

Media Release

Council Highlights
October 20, 2017

York Regional Council Highlights - October 19, 2017

York Telecom Network Implementation and Board Appointment

York Regional Council approved the incorporation of a York Region-owned entity to operate the YTN Telecom Network. In addition, the following were appointed to the Board of Directors:

- York Region Chairman and CEO, Wayne Emmerson
- Mayor Virginia Hackson, Town of East Gwillimbury
- Mayor Steve Pellegrini, Township of King
- Mayor Margaret Quirk, Town of Georgina
- Mayor A.J. (Tony) Van Bynen, Town of Newmarket
- Mayor Frank Scarpitti, City of Markham
- Mayor Geoffrey Dawe, Town of Aurora
- Regional Councillor Jim Jones, City of Markham
- Regional Councillor Gino Rosati, City of Vaughan

The corporation will support York Regional Council's commitment to expanding access to broadband across the Region. Additionally, York Regional Council also endorsed the appointment of Laura Bradley as General Manager for YTN.

Fall edition of York Region Matters is here

York Regional Council received the fall edition of *York Region Matters*, the Region's newsletter which keeps residents up-to-date on everything from transportation to community health and environmental initiatives. The eight-page publication will be delivered throughout York Region neighbourhoods early next week.

Stories include:

- Update on the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension
- Discovering York Region trails
- Sustainable features of the Bill Fisch Forest Stewardship and Education Centre
- Be alert and visible during shorter daylight hours

York Region Matters is delivered to more than 380,000 homes and businesses across York Region three times a year.

Toronto Global Amazon bid update

York Regional Council received an update on the pending release of the final bid proposal to secure Amazon's second worldwide headquarters (HQ2) in the Greater Toronto Area. The proposal has been prepared and submitted by Toronto Global, an economic development agency funded by all levels of government. A total of five York Region locations – in Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Aurora - were initially submitted and vetted through the process. Of the 10 Greater Toronto Area sites proposed, two are within York Region; one in the City of Vaughan and one in the City of Markham.

York Region roads continue to be safe for residents as total collisions continue downward trend

York Regional Council received the 2017 Annual Collision Statistics Report, capturing road safety trends from trips made on York Region roads.

The information in the report is collected using a variety of statistics including collision rates, traffic volumes, weather and population.

- Each day 2.75 million trips are made on York Region roads, with driving remaining the preferred mode of transportation
- 99 per cent of travellers get to their destination without any incident
- The number of total collisions is at a 10-year low with less than 8,000 collisions
- Fridays have the highest number of vehicle collisions; Wednesdays see the highest number of collisions for cyclists and pedestrians with vehicles
- The hour with the highest number of collisions is between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- October to February are the months with the highest number of vehicle collisions
- August sees the highest number of cyclist collisions
- Pedestrian collisions occur most in November
- 73 per cent of all collisions occurred on dry road surface conditions

Collection of this information allows for further analysis to determine and identify new measures to improve safety across the entire Region. Staff will report back to Council in 2018 with an action plan and implementation strategy.

York Region provides feedback to Minister of Health and Long-Term Care's expert panel on public health

York Regional Council and the Board of Health do not support the recommendations put forward by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care's expert panel on public health as they:

- Overlook the integration of services at the municipal level that better address the social aspects of health
- Fail to address community health outcomes and related financial effectiveness and efficiencies
- Propose to introduce sweeping changes throughout the province to fix a problem that has not been well explained and may best be resolved by proposing a solution in locations where the problem exists

York Region Public Health continues to work with local school boards and municipalities, social agencies and emergency service providers and is well-positioned to influence the social determinants of health and reduce the downstream costs to the health care system.

The public health model in York Region is unique within the Province of Ontario. It is fully integrated within the Region and pioneers a comprehensive integration model that promotes and protects the well-being of residents.

Durham York Energy Centre air emissions comply with stringent regulatory standards

York Regional Council received an update on the Durham York Energy Centre, an award-winning energy-from-waste facility that produces energy from the combustion of residual waste. The state-of-the-art facility, whose air emissions standards are among the most stringent in the world, completed its first year of commercial operation in 2016. The facility is a key component of the Region's waste management strategy and significant achievement of 91 per cent diversion from landfill.

