

Monday, November 25, 2019

York Regional Council – Thursday, November 21, 2019

2020 York Region budget tabled for review

York Region Finance Commissioner and Regional Treasurer Laura Mirabella tabled York Region's 2020 budget, which includes an outlook for 2021 and 2022. This is the second year of a four-year budget plan to coincide with the current term of Council.

For 2020, the proposed \$3.3 billion budget is comprised of \$2.5 billion in operating spending and an \$826-million capital component. The budget proposes a tax levy increase of 2.96% for 2020, equivalent to an additional \$75 on the average residential property tax bill. This is consistent with the four-year outlook approved in 2019.

The budget addresses fiscal challenges through savings and efficiencies while addressing growth-related asset management needs with stable debt levels and higher reserve balances.

The proposed 2020 budget will be reviewed at the Committee of the Whole meetings on December 5 and 12, each beginning at 9 a.m. It is scheduled to be presented to Council for approval on December 19.

Regional Government Review

Regional Council has received an [update](#) on the Province's [review of regional government](#), including the Ontario Government's renewed commitment to strengthening Ontario municipalities and the requirement to complete a review of regional representation in 2020.

York Region looks forward to working with the province and our local cities and towns to further explore ways to optimize service delivery and reduce costs while still providing high-quality programs and services to our residents, businesses and visitors.

York Region's strong credit ratings reaffirmed

Regional Council received an [update](#) on The Regional Municipality of York's credit ratings. Both Moody's Investor Service and S&P Global Ratings recently re-affirmed their credit ratings for the debt issued by the Region, commenting favourably on the Region's strong economy, high liquidity balances and prudent fiscal management.

On July 29, 2019, S&P Global Ratings re-affirmed its AA+ rating, revising the outlook to positive from stable. The positive outlook reflects the possibility that within the next two years, S&P Global Ratings could raise the rating to triple A.

Both rating agencies commented favourably on the Region's strong financial management. These ratings help contribute to the Region's ability to access capital markets.

York Region receives Government Finance Officers Association Budget Award

The Regional Municipality of York received the [Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award](#) for its [2019 budget document](#).

To receive this award, a government agency must publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide and as a means of communication.

This professional association serves more than 20,000 government finance professionals throughout North America, and the award is the highest recognition in governmental budgeting.

York Region is a competitive and economic powerhouse

Regional Council has approved the [Economic Development Action Plan 2020 to 2023](#), which continues to position York Region as a place to invest, live, grow and thrive.

Following the success of previous plans, the updated plan fosters an environment that attracts business, grows employment opportunities and draws talent to York Region's nine cities and towns through the [YorkLink.ca](#) marketing strategy.

Regional Council also endorsed the principles for allocating funding through the [Innovation Investment Fund](#), which supports major innovation infrastructure investments in York Region.

York Region-based Non-Resident Speculation Tax

Effective April 2017, the province introduced a 15% [Non-Resident Speculation Tax](#) on the purchase of residential properties by corporations and/or by individuals who are not citizens or permanent residents of Canada. The province's stated intent of this tax was to help make housing more available and affordable. The tax is in effect only within the Greater Golden Horseshoe Region.

Since implementation, \$394 million has been collected by the province, of which more than \$103 million was received from York Region-based transactions.

In September 2018, York Region requested a portion of this tax revenue to reinvest money into programs that support local affordable housing initiatives. Staff are following up with the Ministry regarding a response, and work continues to find other ways to support this important Council priority.

York Region receives \$17.4 million to support community housing

Regional Council welcomes approximately \$17.4 million over three years through the Federal/Provincial Housing Priorities Initiative, plus a one-time contribution of \$51,493 through the Community Housing Initiative.

[The funding](#) will help York Region and housing providers meet community needs by preserving and increasing the supply of community housing.

2020 to 2023 Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan

Regional Council received York Region's [Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan](#).

The plan sets a vision, priorities and key actions to better use community resources to strengthen and integrate child care and early years services over the next four years for children from birth to the age of 12 and their families.

York Region puts Community Safety and Well-Being first

Regional Council approved the development of a [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan](#) for York Region. The plan will identify and assess risks to community safety and well-being, including strategies to reduce prioritized risks.

Development and finalization of the plan will be submitted for Council adoption in late 2020.

York Region continues to look at ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Regional Council received an update about the ongoing planning and implementation of technology aimed at [reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Regional vehicles](#), including transit.

