

Thursday, September 26, 2019

## York Regional Council Highlights Thursday, September 26, 2019

### Highway 400-404 Connecting Link Update

York Regional Council received an update on the Highway 400-404 Connecting Link and next steps after the Minister of Transportation announced in August the province will move forward with this critically important infrastructure project.

The Highway 400-404 Connecting Link will support the rapidly growing population of York Region and Simcoe County. With a combined planned population of 2.6 million people by 2041, the Connecting Link will manage growth and support economic development in both areas.

York Region will work with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation as they review impacts and mitigation measures for the project, confirm preferred preliminary design and estimate the project cost.

### York Region annual solid waste diversion report shows 94% diversion from landfill

The Regional Municipality of York achieved 94% diversion from landfill in 2018 as summarized in the [Annual Solid Waste Diversion Report](#).

Highlights of 2018 waste diversion efforts also include collecting:

- 99,065 tonnes of green bin organics
- 83,526 tonnes of blue box recyclables
- 42,287 tonnes of yard waste
- 1,219 tonnes of household hazardous waste
- 1,124 tonnes of electronic waste
- 123,229 tonnes of energy from waste converted

York Region has long advocated for an Ontario-wide effort to reduce litter and waste in our communities. The Region's Integrated Waste Management Master Plan, the [SM4RT Living Plan](#), sets the stage for waste reduction and reuse activities across the Region. It focuses on the four R's of reducing, reusing, recycling and recovering energy-from-waste.

Energy-from-waste captures the energy produced from waste after all diversion efforts have been maximized. This process also lowers greenhouse gas emissions, recovers metals and reduces the volume of waste going to landfill. In 2018, York Region's waste produced enough electricity to power over 3,000 homes and supplied enough industrial steam to heat over 6,000 homes.

To learn more about the plan, visit [york.ca/sm4rtliving](http://york.ca/sm4rtliving)

## **York Region continues to plan for water and wastewater needs of our communities**

York Regional Council received the 2019 Water and Wastewater Capacity Assignment report which outlines steps the Region is taking to ensure the [water and wastewater needs](#) of the community continue to be met. Providing local cities and towns with a capacity assignment of 108,638 persons will support growth to the end of 2026. This is the largest capacity assignment and the longest forecasted planning horizon since allocating the 2005 water and wastewater capacity.

Building on the success of the not-for-profit housing reserve, York Region has also established an additional reserve of 4,000 persons to support purpose-built rental housing initiatives and the Region's commitment to increasing the supply of rental housing. This capacity assignment is well aligned with York Region's Fiscal Strategy and the Regional 10-Year Capital Plan.

Over the past few years the Region has embarked on new, innovative approaches to promote water efficiency and meet future growth needs. Incentive programs, such as the [Inflow and Infiltration Reduction Program](#), allows local cities and towns to leverage their servicing capacity while promoting sustainable residential development.

To ensure the available capacity is not exceeded, York Region will continue to work with our local municipalities to monitor capacity consumption and track the number of registered units and site plan-approved units and report back to Regional Council in 2021 and again in 2023.

## **York Region provides comment on Bill 108, *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019***

York Regional Council provided comments to the provincial government on [Bill 108, \*More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019\*](#) which identifies common themes related to the proposed regulatory framework.

Recommendations on the proposed regulatory framework relating to the development charges and community benefits charges were guided by five principles:

1. Allotting municipalities sufficient time to effectively transition to the new framework
2. Ensuring municipalities can deliver complete communities in a fiscally sustainable way
3. Ensuring municipalities have a clear legislative foundation to implement the changes
4. Ensuring all stakeholders involved in delivering housing supply, including residents, businesses, municipalities and developers, are treated fairly and equitably
5. Recognizing municipalities are at different stages of growth and development, with different infrastructure requirements

While supportive of the proposed regulatory changes to the *Planning Act, 1990*, concerns were raised regarding the appeal process. York Region is also supportive of a number of proposals relating to the *Development Charges Act, 1997*, including those relating to the new community benefits charge.

A number of questions regarding *Development Charges Act, 1997* were raised including:

- Inability to ensure and secure payment for those types of developments that qualify for the phased and delayed development charges
- Defined types of development eligible for phasing of development charge payments appears too broad

Areas of the community benefits charge identified as needing refinement and/or clarification include:

- List types of development exempt from the community benefits charge (i.e. for-profit retirement homes)
- Services ineligible for community benefits charge funding
- Treatment of the charge in a two-tier jurisdiction

Development charges are dependent on the housing market and non-residential revenue. The fees received from these charges are key to the Region funding growth infrastructure and overall debt-management. Current analysis of Bill 108 indicates the Region could realize upwards of a \$300 million reduction in development charge collections over the next five years. This shortfall could require deferrals of growth-related infrastructure projects to avoid taking on unsustainable debt levels.