The Durham York Energy Centre is designed to safely process up to 140,000 tonnes per year of residential garbage that remains after maximizing waste diversion programs – reducing, reusing, recycling and composting – in Durham and York Region.

Energy-from-waste captures energy content from waste remaining after all recycling efforts have taken place, lowers greenhouse gas emissions, recovers metals and reduces the volume of waste going to landfill.

The facility completed two successful stack tests since August 2016. Air emission samples are collected and sent to an accredited, independent laboratory for analysis.

Additional details on the Durham York Energy Centre's performance are available in the annual report submitted to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change available at durhamyorkwaste.ca

Harm reduction enhancement agreement

With opioid use a rising public health concern, York Regional Council agreed to expand its Harm Reduction Program to support local opioid response initiatives, including the distribution of naloxone kits to eligible community organizations and service providers.

York Region Public Health will develop a response plan with a focus on harm reduction, education and prevention. Activities to be implemented include:

- Build a real-time opioid use and overdose warning and surveillance system
- Lead the development, implementation and evaluation of a local overdose response plan and strategy
- Work with partners and agencies to strengthen the development of York Region's opioid response strategy
- Act as the lead for naloxone distribution and training for eligible community agencies

Opioid misuse is currently the third leading cause of accidental death in Ontario. In 2016, there were 139 emergency department visits and 62 hospitalizations in York Region as a result of opioid overdoses. Opioid use in York Region will be a topic of focus at *York Region Inter-Municipal Emergency Training and Education Conference* on October 20, 2017.

Public Health units are mandated by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to use harm reduction policies, programs and practices that focus on reducing harm from drug use. Harm reduction is a public health approach that helps mitigate the negative consequences of drug use on individual and communities.

That's a wrap on Regional traffic signal cabinets

York Regional Council approved the wrapping and/or painting of select Regional traffic signal cabinets. This initiative will help combat vandalism and graffiti by beautifying public spaces across the Region. Interested municipalities will work with the Region to outline maintenance requirements and responsibilities before wrapping and/or painting can begin.

York Region reinforces position on proposed re-route of rail network

York Regional Council reinforced York Region's position to not support a proposed re-routing of the Greater Toronto Freight Rail Network. The proposed re-routing of the rail network would include the construction of a new freight rail corridor in Peel Region, and could see the re-routing of existing freight rail traffic in Toronto and Mississauga through York Region. In 2016, York Regional Council passed resolutions advising the re-routing of freight rail traffic through York Region is not supported by Council.

Annual update on invasive species

York Regional Council received an update on emerald ash borer and other invasive species found in York Region. The report also seeks funding from the federal and provincial governments to help mitigate the ongoing impacts of invasive species.

Invasive species in York Region and Ontario are a growing environmental and economic concern. Ontario has more invasive species than any other province or territory in Canada.

To assess, prevent and mitigate the impacts of emerald ash borer and other invasive species, York Region is:

- Removing more than 12,000 ash street trees and ongoing sweeps for the invasive insect
- Replacing ash trees on Regional roads with trees of a different species in local cities and towns
- Participating in a working group to identify and share information on the threat to southern Ontario forests and how best to prevent the insect's spread

York Region is also continuing to work with local cities and towns, other levels of government and non-profit organizations to combat the threats posed by invasive species.

Accessibility update and review of accessibility policies

York Regional Council received an update on ongoing accessibility initiatives and approved amendments to the corporation's Accessibility Policy, which is a requirement of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

The updated Accessibility Policy affirms York Region's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities so that all people may access Regional programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects their dignity and independence.

York Region continues to comply with Ontario's accessibility laws and to implement the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) which sets out mandatory accessibility standards in the areas of information and communications, employment, transportation, design of public spaces and customer service with the goal of making Ontario accessible by 2025.

Since the AODA became law, York Region and York Regional Police have implemented more than 750 accessibility initiatives across all departments, including many actions that go beyond the legislated requirements.

Transfer of Sutton Youth Emergency and Transitional Housing to Housing York Inc.

York Regional Council approved the transfer of ownership of the Sutton Youth Services emergency and transitional housing property from The Regional Municipality of York to Housing York Inc. This transfer will support consolidation of property management responsibilities, enabling more efficient operations and providing one point of contact for community agencies. Funding currently directed to the Region for facility management costs will be reallocated to Housing York Inc.

