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## Media Release

### Council Highlights

May 26, 2017

#### **York Regional Council Highlights - May 25, 2017**

#### **York Region Chief of Staff Lina Bigioni receives Civic Leadership Award**

York Region Chief of Staff, Office of the Regional Chair, Lina Bigioni received the York Regional Police Civic Leadership Award in recognition of her outstanding commitment to community giving. York Region Chairman and CEO Wayne Emmerson recognized the achievement and offered congratulations on behalf of Regional Council. The Award for Civic Leadership was created by The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board to recognize the highest level of excellence in Civic Leadership.

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#### **York Region Rapid Transit Chief Engineer Paul May named Top Public Works Leader**

York Region Chairman and CEO Wayne Emmerson joined Mary-Frances Turner, President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation in recognizing Paul May, York Region Rapid Transit Chief Engineer, for being named to the American Public Works Association 2017 Top Ten Public Works Leaders of the Year. The award honours excellence and dedication for public works professionals in the private and public sectors. Paul began his career with York Region in 1988. His career achievements include planning and implementing the first phase of Viva rapid transit and overseeing complex rapid transit projects on behalf of the Region, totalling over \$3 billion in new infrastructure.

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#### **York Region receives \$34.8 million in funding through the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund**

Twenty-nine new water and wastewater projects in York Region have been approved for funding under the Government of Canada's Clean Water and Wastewater Fund. Through this program, the Government of Canada provides up to 50 per cent and the Province of Ontario provides up to 25 per cent of total eligible project costs. Funding recipients provide for the balance.

A total of \$34.8 million in funding will be directed to projects ensuring safe provision of water and wastewater services, including:

- Sewer rehabilitation
- Phosphorus reduction testing
- Watermain replacement
- Pumping station rehabilitation
- Flood Control with Structural Sewer Replacement

## New York Regional Police marine facility on the way in Town of Georgina

York Region has purchased land at 20 Bonnie Boulevard in Jackson's Point in the Town of Georgina to build a new York Regional Police marine facility. The 8,600-square foot site will help meet growing safety demands on Lake Simcoe and enhance local community safety. The facility will include office space, three boat slips and a storage facility with completion expected in late 2018. The decision was confirmed at the May 18 Regional Council meeting.

## Seniors play an important role in York Region

York Region recognizes Seniors' Month this June and the important role seniors play in the community.

This year's theme "Living Your Best Life" marks the 33rd anniversary of the celebration highlighting how seniors have built our communities and continue to contribute their time and talents.

Over the next 15 years, the number of seniors in York Region is projected to grow to over 310,000, with 21 per cent of the population age 65 and older by 2031. York Regional Council approved the York Region Seniors Strategy - Thinking Ahead in November 2016 to respond to the needs of York Region's growing senior population.

## York Region recognizes Pride Week June 9 to 18

York Region recognizes Pride Week and the 17th Annual Pride Week Festival June 9 to 18 to celebrate a safe, inclusive and discrimination-free community for all citizens.

The York Pride Fest festival joins others across Canada to bring visibility to the LGBT+ community. Pride Week offers many events, including a parade, live entertainment, community fair, celebration of Canada's 150th anniversary and other family-friendly activities.

## Council and Committee meetings to be video streamed starting fall 2018

York Regional Council approved the installation of video streaming hardware, software and other controls in the Council Chambers to be installed in July and August 2018.

York Regional Council and Committee of the Whole meetings currently stream live audio, accompanied by a video feed of presentation material. Council and Committee of the Whole meeting schedules and live audio streaming is available at [york.ca](http://york.ca)

## **York Region seeks new revenue sources to help fund infrastructure projects**

York Regional Council will request the Province provide York Region with the revenue powers available under the City of Toronto Act to help fund growth-related infrastructure and provide for the upkeep of existing infrastructure in a financially sustainable way

York Region's revenue raising powers are currently limited to property taxes, development charges, user fees, fines and penalties and investment income. In recent years, the Region has made progress towards financial sustainability by adopting a fiscal strategy and a plan to achieve full cost recovery for water and wastewater services. However, the twin objectives of accommodating growth and achieving financial sustainability can only be met with new revenue sources.

York Regional Council approved the 2017 Development Charge Bylaw. In addition, Council directed staff to bring back a report and a proposed bylaw amendment on or before March 31, 2018, to include additional road projects in the charge.

## **Timeline for 2018 budget approved**

York Regional Council approved the timeline for preparation of the 2018 budget. This will be the final year of the current multi-year budget.

The 2018 budget will be tabled before Council in November 2017 with final budget approval scheduled for December 14. As this budget will cover the final year of this Council's term of office, budgets for 2019 and beyond will be part of a new multi-year budget developed for the next term of Council.

## **York Region's \$14.4 million investment in local hospitals is investment in community health**

The Regional Municipality of York will contribute \$14.4 million in 2017 capital funding to York Region hospitals to support continued quality care for residents.

