



Thursday, February 19, 2009

For Immediate Release

## York Regional Council approves 2009 Operating Budget for The Regional Municipality of York

*Budget contributes to hospital capital funding, Social Services and Housing reserves*

**NEWMARKET** – York Regional Council today approved a \$1.35 billion Operating Budget as part of The Regional Municipality of York’s overall 2009 Business Plan. The Budget responds to increased demand for Regional services while renewing a commitment to financing hospital capital funding.

In order to meet York Region’s growth needs for more than one million residents, the Operating Budget will increase services in areas including:

- York Regional Police
- Long Term Care
- Solid Waste Management
- Social Housing
- Hospital capital funding
- Child and Family Health Programs
- Emergency Medical Services
- Transit (YRT and Viva)

“York Region’s 2009 Operating Budget reflects the global economic challenges and uncertainty we are facing while at the same time maintaining service levels to ensure that residential and business taxpayers’ needs across all nine area municipalities are being met,” said York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch. “Our continued investment in Regional services and our hospitals is important for ensuring that York Region remains among the safest, healthiest and most livable communities in the Greater Toronto Area.”

The Operating Budget includes a 2.2 per cent tax levy increase which will have an impact of approximately \$42 for the year for a York Region residential property assessed at \$400,000.

“The 2009 Operating Budget provides a sound and fiscally responsible plan for dealing with York Region’s growth-related pressures, as well as an increased need for services precipitated by the downturn in the economy,” said Town of Newmarket Mayor Tony Van Bynen, Chair of the Region’s Finance and Administration Committee. “We have also responded to the increased capital needs of our hospitals while seeking to reduce the impact on our Budget and to our Regional taxpayers.”

The Budget increases York Region’s annual contribution to Hospital Capital Funding for the Region’s three existing hospitals and the planned hospital in the City of Vaughan to \$12 million.

In addition, York Region contributed \$3.5 million to its Capital Asset Replacement reserve to pay for future infrastructure replacement. These contributions help reduce future costs for taxpayers.

Standard & Poor’s and Moody’s investor services have consistently awarded York Region AAA credit ratings, partly in recognition to York Region’s policy of allocating funds annually to reserves which allows the Region to service debt costs at more favourable interest rates, and translates into further savings for Regional taxpayers.

In previous years, York Region has provided significant funding, including:

- The Community Development and Investment Funding strategy (CDIF) for employment supports, homelessness prevention and family and children’s services
- New Social Housing Units
- Community Hospital Capital Funding
- Emergency Medical Services and paramedics

The Budget has been reviewed by Regional committees and staff. It features \$21.5 million in growth and enhancements, including:

**\$4.7 million for Hospital capital funding**

- Topping up York Region's 2009 contribution to \$12 million

**\$3.6 million for Community & Health Services**

- New contact centre for Health Connection and front-line staffing
- New rent supplement program
- Increased staff for long term care day programs and child and family health programs
- Contribution to reserves for non profit housing provider capital repairs

**\$3.5 million for contributions for Capital Asset Replacement**

- Replaces aging infrastructure including transit vehicles and supports the Region's AAA credit rating

**\$2.3 million for York Regional Police**

- 38 additional police officers and 14 civilians

**\$2 million for Transit (YRT/Viva)**

- 24,660 additional service hours

**\$1.6 million for Solid Waste Management**

- Accommodate increase tonnage for blue box recycling, green bin organics and residual waste
- Blue box bylaw enforcement, waste reduction advocacy and green bin promotion and education

**\$1.4 million for Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

- 12 paramedics and 168 additional ambulance hours

**\$1.1 million for Social Services and Social Housing programs**

- Social services long-term planning

**\$900,000 for Regional Roads**

- Road maintenance for additional lane kilometres

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 \$1.04 billion Capital Budget for 2009 in December 2008. Combined, the 2009 Capital and Operating Budget is more than \$2.4 billion.

Please refer to accompanying Media Backgrounders for detailed information on:

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| • 2009 Operating Budget Highlights   | • York Region Hospital Funding                  |
| • York Regional Police Media Release | • How your 2009 York Region Tax Dollar is spent |

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

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