

Stephen Lewis Foundation

Alan Wells, former York Region CAO made a presentation to Regional Council on behalf of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. The Foundation has been working to inform nations on the important issue of fighting AIDS in Africa. York Region's committee for the Stephen Lewis Foundation will be holding a fundraiser gala event on Thursday December 2nd, 2004, to help raise awareness and funds towards combating this disease.

York Regional Council to seek approvals for key infrastructure projects

York Regional Council today endorsed a plan to begin a communication process with senior levels of government and local MPs and MPPs to secure the necessary permits to keep key infrastructure projects on track to meet planned Regional growth forecasts.

A Chair and Mayors Task Force has been struck that will oversee the communication with senior levels of government and seek the necessary permits to move forward with the key projects.

Providing adequate wastewater servicing capacity beyond 2007 relies on the completion of several key sewer projects. Approval delays for one of the projects, the 16th Avenue Trunk Sewer; Phase Two, has identified the need for more effective communication with regulatory agencies.

Bowl for Kids' Sake

Today, Regional Council received a presentation from Big Brothers and Big Sisters of York Region Bowl for Kids' Sake 2004. This year's event raised \$220,000, exceeding last year's event by \$10,000. Bill Fisch, Regional Chair and CEO, Honorary Chair of Bowl for Kids Sake, presented East Gwillimbury Mayor James Young, with the Trophy for the Chair's Challenge. The Chair's Challenge was put to Mayors to raise \$50 for every 1,000 people in their municipality. The Chairs challenge helped raise \$29,451 of the \$220,000 raised in 2004. Mayor Young won the challenge by raising \$98 for every 1,000 people in his municipality.

Law Enforcement Motorcycle Ride for the Prevention of Child Abuse

York Regional Council received a presentation from York Regional Police Services on the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness. The Newmarket-based national charity supports programs for victims of crime.

Regional Council endorsed the charity's main Law Enforcement Motorcycle Ride for the prevention of Child Abuse event which takes place on Saturday, July 17th, 2004.



Council Highlights

YRT Ridership Increases

York Region Transit's (YRT) conventional service ridership increased in March by 42 per cent over 2003. Much of this increase is due to the acquisition of GO Transit's Yonge and Bayview routes in September 2003. Without these routes, the service still exceeded expectations with a 9.9 per-cent increase.

Mobility Plus Transit for passengers with special needs increased by 17.2 per cent over the same period.

Volume Incentive Pass (VIP) Program

To encourage transit ridership, York Regional Council has approved a one-year pilot for the York Region Transit (YRT) Volume Incentive Pass (VIP) Program.

The VIP program will allow organizations in York Region to purchase YRT passes at a 15 per-cent discounted price, based on a commitment to purchase at least 15 passes per month for a minimum of 12 months. The passes can then be re-sold to employees, to be used on YRT services. The pilot is set to begin in September 2004.

2004 Traffic Safety Improvement Program

York Regional Council today received a report outlining the 2004 Traffic Safety Improvement Program. The program provides staff with a list of intersections and roadway links where statistical analysis has indicated a potential for a significant reduction in collisions through the application of various road safety improvement measures.

The program includes:

- Roadway Resurfacing Capital projects
- Traffic Signal System upgrades
- Capital Intersection improvements
- 10-Year Improvement Capital Plan
- Road improvements

Markham Source Separated Organics Program Communication Plan

York Regional Council has approved a Communication Plan for the introduction of a Source Separated Organics (SSO) program commencing in Markham this fall.

Consultations will take place with the area municipalities, and public information sessions will be held.

York Region staff will work closely with Markham staff to ensure there is no duplication of efforts.

The Plan will highlight the three-stream waste collection program, efforts to divert waste from landfills, and the necessity of an SSO program and enhanced Blue Box program to increase diversion to the 60 per-cent level recently established by the Government of Ontario.

Revised Draft ROPA 43 to be discussed at Statutory Public Meeting

Regional Council approved a recommendation to hold a Statutory Public Meeting on the evening of Tuesday, June 24, 2004 to review the latest version of Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 43.

The idea of concentrating development in a network of centres and corridors to focus growth and infrastructure investment has been a key objective of the Regional Official Plan for the past 10 years. Enhancements proposed under ROPA 43 support this goal through good planning.

A key objective of the ROPA 43 process has been to provide clear and supportive policy direction to bolster city-building efforts at the local level, which occurs through local Official Plans, zoning by-laws, site plan control and programs.

Changes made to the draft policies attempt to clarify the scope and purpose of the ROPA in a way that strengthens the efforts at the local municipalities, as well as incorporates comments received to date by area municipal staff and councils and the public.

Study indicates homelessness efforts need to focus on prevention

Results of a homelessness evaluation study received by Council concluded that there is an increasing need in York Region to focus on preventing our most vulnerable residents from becoming homeless.

Preventing Homelessness in York Region: Taking the Next Steps states that although absolute homelessness is not highly visible in the Region as it is in more urban centres such as Toronto, prevention is the key to avoiding a homelessness crisis in the future.

The study indicates that while crisis supports are critical, there is increasing pressure on those at risk, who may be only one event away from starting the spiral that can lead to homelessness. Because of low incomes, insecure employment, lack of affordable housing, domestic violence, a mental health or addiction problem or lack of social support, a number of households are in unstable housing situations.

