profile of York Region's low income residents based on the 2006 Census of Population for Canada.

A Profile of York Region's Low Income Population focuses on the social and economic characteristics and risk factors that are often related to an individual's low income status.

Using Statistics Canada's Low Income Before Tax Cut-Offs and Census data, low income families are those who spend more than 55 per cent of their gross income on food, shelter and clothing.

The low income profile highlights the following key trends:

- The majority of low income residents have post-secondary education, are employed and own homes
- They include two parent families with children and both Canadian born and immigrants
- They are a growing "working poor" population
- They are increasing across all family types and age groups (except seniors)
- There are changing patterns of where low income residents live

A Profile of York Region's Low Income Population will be shared with York Region's nine municipalities for local analysis and community-level service planning.

New Agency Development Fund strengthens new and emerging social service agencies

York Regional Council today received an update on the recent activities of the New Agency Development Fund (NADF). In total, 10 projects received \$389,966 in funding in 2010 and 11 projects received \$436,620 funding in 2011.

York Region's investment of \$826,586 in new and emerging community-based agencies in 2010 and 2011 helps enhance community services and strengthens the supports that are available to meet the growing and increasingly diverse needs of York Region residents.

The New Agency Development Fund's goal is to develop agency organizational structure and capacity so that community agencies can begin to provide services that fill the gaps in the Region's social service system.

Newly formed not-for-profit or charitable agencies (less than five years at the time of application) that deliver social services to York Region residents and meet eligibility criteria may be considered for NADF support.

Interested agencies are invited to apply for funding through the next community-wide call for proposals process beginning in fall 2011.

Next meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, June 23 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: *Michael Kemp, Corporate Communications, York Region*
Phone: 905-830-4444 Ext. 1232 / Cell: 905-251-6419
Email: michael.kemp@york.ca