Under an ongoing Memorandum of Understanding with four local hospitals, York Region provides potential funding of at least \$12 million per year through 2031. Annual funding amounts are adjusted for hospital performance and assessment

growth, and divided among the four local hospitals: Mackenzie Health Richmond Hill, Markham Stouffville Hospital, Southlake Regional Health Centre and Mackenzie Health Vaughan.

In 2016, all local hospitals met the paramedic off-load target of 30 minutes. Timing for off-load is calculated from when an ambulance arrives at hospital with a patient to the time hospital staff assume patient care. If the 30-minute off-load target is not achieved, capital funding provided to the hospital may be reduced to address operating costs incurred by York Region Paramedic Services to maintain response time targets.

York Region has a long history of contributing to hospital capital costs. The Province of Ontario funds up to 90 per cent of hospital construction, accounting for approximately 65 per cent of total cost. The remaining 35 per cent is funded from community sources.

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### **York Region Newcomer Strategy supports warm welcome for new resident**

The Regional Municipality of York 2017 to 2021 Newcomer Strategy supports York Region's vision for a welcoming and inclusive community where newcomers are supported, engaged and thriving.

By 2031, an estimated 55 per cent of York Region's population will be immigrants and 62 per cent will be members of a visible minority group. The Newcomer Strategy helps connect newcomers – York Region residents who have lived in Canada less than 10 years – to the right jobs for their skills and experience, and the right resources to feel connected and engaged in the community. The strategy also aims to strengthen links between employers and newcomers to meet labour growth needs in coming years.

Work is already underway on a number of actions under the strategy, such as:

- Planning the next York Region Internationally Educated Professionals conference for fall 2017
- Developing and promoting tools supporting the Diversity and Inclusion Charter for York Region
- Refreshing the yorkwelcome.ca portal to better meet newcomer and service provider needs
- Working with partners to research and better understand social resiliency in the community

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### **York Region Greening Achievements continue to meet and exceed targets**

The Regional Municipality of York reported another successful year of achievements through its Greening Strategy, a blueprint for actions which help protect and preserve our natural environment.

In 2016, York Region surpassed all targets to preserve and enhance green spaces with accomplishments in the areas of tree planting, education and outreach. Achievements include planting more than 93,000 trees and engaging residents at over 200 environmental outreach events.

Building on successes in 2016, the Region is now recognized as Canada's first Monarch butterfly-friendly Region through

the United States National Wildlife Federation (NWF). This designation reaffirms York Region's commitment to encourage residents to create monarch butterfly habitat and support the sale and use of native plants.

York Region will continue to work with partners to advance priorities set out in the Greening Strategy. York Region's current canopy cover is 31 per cent and every tree planted helps meet the goal of 35 per cent canopy cover by 2031.

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## **York Region community funding supported nearly 60,000 residents in 2016**

The Regional Municipality of York invested \$5.8 million in the Community Investment Strategy, transit ticket and refugee support programs in 2016, bringing assistance to nearly 60,000 residents in need.

The Community Investment Strategy invested \$5.5 million in 51 projects in 2016 providing low and moderate income residents access to human services through community agencies to improve their health, housing and economic independence.

Through the Region's Community Partnership Council (CPC), consisting of representatives from government, settlement, language, business, education, health and police sectors, York Region quickly responded to the federal Refugee Resettlement Initiative of 2016 by establishing the Refugee Planning Table for York Region. More than 1,000 refugees benefitted in 2016 from a \$200,000 Regional investment to support housing, clothing and employment skills.

Additionally, through the Transit Ticket Program, more than \$100,000 in YRT/Viva transit tickets were provided to 54 community agencies to help residents access groceries, food programs, education and training, job opportunities and medical services.

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## **Legalization of cannabis poses impacts for Canadian municipalities**

The federal government's plan to legalize cannabis for recreational use by July 2018 poses financial, policy and program impacts for Canadian municipalities.

Although responsibility for overseeing legalization will be shared by federal, provincial and territorial governments, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario has created a task force to identify potential issues for municipalities.

Municipal impacts may include increased policing costs for impaired driving and criminal activity, enforcement costs for compliance with production, distribution and consumption guidelines, public health costs for education and response to addiction and mental health issues, as well municipal planning, zoning and licensing implications.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario is recommending solutions to the federal and provincial government, such as:

- Funding for municipalities to support public safety and health

- New or enhanced powers to address business licensing, zoning and siting and the authority for municipalities to “opt-out”
- Updated federal regulations related to medical marijuana issues to prevent similar problems with recreational marijuana

Authority for municipalities to impose local excise tax for products sold within their boundaries

York Region staff will monitor progress as provincial and federal government consultation continues.

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### **Updated Ontario Public Health Standards protect community health**

York Region Public Health recently reviewed and provided feedback on updated Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) developed by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

On February 27, 2017, updated standards were released to public health units for review and feedback. Updates included addition of visual health supports and vision screening for pre-teen and kindergarten-aged children, development of new accountability requirements and increased flexibility to plan, deliver and modify programs and services based on local community needs.

York Region Public Health will monitor new developments and participate in further consultations as the standards are finalized. Implementation of revised standards is expected in 2018.

