



York Regional Council Highlights

September 23, 2004

Immigrant research and inclusivity action plan

Regional Council received a report regarding a summary of initiatives to study and address the issue of ethno-cultural diversity in York Region. The changing demographics of York Region are an important consideration in its growth management strategy. The importance of a skilled labour force and the inclusion of immigrants in both the workforce, and as fully participating citizens, are critical to the growth of York Region as a strong, caring and safe community. The following are three initiatives that are contributing to this vision:

- Human Services Planning Coalition's (HSPC) development of an inclusivity action plan is scheduled for completion in November. The plan will include three themes: improving communication, promoting ethno-cultural representation, and creating ethno-cultural awareness.
- HSPC-York University Research Partnership, if funded, will provide practical research on the patterns of settlement of immigrants in York Region, and the implications for both human service providers and settlement service agencies. Response to the application funding from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council is expected in November.
- York Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch is a member of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). One of its initiatives was Careerbridge, an internship program of which York Region received two interns. The second initiative is a mentoring program where York Region is one of three pilot sites that will be launched this fall.

Residential intensification below target

Regional Council received a report regarding the results of a Residential Intensification Study recently conducted in York Region.

Based on initial findings, the percentage of intensification for the 1990-2003 period was 16.9%, below the 20% minimum target set in the Region's current Official Plan. However, the rate of intensification is increasing. Based on the inventory of compact development under construction and assuming that total housing growth over the next three years will continue at the historical rate, the Region's intensification would equate to a figure of 30 to 35%. This is in keeping with Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 43 which proposes a 30% minimum target. The Province of Ontario's discussion paper, *Places to Grow – A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* proposes that a minimum of 40% of the expected growth in the Region occur through intensification in existing developed areas.



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Composter promotion a success

A report to Regional Council has detailed the success of a joint composter sales program between the Region and the local municipalities.

The program was established this year to expand upon work being done by the local municipalities, to help divert more organic waste from landfills.

The program subsidizes the cost of backyard composters for sale to residents. The Region has allocated \$50,000 to the project, and has seen nearly 3,500 units sold in five separate events. Of these, a recent event in Vaughan saw the sale of over 1,200 units in just over two hours.

The report recommends the continuation of these events, with even more composters for sale to meet the obvious high demand.

Litter prevention strategy

York Region is set to unveil its Five-Year Litter Prevention strategy in October 2004.

Following a study in 2003, litter was recognized as a major societal and environmental problem in the communities of York Region. The strategy aims to change resident behaviour towards littering through advertising, public education and a number of litter clean-up events.

York Region will also be working with the local municipalities to expand upon existing anti-litter initiatives.

King City Sanitary Servicing project moves forward

The Certificate of Approval (C of A) for the first phase of the King City Sanitary Servicing project was received from the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) on July 30, 2004. Construction will begin as early as October, commencing on four contracts to build: a pumping station, a forcemain, local sewers and a GO Transit rail crossing with link to the York Durham Sewage System (YDSS).

A flyer, titled *At Your Service*, has been distributed to King City residents, apprising them of the project's status. The project is expected to be completed by fall 2008.



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Infrastructure Design and Construction Capital construction program update

In early 2004, Region Council approved an unprecedented Capital Budget of \$812.7 million, including \$596 million for roads, water and wastewater programs. Of this amount \$392 million was allocated for design and construction.

This program is the largest in York Region's history, with an aggressive schedule for completion. Excellent progress has been made to date in its implementation, which includes:

Roads:

- 5 major arterial projects from 2003 completed
- 20 roadways under construction for 2004
- 5 more to be tendered

Water:

- 6 major water capital projects from 2003 completed
- 13 major water projects under construction for 2004
- 11 more to be tendered

Wastewater:

- 3 major wastewater capital projects completed from 2003
- 8 major wastewater projects under construction for 2004
- 4 more to be tendered

With a few exceptions, the Capital Plan is running on-track for 2004. When complete, these capital works will add greatly needed infrastructure to support growth across the Region.

YRT ridership increases

As of July 2004, York Region Transit (YRT) ridership increased 11.6 per cent year-to-date over 2003, with nearly 7.8 million passengers.

Should the increased ridership trend continue, it will mark the fourth consecutive year that YRT has achieved ridership increases of 10 per cent or more.



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York Region Transit revised fares for 2005

York Regional Council has moved to standardize cash fares at \$2.25 for 2005, as part of an overall fare restructuring. The move will bring fares in line with other Greater Toronto Area (GTA) transit services, which have already moved to standardize cash prices.

Among the changes, tickets for adults, students and children will increase by 10 cents, while tickets for seniors will remain unchanged.

The revisions will allow YRT to collect just over \$1 million in additional revenue, required to fund additional operational expenditures for 2005 and meet forecast cost recovery targets.

YRT remains one of the most economical transit systems in the GTA, and a far less expensive option than automobile use.

York Region approves Georgina Official Plan Amendment 93

Regional Council approved a recommendation that the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be authorized to give notice to approve the Town of Georgina's Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 93, subject to modifications and site specific deferrals.

OPA 93 advances Georgina and York Region's growth management approach to direct growth and redevelopment to designated areas. It:

- Updates the existing Secondary Plan
- Introduces a business park study area outside of the existing urban area
- Advances the concept of an additional Highway 404 interchange at Glenwoods Avenue

The proposed changes to the Secondary Plan conform with the Regional Official Plan and represents good planning.