Staff will develop an Action Plan that assesses the feasibility of the Study's recommendations, as well as proposes implementation strategies. Staff will also take advantage of the opportunity posed by York Region's Growth Management Strategy by incorporating the Action Plan into the work of the Growth Management Committee. This will allow the Region to apply a "prevention lens" that looks for opportunities to support vulnerable residents across all Regional initiatives. The draft Action Plan is expected to go before Regional Council in the fall.

Copies of *Preventing Homelessness in York Region: Taking the Next Steps* will be distributed to the community by early June and will be available on the York Region Web site at www.region.york.on.ca

Research findings outline needs of youth homelessness in York Region

Findings of research completed by Pathways for Children, Youth and Families of York Region received by Council identified that youth at its Home Base drop-in centre are significantly at-risk of becoming homeless or are currently homeless and require multi-service approach to meet their needs. The purpose of the research was to understand the full range of needs of homeless youth, aged 13 to 24 years of age.

Funded through the federal government's Supporting Community Partnerships Initiatives fund, which is managed by York Region on behalf of the community, findings of the research are consistent with findings of the Region's 2001 Emergency Shelter study and with preliminary findings of the Region's Homelessness Evaluation Study. The Region and service agencies will be able use Pathway's research to make more informed decisions on service needs and issues specific to homelessness and at-risk youth.

Region celebrates National EMS Week with launch of new high visibility look

As part of National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week, York Region EMS introduced to Regional Council, its new high-visibility decal package to its fleet of paramedic ambulances. The new decal package consists of fluorescent colours, which are up to three times brighter than non-fluorescent colours. The added visibility of the new decal package will aid motorists in recognizing approaching EMS vehicles sooner, allowing ample opportunity to react.

York Region EMS has a total fleet of 35 ambulances. To date, five ambulances have the new high visibility branding, with an additional 16 vehicles to be added in 2004 (14 replacement vehicles, with two new vehicles added in the fleet). New EMS vehicles joining the fleet over the next few years through attrition will receive the new high visibility decal package, until all vehicles have been outfitted.

York Region Export Development Initiative continues

Council approved the contract extension of the Region's two Export Advisors, allowing the Region's Export Development Initiative (EDI) to continue to December 2004.

Launched in 2000, the purpose of the York Region EDI is to familiarize local companies with the programs and information needed to succeed in the global marketplace. For the first three years, the program was funded by Human Resources Development Canada. In order to maintain the success it has achieved in the past, the EDI became a Region-funded initiative since 2003.

Businesses can speak with an Export Advisor from the York Region Export Development Initiative by calling the toll-free hotline at 1-877-464-9675, Ext. 1554. Inquiries can also be sent via e-mail at export@region.york.on.ca or by fax at (905) 895-3482.

Council adopts annual report on progress of *Vision 2026*

Council adopted *Towards the Vision: Second Annual Report on Indicators of Progress*, which continues to meet the objectives of reporting on the progress of *Vision 2026*, the Region's 25-year strategic plan, to the residents of York Region.

Developed through extensive consultation with the public and staff, this year's annual report builds on the first report by providing comparisons of the Region's progress to last year's measures where possible and by listing achievements, innovations and successes under the *Vision 2026* action areas.

Towards the Vision: Second Annual Report on Indicators of Progress is available from the York Region Web site at www.region.york.on.ca Printed copies are also upon request by calling 1-866-258-2026, or by e-mailing vision2026@region.york.on.ca

Employment growth continues to exceed provincial and national average

Employment growth in York Region continues to exceed both provincial and national averages, notes the *Employment and Industry 2003* survey that was received by Regional Council. Additionally, York Region's business expansion across a variety of industry sectors continues to insulate the Region from sudden shifts in the business cycle.

Produced annually, the *Employment and Industry* report provides insight into emerging patterns of employment growth and economic development within York Region. It is also intended to evaluate York Region's employment and economic performance within a national and provincial perspective.

The report is based on information collected from a door-to-door survey conducted with businesses located in selected employment areas and rural community centres in York Region between May and August of 2003. With assistance from area municipalities, over 19,110 companies were contacted in 2003, with a 69.8 per-cent response rate. These 13,340 firms accounted for an estimated 53.1 per cent of total Regional businesses in 2003.

York Region's *Employment and Industry 2003* will be available from the York Region Web site in June at www.region.york.on.ca Printed copies will also be available upon request from the Region's Planning and Development Services Department by calling 1-877-464-9675, Ext. 1550.



Council Highlights

York Region's economy continued to grow and diversify in 2003

Despite many economic challenges in Canada last year, York Region's economy continued to grow and diversify, according to the Region's *Economic and Development Review 2003*, which was received by Regional Council.

Published semi-annually since 1995, the Region's *Economic & Development Review* provides statistics and an analysis of key economic and demographic indicators in York Region.

Used by Regional Council, as well as the public and private sectors as baseline information to prepare such things as economic investment strategies, the *Economic and Development Review 2003* will be circulated in June by York Region's Planning and Development Services Department to area municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade, other business groups, libraries and other key stakeholders in the Region.

It will also be available from the Region's Web site at www.region.york.on.ca and upon request by calling 1-877-464-9675, Ext. 1550.

Compiled by Masrine Guthrie-Peart, Communications Account Specialist, York Region Corporate Communications, (905) 830-4444 or 1-877-464-9675, ext. 1236. Email: masrine.guthrie-peart@region.york.on.ca

The contents of this summary are intended to be for information purposes only. Actual text of Council resolutions and official copies of reports to Council can be obtained from the York Region Web site at www.region.york.on.ca under Regional Council.