



Friday, April 25, 2008

For Immediate Release

## York Regional Council approves 2008 Operating Budget for The Regional Municipality of York

*Regional Council allocates GTA Pooling savings to reducing tax levy*

**NEWMARKET** –York Regional Council has unanimously approved a \$1.3 billion Operating Plan as part of The Regional Municipality of York's 2008 Business Plan and Budget. Additionally, Council voted to return the entire \$13.2 million in GTA Pooling savings back to York Region taxpayers, reducing the tax levy by a full two per cent.

This community-focused budget places an emphasis on both new and enhanced service delivery to all York Region residents and businesses. The 2008 Operating Budget also places special emphasis on investing in community social services to help some of the Region's most vulnerable people by providing employment assistance, family and children's services and homelessness prevention.

The Budget will provide improved and increased levels of service in a number of important areas, including:

- York Regional Police
- Community Services and Housing
- York Region Transit and Viva Rapid Transit
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Public Health
- Water delivery and wastewater treatment
- Regional Roads
- Solid Waste Management

"This budget ensures that York Region remains one of the safest and most livable communities in Ontario in which to work and raise a family," said York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch. "I am pleased our 2008 Operating Budget offers a host of new initiatives for our residents and businesses across all nine of our municipalities while maintaining sound fiscal policies and directing GTA Pooling savings back to our taxpayers."

The 3.9 per cent tax levy increase in the Budget will have an impact of approximately \$72 for the year, or 20 cents a day, for the average York Region home with an assessment value of \$371,070.

"This Budget provides high-quality services to all our citizens and offers a common-sense approach to managing our finances," said Town of Newmarket Mayor Tony Van Bynen, Chair of the Region's Finance and Administration Committee. "I would like to thank Regional staff for all of their hard work on this budget and to York Region taxpayers for their input at our public workshop and throughout our budget process."

The Budget has been reviewed by Regional committees and staff, in addition to a public workshop held February 28<sup>th</sup>. It features \$28.8 million in growth and enhancements, including:

- **\$7.9 million for tax supported capital programs:**
  - Roads – support for construction of 59 additional lane kilometres of Regional Roads
  - Transit – support for transit capital projects
  - EMS – includes purchase of two new ambulances

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- **\$5.3 million for Community Services and Housing**
- Provide \$2.7 million to assist four community agencies to develop 270 affordable housing units by providing one-time funds, up to \$10,000 per unit
- Provide \$2.6 million into the Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF) for:
  - homelessness prevention
  - employment assistance
  - family and children's services
- **\$2.1 million for Public Health Services and EMS:**
  - 26 new paramedics and two operational support staff
  - Six new staff (one for Health Protection, four for Infectious Disease Control and one for Child and Family Health)
- **\$6.8 million for Capital Asset Replacement:**
  - Replace aging infrastructure, including transit vehicles
- **\$4.9 million for Transit:**
  - Six per cent increase in service hours for YRT and Viva Rapid Transit, for a total of 61,047 additional service hours
  - Conversion of the Viva Rapid Transit fleet to more environmentally friendly biodiesel
- **\$4.5 million for York Regional Police:**
  - 67 additional sworn police officers and 35 civilian staff
  - Four new 9-1-1 call takers / dispatchers
- **\$1.8 million for Solid Waste Diversion and Disposal:**
  - Operation of the Dongara waste pelletization plant commencing in July
  - full year cost of the Green Bin Collection for all York Region municipalities
  - four per cent growth in Blue Box and Green Bin programs
  - Construct a Community Environmental Centre in the City of Vaughan

York Region is responsible for the delivery of 13 core services to residents and businesses:

- |                               |                                  |                                     |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • York Regional Police        | • Water and Wastewater Treatment | • Planning and Economic Development |
| • Regional Transit (YRT/Viva) | • Public Health                  | • Family and Children's Services    |
| • Emergency Medical Services  | • Long Term Care                 | • Social Assistance                 |
| • Court Services              | • Solid Waste Management         | • Housing                           |
| • Regional Roads              |                                  |                                     |

York Region follows a number of performance measurement activities for business planning and budgeting. York Region is a member of the Ontario Municipal CAO's Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI), a partnership project with 15 municipalities which share performance statistics and best practices, and has been recognized by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), which has established standardized reporting for budgets and financial statements.

York Regional Council approved The Regional Municipality of York's \$682 million Capital Budget for 2008 in December 2007. Combined, the 2008 Capital and Operating Budget is more than \$1.98 billion.

Please refer to accompanying Media Backgrounders for detailed information on:

- 2008 Operating Budget Highlights
- GTA Pooling
- 2008 Capital Budget Highlights
- How your 2008 York Region Tax Dollar is spent
- York Regional Police Media Release

For more information on The Regional Municipality of York, please visit [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

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