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### **York Region to enter Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension maintenance agreements**

York Regional Council has approved agreements for the operation and maintenance of the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension. The agreements identify responsibilities and coordination of service between the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and York Region Transit (YRT/Viva) in relation to the subway extension.

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### **Customer service, education and public outreach highlighted in YRT/Viva Enforcement and Security success**

York Regional Council received the York Region Transit (YRT/Viva) 2016 Enforcement and Security Annual Report highlighting YRT/Viva’s commitment to providing travellers with a safe and enjoyable experience.

By combining traveller education, outreach and inspection standards, staff successfully provide customer service, education, safety and security, as well as keeping fare evasions low at 1.8 per cent.

## **Natural Gas Buying Group provides energy conservation opportunities**

York Regional Council received an update on the Region's participation in the Natural Gas Buying Group with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

Through collective buying power, York Region is able to secure more competitive pricing while negotiated fixed prices allow for accurate multi-year budgeting.

In 2016, natural gas costs accounted for five per cent of York Region's total energy costs. Use of natural gas has increased approximately eight per cent per year since 2006 as Regional facilities replace electric heating with less costly natural gas.

The Region is continuously evaluating opportunities to conserve energy and will provide updates on the performance of the Buying Group once every three years.

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## **Investment attraction Toronto Global Update**

York Regional Council received an update on the Region's participation in Toronto Global. Formerly known as the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Marketing Alliance, this group focuses on attracting foreign investment to the GTA to develop and maintain a strong Regional economy.

York Region has actively supported the transition to Toronto Global, including:

- Participation in the interim Toronto Global Board of Directors
- Participation in the Economic Development Office Management Council to help create the agreement and support program development
- Support by Regional staff for market research, tours and investment inquiry support

Foreign investment attraction to the GTA is an important part of developing and maintaining a strong Regional economy

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## **Centres and Corridors key to growth in York Region**

York Regional Council received an update on the Region's Centres and Corridors: Markham Centre, Newmarket Centre, Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway and Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. These communities are home to more than 50,000 people and approximately 118,000 jobs and are designed to accommodate a significant share of York Region's population and employment growth.

Since 2013, building permits for approximately 120,000 square metres of office space has been issued in the Region's centres and corridors, making York Region second to the City of Toronto in new Greater Toronto Area office construction.

## New agreement provides important data for York Region Data Consortium

York Regional Council approved a new five-year agreement with the Canadian Council on Social Development to provide community data until March 21, 2022.

York Region joins with over 500 municipalities and community organizations across Canada to participate in The Community Data Program led by the Canadian Council for Social Development. The program allows members to access customized tables from Statistics Canada and other data providers on social and economic development trends in the community.

As a member since 2005, York Region has used the data to inform initiatives such as Making Ends Meet, Immigration Settlement Strategy, Seniors Strategy, 2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan and Housing Solutions: A Place for Everyone. Data will continue to inform program and service delivery.

York Region leads the York Region Data Consortium which allows 13 members to share costs and access to the Community Data Program. By pooling resources, members gain access to over \$1 million of data at a fraction of the cost. Total cost for the 2017 to 2022 agreement is \$99,950, with York Region's portion, including the Region and six local municipalities, totalling \$53,819.

## York Regional Council approves traffic control measures in two locations

Effective June 6, 2017, an all-way stop using stop signs will be in place at the intersection of Major Mackenzie Drive East and Reesor Road in the City of Markham.

A traffic signal will also soon be installed at the intersection of Mount Albert Road and Centre Street in the Town of East Gwillimbury

Traffic controls provide orderly movement of traffic, help reduce right angle and turning collisions and promote pedestrian safety.

## York Region ranks within top 10 Canadian municipalities in growth and development

Development and population indicators highlighted in The Growth and Development Review 2016 report show York Region remains competitive and ranks within the top 10 municipalities in Canada in key economic areas, including construction values and the housing market.

York Region's economy added 15,100 new jobs in 2016, consistent with the steady job growth of approximately three per cent increase annually over the past five years. In addition to employment, York Region also experienced growth in population, increasing an estimated 1.8 per cent to 1,186,900.



Strong growth and development demonstrates York Region continues to be a place where people want to live and companies want to work and invest.

### York Region has housing supply five years and beyond

York Regional Council received an update on housing supply, identifying York Region's short and long-term housing supply continues to exceed requirements set by the Province, as well as the York Regional Official Plan.

The Region currently has housing supply in registered and draft approved units, as well as sufficient regional water and wastewater to accommodate approximately five years. York Region also has 21 to 23 years of designated housing supply, surpassing the 10-year requirements in Regional and Provincial policies.

### Next regular meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, June 29 at 9 a.m. in the York Region Administrative Centre Council Chambers, located at 17250 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket.

The Regional Municipality of York consists of nine local cities and towns, and provides a variety of programs and services to almost 1.2 million residents, 50,000 businesses and 595,000 employees. More information about the Region's key service areas is available at [york.ca/regionalservices](http://york.ca/regionalservices)

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Printed: June 6, 2017