York Region responds to *Places to Grow – A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*

Regional Council approved recommendations in a report that will serve the basis for York Region's response to the Province of Ontario's discussion paper entitled *Places to Grow – A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*.

Places to Grow represents a significant provincial commitment to ensure that Greater Golden Horseshoe municipalities have the tools to accommodate an estimated additional four million residents over the next



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30 years in a manner that is sustainable from social, environmental and economic perspectives.

The Province's recommendations are consistent with York Region's Official Plan and ongoing strategic initiatives to manage growth in a sustainable manner. The Region supports the overall directions of *Places to Grow* and makes 30 recommendations.

York Region appoints two new members to its Accessibility Advisory Committee

York Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch has appointed Zahra Brown of Richmond Hill and Diane Humeniuk of Newmarket to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), effective immediately until November 2006.

These new appointments to the York Region AAC are being made at this time to fill a vacancy that came open when an existing member, Anwar Yussuf, resigned from the Committee because he was moving out of the Region. The second appointment will ensure that the York Region AAC continues to meet the requirements for the Committee as included in the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA).

The York Region AAC advises York Region on its implementation of the ODA. The purpose of the ODA is to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities through the identification, removal and prevention of physical and other barriers.

The York Region AAC is comprised of 12 members, a majority of whom are people with disabilities. The membership includes citizens from across York Region as well as three members from Regional Council (the Regional Chair and CEO is an ex-officio member).

Region to implement Provincial Rent Bank Program

Regional Council approved a recommendation to enter into the Provincial Rent Bank Program Grant agreement to access one-time funding of \$639,133, which will be allocated over two years in 2005 and 2006.

Seventy-five per cent of initial funding will be used to expand the Region's existing Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP), which has been operated by the Salvation Army since 2001. The HPP provides one-time assistance to people who are at risk of losing their home and individuals who are homeless or residing in a temporary shelter. In addition to rental arrears, a household can apply to HPP for other types of financial assistance such as first and last month's rent or emergency medical expenses.

The remaining 25 per cent of funding will be used to complement Social Assistance's Ontario Works (OW) discretionary benefits for clients with extraordinary expenses over and above their basic needs. This can include funds for rental arrears to prevent an OW recipient from eviction. This OW discretionary benefit will also be extended to Ontario Disability Support Program recipients.



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Housing Supply Strategy 2004/2005 Work Plan

Regional Council has endorsed a 2004/2005 work plan that will further implement its Housing Supply Strategy. Many of the steps outlined in the Strategy, which was endorsed in June 2002, have been implemented. This groundwork, combined with steps that will be taken in 2004/2005 and future years, will encourage and support the supply of affordable housing and provide more housing choices for the residents of York Region.

The work plan will continue and enhance those successes already achieved in the following areas:

- Direct delivery of new affordable housing
- Partnerships in the development of new affordable housing
- Affordable home ownership
- Community awareness
- Advocating Federal and Provincial Governments roles
- Growth management
- Homelessness
- Monitoring progress

Long Term Care and Services Branch receives three-year accreditation standing

York Region Health Services' Long Term Care and Services Branch was awarded a full three-year accreditation standing by the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation (CCHSA). The Long Term Care (LTC) and Seniors Branch encompasses the Newmarket Health Centre, Maple Health Centre, LTC Supportive Housing/Assisted Community Living (ACL) and LTC Day and Outreach Programs.

Participation in the accreditation program is voluntary, and the highest level of accreditation a health service organization is eligible to receive is three years.

A survey of the Branch's programs was conducted in May 2004. During this survey, all programs and services were found to be meeting a very high compliance of CCHSA standards. These standards are client focussed and address all aspects of the facility operations, from accounting practices and administration, to dental care and community support programs, to safety and security and volunteer services.



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Former Mayor of East Gwillimbury passes away

Regional Council acknowledged the passing of Angus Morton, former Mayor of East Gwillimbury. He passed away on September 21st, 2004, following a brief illness. As the Mayor of East Gwillimbury, Mr. Morton played an instrumental role, both in his community, and as an integral member of York Regional Council. The former Mayor served on Regional Council for nine years – beginning in January 1977 until late 1985. Regional Council offered their sympathies to the family and friends of Angus Morton. He will be missed by family, friends and the community.

Communities in Bloom

The City of Vaughan and Township of King received special recognition for recent wins in the Provincial Communities in Bloom Competition. The volunteers, staff, residents and businesses worked together to impress the judges in all areas of the competition.

Recognition

Regional Council has recognized October 20th as Character Community Day in York Region. Regional Council also recognized October 18th to 24th as Waste Reduction Week

Greenlands Property Securement

Regional Council authorized the contribution of the lessor of \$750,000, or 25 per cent of the appraised value towards the acquisition of the Slokker Property. The property is a parcel of land, approximately 170 acres, located on the Oak Ridges Moraine in the Township of King.

The acquisition of the property is conditional upon:

- The Region taking ownership of and managing the tablelands (approximately 95 acres)
- The Province committing 50% of the funds (\$1,500,000) to the project in a timely fashion
- Successful fundraising by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust (ORMLT) for the balance of the purchase amount (\$750,000)



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