### **Planning for growth in a fiscally responsible manner**

York Regional Council received an update on the [Region's 2041 growth forecast](#) and endorsed the principle that new infrastructure investment be tied to the achievement of population thresholds.

In line with the Region's fiscal strategy, which provides tools to manage debt and better align capital spending with growth, Council will continue to optimize existing investments in infrastructure before triggering new investments.

While the Region remains committed to delivering the infrastructure required to support growth to 2041, our existing infrastructure investments in [major urban centres](#) can accommodate a significant amount of population growth without taking on additional debt.

Residents and businesses wishing to learn more about the Region's growth plans can visit [york.ca/mcrgetinvolved](http://york.ca/mcrgetinvolved) and share their vision for the future of our communities.

### **Region remains committed to supporting the changing needs of seniors**

York Regional Council received an update on [the performance of the Region's two long-term care homes](#) and implementation of the [Region's Seniors Strategy](#) which looks at the changing senior population, redefines the Region's role in serving seniors and sets a collaborative course for action to best support the aging population over the next 10 to 20 years.

In 2018, the Region continued to deliver exemplary care and services to ensure the safety and comfort of residents including 532 residents supported through 192 long stay long-term care beds, six short stay respite beds and 34 convalescent care beds. Both long-term care homes have made several improvements under a new revitalization plan launched in 2018. Improvements include:

- Implementing enhanced dementia care for residents
- Improving clinical care and other supports to strengthen care across a diverse range of needs
- Improving opportunities for communicating and collaborating with residents, families and staff to strengthen trust, engagement and transparency
- Restructuring nursing leadership and registered and non-registered staffing resources with resident care needs
- Introducing new technologies for providing care and expanded online learning opportunities for staff

The Region remains committed to supporting the changing needs of seniors now and into the future. York Region's Seniors Strategy, launched in 2016, identifies key priority areas in response to the

growing population. Actions on these priority areas are well underway, benefiting residents and caregivers.

### **Innovative service delivery needed to address aging senior population**

York Regional Council [endorsed York Region's submission to the provincial government](#) on its planned seniors strategy. York Region recommends the Ontario government lead and develop innovative service delivery solutions, as well as engage and consult with municipalities, long-term care homes and other senior's organizations to most effectively meet the needs for the seniors population.

York Region's own [Seniors Strategy](#) was approved by Regional Council in 2016 and sets the course for action over the next 10 to 20 years by focusing on the following four areas for action and advocacy to support seniors to age in place:

- Balancing the needs of seniors with all residents
- Keeping seniors healthier, longer
- Supporting age friendly, complete communities
- Connecting seniors and caregivers to the right programs and services at the right time

Consultations were held by the province earlier this year to seek input on how to best support Ontario's aging population. Feedback from the consultations will inform the development of a provincial seniors strategy.

York Region is committed to working collaboratively with industry, provincial, agency and other partners to support the planning, policy and decision making for seniors so they are healthier, connected to their communities and can better age in place.

### **Repairing and improving social housing buildings in York Region**

Housing York completed [important housing repairs and improvements through the Social Housing Improvement Program](#). More than \$5 million in funding was made available to 32 housing providers across York Region.

In 2016, the federal and provincial government committed \$640 million for affordable housing over three years to improve the quality and increase supply of affordable housing across Canada. Housing York, who maintains nearly 40% of total affordable housing units in York Region, received funding in the amount of \$739,484.

Repair and improvements made include:

- Upgrades to HVAC, mechanical and electrical systems
- Retrofits to meet requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act*
- Interior building repairs
- Site and ground upgrades

Housing providers that received funding are required to remain affordable for 10 years after the completion of the funded project, including a minimum of five years in which the provider will operate as social housing under the [Human Services Act, 2011](#).

## **Opioid Action Plan developed to combat increasing opioid use in Region**

York Regional Council [received an update](#) on York Region Public Health's [Opioid Action Plan](#) developed to address opioid use in the Region and support individuals, families and friends impacted by this rising epidemic.

Over 20 community partners worked together and developed the Opioid Action Plan with feedback from people with lived experience. The plan contains recommendations for action based on four key pillars: prevention, first response and enforcement, treatment and harm reduction.

York Region has one of the lowest rates in Ontario of emergency department visits and deaths for opioid overdoses; however emergency visits and hospitalizations have been steadily increasing since 2009. In 2018, there were 40 opioid-related deaths in York Region.

In 2016, the Canadian government identified the opioid crisis as a top priority and asked provinces, territories and other partners across the country to commit to action. York Region's Opioid Action Plan recognizes the different degrees of opioid use and the need for intervention and support.

