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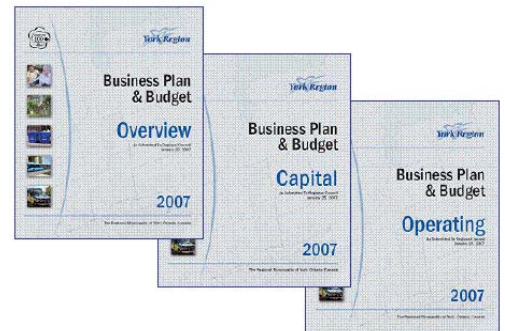
For Immediate Release

York Regional Council approves 2007 Business Plan and Budget

The Regional Municipality of York benefits from GTA pooling elimination, gas tax revenue

NEWMARKET – York Regional Council today approved The Regional Municipality of York's *2007 Business Plan and Budget* which features a continued investment in York Region's capital infrastructure including major roads construction, transit and rapid transit expansion, increased water/wastewater capacity and enhancements to Policing; a debt reduction strategy and a capital asset replacement program.

"The Provincial Government's announcement to phase out GTA pooling and the continued commitment of senior levels of government to share gas tax revenue have factored significantly in York Region's own budget process and final outcome," said York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch. "Added to this is York Region's commitment to reducing the Regional debt and contingency planning for our infrastructure and assets. The end result is York Region's *2007 Business Plan and Budget* will ensure that York Region taxpayers' service needs are met both now and into the future."



The \$1.8 billion *2007 Business Plan and Budget* – which factors in 3.3 per cent assessment growth – includes a 4.8-per cent tax levy. The resulting impact for the average York Region home with an assessment value of \$371,000 is approximately \$80 for the year or 22 cents a day.

A 5.3-per cent tax levy was originally proposed when the Budget was tabled at Regional Council on January 25th and was reduced following review by Regional committees and staff.

"This is a sensible budget which will ensure that York Region's communities can meet growth-related challenges and continue to enhance the quality of life of all of our citizens," said Town of Newmarket Mayor Tony Van Bynen, Chair of the Region's Finance and Administration Committee. "Regional staff is to be commended for all of their hard work for bringing this budget to fruition and for helping to ensure that York Region taxpayers are receiving value-added services for their tax dollars."

The Regional budget includes approximately \$1.2 billion in operating costs required to maintain existing services and outlines \$565 million for capital expenditures, including costs required for the ongoing maintenance and replacement of existing assets as well as growth and service improvements, including:

- Major road construction and improvement projects
- Expanded transit routes and new transit vehicles
- Additional police officers, vehicles and civilian support staff
- Expanded water/wastewater facilities and additional capacity
- Continued implementation of the Source Separated Organics program (Green bins)

(Please refer to accompanying Media Backgrounders for detailed information on specific service areas.)

Major factors in York Region's 2007 *Business Plan and Budget* include:

Phased Elimination of GTA Pooling

- The 2007 Provincial Budget included an announcement of a phased elimination of the GTA Pooling program, commencing in 2007 and concluding in 2013. (GTA Pooling is the money collected from York, Peel and Halton Regions, remitted to the Ontario Government and then distributed the City of Toronto and Durham Region to assist with their Social Housing and Social Assistance costs.)
- York Region's 2007 GTA pooling requirements are capped at the 2004 level of \$79.5 million and further offset by the elimination of \$9.5 million from the Province's Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (2006/2007) – representing a net GTA pooling reduction of \$6.5 million. Annual reductions of \$13 million commence in 2008 and continue through 2013 inclusive.
- The \$6.5 million will be allocated to debt reduction.

Gas Tax Revenues

- The Region continues to receive gas tax revenues in 2007 from the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario.
- These revenues are committed to fund investment in transit Capital and Operating programs.
- They remain at the 2006 level in the 2007 Operating budget in the amount of \$11.3 million.
- The remaining gas tax revenues of \$11.4 million for 2007 are allocated to the capital program to reduce the requirement for new debt and ease debt financing.

Debt Reduction and Capital Asset Replacement

- The 2007 budget includes provision for allocation to reserves of \$6.1 million, or one per cent, for capital asset replacement to respond to needed rehabilitation and replacement as required.
- A further \$6.1 million, or one per cent, is allocated in the budget to the capital pay-as-you-go program intended to reduce reliance on new debt and ease the burden on future tax levy related to debt service costs.

York Region is responsible for the delivery of 13 core services to residents and businesses:

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Arterial Roads | • Public Health | • Court Administration |
| • Regional Transit (YRT/Viva) | • Police Services | • Family and Children's Services |
| • Water and Wastewater Treatment | • Long Term Care | |
| • Social Assistance | • Social Housing | |
| • Solid Waste | • Emergency Medical Services | |
| | • Planning and Economic Development | |

York Region follows a number of performance measurement activities for business planning and budgeting. York Region is a member of the Ontario Municipal CAO's Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI), a partnership project with 15 municipalities which share performance statistics and best practices, and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), which has established standardized reporting for budgets and financial statements.

Regional Staff will now commence work on revised budget forecasts for 2008-2010 and deliberate on allocation options for GTA Pooling dollars for future years.

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For more information on The Regional Municipality of York, please visit www.york.ca

Media Contact: Ken Turriff, Corporate Communications, York Region
Phone: (905) 830-4444 / toll-free 1-877-464-9675, Ext. 1226
Cell: (905) 251-6415 / Email: ken.turriff@york.ca