Launched in 2013, Ontario's Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative combined funding from separate housing and homelessness programs into a single flexible program. Under this program, York Region became responsible for administering emergency housing and services that help people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness to find and keep housing.

Reserve withdrawal for Housing York Inc. Capital Repair Reserve

Housing York Inc. will receive a subsidy of \$5.4 million for capital repairs funded from the Non-Profit Housing Capital Repair Reserve. This money will help complete the 2017 \$6.5 million in repairs, including replacement of roofs, kitchens, windows and doors. Roadway and parking lot constructions will also take place.

York Region financially supports over 3,800 social housing units owned and operated by 36 non-profit housing providers. Housing York Inc. also owns and operates 1,865 social housing units. Thousands of York Region residents live in social housing communities with even more on wait lists. Well-maintained buildings in a healthy environment are an important community asset.

The Non-Profit Housing Capital Repair Reserve was established in 2002 to ensure social housing is well maintained. Through the annual budget process, \$9.3 million is contributed annually to this reserve.

Update on Housing York Inc.'s parking pricing policy

The Board of Directors of Housing York Inc. approved a new parking pricing strategy for Housing York Inc. based on the property's access to local amenities and transit services.

Surface parking rates for walkable locations with good transit will be \$30 per month. Surface parking at all other locations will be \$20 per month. Additional charges apply for underground and deck parking. Charges are similar to other non-profit funding providers across the Region and in other Greater Toronto Area municipalities.

Housing York surveyed residents in collaboration with York Region Transit to better understand their transportation needs and priorities. The survey included questions on parking pressures and costs.

In 2016, parking revenues were approximately \$245,000 and parking service costs for the same period were approximately \$394,000.

York Region agriculture and agri-business update and strategy

York Regional Council received an update on York Region's Agriculture and Agri-food strategy and approved five strategic goals to further support agri-food community.

The strategic goals include:

1. Strengthen communication and collaboration with York Region, local municipalities and the agri-food sector
2. Support the agri-food sector through integrated land use planning and economic development
3. Support increased capacity for value-added processing and support services
4. Leverage the Region's location within the Greater Toronto Area through direct farm marketing to meet demand for local food production
5. Provide support for business retention and expansion of primary agricultural production within York Region

This action will further protect and promote agriculture and farming in York Region, an industry valued at over \$6 billion.

York Regional Council approves \$143 million to support Mackenzie Health Vaughan

York Regional Council approved the Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital project and funding of eligible costs through a draw of the hospital's full share under the Region's 2009 Hospital Capital Funding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In 2009, York Region agreed through a Memorandum of Understanding with four local hospitals to set aside annual contributions for hospital capital projects until 2031.

The Regional Municipality of York will fund eligible capital costs of \$143 million to be paid to the hospital between 2017 and 2031. Annual payments from 2018 onwards will be adjusted for the rate of change in assessment growth and will incorporate paramedic off-load targets.

The new Mackenzie Vaughan hospital will be the first new hospital within the City of Vaughan and provide York Region residents with improved access to health care. This hospital is a 1.2-million square foot facility with 350 beds, with the capacity to expand to 550 beds. Construction of the hospital began in October 2016 and is expected to be complete by 2020.

2017 Open Data program update

York Regional Council received an update on the 2017 Open Data program. Highlights of the program include:

- Increasing the number of downloads from York Region's Open Data website by 70 per cent over 2016
- Downloading 28,250 data sets since the Open Data website was launched in 2015
- Partnering with Waze to incorporate the Region's traffic disruption data into their app, releasing 175 data sets to the public, and providing data back into York Region's traffic management centre
- Partnering with Yelp to incorporate food premise inspection results into their local business search tools that published crowd-sourced reviews

Open data increases transparency and empowers citizens to use data in new and creative ways.

York Regional Council extends best wishes to those celebrating Diwali

Councillor Singh and York Regional Council send their best wishes to communities across York Region celebrating Diwali this month.

Next regular meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, November 16, 2017 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, 50,000 businesses and 595,000 employees. More information about the Region's key service areas is available at york.ca/regionalservices