Launched as an outcome from the plan, [Report Bad Drugs](#) is an online tool to anonymously report harmful drugs and bad reactions to street drugs. The information received may be used as part of the early warning system to alert the community and service providers about drug and overdose concerns.

## **York Regional Council approved participation on Ontario Health Teams**

York Regional Council [approved the Region's participation in two Ontario Health Teams](#) aimed to improve health care delivery and act as a community of providers that guide patients at every age and stage of their health care journey. The Region will partner with the Southlake Community Ontario Health Team and the Eastern York Region and North Durham Ontario Health Team.

The [Connecting Care Act, 2019](#) brings together six provincial agencies and the Local Health Integration Networks into a new provincial agency called [Ontario Health](#). The goal of the new agency is to oversee the delivery of health care services in the province, improve clinical guidance and provide support to ensure better quality of care for patients.

Partnering with local Ontario Health Teams aligns with the Region's strategic priority for supporting community health, safety and well-being. Participation in Ontario Health Teams will create funding opportunities, as well as help ensure residents in York Region will have access to the necessary health and social support services where and when they need them most.

## **Provincial vision screening for students**

The Board of Health [received an update on a request to waive the requirement](#) to implement the Provincial Vision Screening Program as set out in the [Ontario Public Health Standard](#). The Child Visual Health and Vision Screening Protocol, 2018 requires all public health units provide or ensure the provision of vision screening by trained individuals for all students in senior kindergarten on an annual basis. York Region Public Health is currently exploring options to leverage community partners and reduce program costs in order to meet the Ministry requirements to offer vision screening.

## **Mid-year development activity summary**

York Regional Council received the [Mid-Year Development Activity Summary 2019](#) report, which provides an overview of York Region's planning and engineering development approvals within the first half of 2019. In addition to Development Charge revenue totalling \$45,051,970, combined, 2019 site plan and engineering approvals reached their highest level at 130. These achievements directly contribute to the growth and economic vitality of York Region.

Additional highlights include:

- Responding to 256 development applications, surpassing the previous two years
- Responding to 47 Official Plan Amendment applications including approval of plans to accommodate an estimated 19,100 persons and minimum of 1,500 jobs in the City of Vaughan
- Approving 67 plans of subdivision and condominium applications for 4,784 residential units

The Region is also undertaking a [Municipal Comprehensive Review](#) and [Water and Wastewater Master Plan](#) to consider future water and wastewater needs and help ensure we are building communities that are healthy and complete, where residents of all abilities and ages can live work and play.

## **Pedestrian and cyclist safety measures update**

In June 2019, Council adopted the [Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety Improvement Report](#) which included implementing a suite of operational measures on a pilot basis to evaluate effectiveness. Four intersections were selected for implementation of operational safety measures. Staff will be monitoring performance of the safety measures to evaluate safety benefits. Public outreach events will be held at all four pilot locations to inform travellers of the changes.

Improvements can include no right turns on red lights, exclusive left turn signal, pedestrian and cyclist right-of-way signage and advanced pedestrian crossing signal. The following four intersections have been selected for additional safety enhancements this summer:

- Major Mackenzie Drive and Bayview Avenue in the City of Richmond Hill
- Yonge Street and Clark Avenue in the City of Markham
- Bathurst Street and Carrville/Rutherford Road in the City of Richmond Hill
- Bathurst Street and Clark Avenue in the City of Vaughan

## **York Region studying feasibility of east-west cycling and pedestrian corridor**

The Regional Municipality of York is exploring the feasibility of an east-west walking and cycling corridor located within the cities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. The proposed South York Greenway Cycling and Pedestrian Corridor would stretch from approximately the York-Durham Line in Markham, to Highway 50 in Vaughan.

The corridor could connect to north-south trails, such as the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail, as well as connect to several mobility hubs including YRT terminals, GO Stations and current/future subway stations.

## **TTC Routes in York Region now accept PRESTO payment**

Travellers taking TTC routes operating in parts of York Region can now use PRESTO as a payment method for both YRT and TTC fares. These changes result in travellers not needing to carry multiple fare types of cash and instead have the option to carry only a PRESTO card.

There are currently five TTC routes that operate in York Region, four in the City of Markham and one in the City of Vaughan.

## **There's no place like York Region**

Local events, premier amusement parks, art galleries, restaurants, golf courses, family farms and markets, spectacular York Regional Forest trails and waterfront activities make York Region a vibrant place to live, work, visit and invest according to the [2018 Tourism Update](#) received by York Regional Council.