The Region is reducing greenhouse gas emissions generated by Regional vehicles with a series of initiatives, including:

- Purchase of six electric buses and participation in the Pan-Canadian Electric Demonstration and Integration trail
- Implementing operating procedures to limit bus idling while out of service
- Consideration of purchasing hybrid or electric vehicles as the lifecycles of current vehicles come to an end
- Purchase of 17 hybrid vehicles over the last seven years

York Region continues to reduce its carbon footprint and move towards achieving the overall [goal of zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2051](#).

York Region paramedics recognized for bravery

Two York Region paramedics have been presented with the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery for going above and beyond their day-to-day duties.

In 2017, York Region paramedics Bret Foisy and Richard Morra responded to a distress call at the Holland River. After searching in the dark for 35 minutes they were able to locate the person in distress and quickly treat for hypothermia. As a result of their heroic actions, the person remained safe and has now recovered fully.

Five new parking restrictions on Regional roads

Regional Council has approved [parking and stopping restrictions](#) to address traffic concerns and to help move traffic more efficiently on sections of Warden Avenue, Bayview Avenue, Metro Road and Ninth Line.

Effective immediately, parking restrictions will be in the [following sections of road](#):

- Warden Avenue at 19th Avenue in the City of Markham, both east and west sides, 24 hours a day, seven days a week
 - Metro Road, at Shorecrest Road in the Town of Georgina, on the west side, 24 hours a day, seven days a week
 - Ninth Line, south of Bloomington Road in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, both east and west sides, 24 hours a day, seven days a week
 - Bayview Avenue at High Tech Road in the City of Richmond Hill, on the east side during weekday evening rush hour from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 - Bayview Avenue at High Tech Road in the City of Richmond Hill, directly south and north of High Tech Road, 24 hours a day, seven days a week
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York Region continues to support vibrant communities that invite pedestrians and cyclists

Regional Council approved [updates](#) to the Municipal Streetscape Partnership and Pedestrian and Cycling Partnership Program policies.

Since the implementation of the [Municipal Streetscape Partnership Program](#) in 2006 and the [Pedestrian and Cycling Partnership Program](#) in 2007, York Region and local municipalities have invested over \$34 million to promote projects to enhance active and vibrant communities. Annually, Regional Council commits \$1.5 million to support these locally-initiated programs.

The Region will continue to collaborate with all nine cities and towns, and the conservation authorities in these cost-sharing programs that support community and promote active transportation.

Rutherford Road construction supports more frequent GO service and enhances road travel

Regional Council approved an [agreement with Metrolinx](#) for Rutherford Road to be widened from four to six lanes and will cross underneath the Barrie GO rail corridor.

The Rutherford Road construction between Westburn Drive/Barrhill Road and Confederation Parkway/Peter Rupert Avenue and improvements to the Rutherford GO station will support the GO expansion. This includes all-day frequent service on the Barrie and Stouffville GO rail corridors, improving travel options for residents and businesses. The construction will also minimize delays for road users by removing the increased train traffic from the roadway.

York Region will also make improvements to Rutherford Road/Carrville Road from Jane Street to Yonge Street to meet increasing travel demands, including widening the road and installing multi-use paths.

December 1 is World AIDS Day

York Regional Council has recognized December 1 as [World AIDS Day](#). Celebrated annually, World AIDS Day provides an opportunity for people worldwide to demonstrate support for those living with HIV/AIDS, commemorate those who have passed away and to eliminate stigma and discrimination by raising awareness.

As the only non-profit organization in York Region providing support to residents living with HIV/AIDS, the [AIDS Committee of York Region](#) provides programming, education and advocacy for those impacted by HIV/AIDS, including the annual World AIDS Day [Courageous Conversation event](#) taking place in the City of Richmond Hill on Friday, November 29.

York Regional Council kicks-off Salvation Army campaign

On Thursday, November 14, 2019, members of Regional Council joined local community partners and representatives from the Salvation Army to officially kick-off the 2019 Christmas Kettle campaign.

As one of Canada's largest and most recognizable annual charitable events, the [Salvation Army's Christmas Kettle Campaign](#) seeks donations from the public to help provide practical assistance to individuals and families across Canada. The campaign allows the Salvation Army to continue operating its life-changing programs, such as substance abuse recovery, housing supports, jobs and skills training and budgeting and education classes.

Every dollar donated to a Salvation Army Christmas Kettle remains in the community in which it was given to help local people in need.

Next regular meeting of York Regional Council

Regional Council will meet on Thursday, December 19 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

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