Since 2011, York Region has supported the York Region Arts Council to market and promote York Region as a place to live, work and play. Highlights from the report include:

- More than \$2 million in revenue generated by the [Artrepreneur Business Accelerator Program](#) since 2015
- A 21% increase in traffic to the refreshed [experienceyorkregion.com](#) website
- Participation in 13 local events and festivals, attracting more than 500,000 attendees
- Distribution of 75,000 [York Farm Fresh maps](#)

On September 27, 2019 – World Tourism Day – residents are encouraged to get out and explore the many reasons they #loveyr. For a list of destinations, events, festivals, shopping and dining visit [experienceyorkregion.com](#)

## **York Region receives innovation award for remote testimony projects**

York Region was awarded [the P.J. Marshall Innovation award](#) at the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference in August 2019, recognizing the Region's [remote video testimony project](#).

A collaboration between York Region Courts Services, York Regional Police and Information Technology Services, the remote video testimony project allows York Regional Police officers to provide real-time testimony from police districts into the courtroom. This means residents will enjoy increased public safety due to heightened police presence on the streets as officers will spend less time travelling to and from court appearances.

York Region is the first municipality in Ontario to introduce video testimony in court proceedings. Thanks to the success of the project in York Region other municipalities and law enforcement organizations are considering adopting the initiative.

## **Awards highlight York Region's commitment and achievement in leveraging infrastructure**

York Region received awards from the Ontario Water Works Association (OWWA) and the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering (CSCE) to recognize the Region's achievement in innovation and excellence. The Region has goals to reduce water consumption throughout the Region to allow growth without the need for expensive water infrastructure.

The awards include:

- Ontario Water Works Association's Water Efficiency Committee's 2019 Award of Excellence (Public Sector & Utilities – Programs category)
- Canadian Society for Civil Engineering's Excellence in Innovation in Civil Engineering Award

The Ontario Water Works Association is a leader in the delivery of safe drinking water. OWWA, with the support of its parent organization, the American Water Works Association (AWWA), is at the forefront of research, technology and policy development with respect to safe, sufficient and sustainable drinking water.

The Excellence in Innovation in Civil Engineering Award recognizes excellence in innovation in civil engineering by an individual or a group of individuals practicing civil engineering in Canada.

### **York Region receives Environmental Achievement Award on Bayview project**

The Regional Municipality of York has been awarded the TAC Environmental Achievement Award for the Bayview Corridor Project.

The improvements to Bayview Avenue and 19th Avenue in the City of Richmond Hill not only improved the way people travel, but also the wildlife and brook trout habitat in the newly transformed 4.35 Hectares of land in the area.

In addition to the TAC award, York Region has been recognized with an additional three awards for this project, including [American Public Works Association: Public Works Projects of Year Award](#), [Ontario Public Works Association: Project of the Year Award](#) and [Professional Engineers Ontario: Project of the Year Award](#)

### ***Fore the love of golf!* York Region hosted The Ladies Professional Golf Association tournament**

From August 19 to 25, 2019, York Region welcomed golfers from around the world to the [2019 LPGA Canadian Women's Open](#) at the Magna Golf Club in the Town of Aurora.

As the only Canadian stop on the LPGA tour, the Canadian Women's Open put an international spotlight on York Region, broadcasting to more than 500 million viewers world-wide.

Hosting 90 of the top 100 LPGA tour players, and tens of thousands of golf fans, the 2019 LPGA Canadian Women's Open helped contribute \$15 to \$18 million to our local economy.



### **Representatives from UNITAR visit York Region**

On September 26, 2019 representatives from the [United Nations Institute of Training and Research \(UNITAR\)](#) visited York Region to explore partnership opportunities with York region, York Regional Police and York University.

In 2018, UNITAR visited York Region for two days to discuss how the [Inclusion Charter for York Region](#) can be used as a leading practice model around the world. Further discussion build on this work, and the work York Regional Police are doing to build a Human Rights Classroom at the Community Safety Village.

### **York Region's General Manager of Housing retires**

After 42 years in the affordable housing sector, York Region's General Manager of Housing, Rick Farrell, is set to retire on October 4, 2019.

Recognized for his tireless work in finding innovative housing solutions for some of our most vulnerable residents, York Regional Council wished Rick the best in retirement and thanked him for his decades of dedicated public service.

### **York Region Committee and Council dates for 2020**

York Regional Council approved the Committee and Council calendar for 2020. You can view the dates on the events calendar on [york.ca](#) or stay up to date by downloading York Region's mobile app.

### **Next regular meeting of York Regional Council**

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, October 17 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 1.2 million residents and 52,000 businesses with over 636,600 employees. More information about the Region's key service areas is available at [york.ca/regionalservices](#)

- 30 -

**Compiled by:** Masrine Guthrie-Peart, Corporate Communications,  
The Regional Municipality of York  
Phone: 1-877-464-9675, ext. 71226 Cell: 905-251-6416  
Email: [masrine.guthrie-peart@york.ca](mailto:masrine.guthrie-peart@york.ca)