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For Immediate Release

Making Ends Meet: A Model for Change

Regional Council endorses York Region's Human Services Planning Board's 2011 work plan to help low and moderate income residents

NEWMARKET – York Regional Council today endorsed the York Region's Human Services Planning Board's (HSPB-YR) *Making Ends Meet* initiative and 2011 work plan, and received an update on the profile of low income residents.

"Since York Regional Council's appointment of the Human Services Planning Board in April 2010, members have been working beyond their own boundaries to strengthen the capacity of the human services sector in York Region," said York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch. "This initiative is a concrete demonstration of the Board's focus on helping our low and moderate income residents who are struggling to make ends meet."

Making Ends Meet in York Region is a call to action to address economic vulnerability throughout the Region. The first step of engagement involves the Board's commitment to tangible actions using a tool they can bring back to their own agencies and sectors to begin turning the curve for change. It also provides an opportunity to show the community how they can make change, how they can contribute and how they can get involved.

"York Region is home to some of the wealthiest residents in the Province, but also has a growing low and moderate income population," said Markham Deputy Mayor Jack Heath, Chair of the Region's Community and Health Services Committee. "Providing supports to our low and moderate income families is a preventative measure to advance healthy and inclusive communities."

The Board identifies the following two priorities for low to moderate income families and individuals in their 2011 work plan:

- **Affordable Housing:** A good mixture of safe and affordable housing options and programs throughout York Region
- **Economic Self-Sufficiency:** A strong combination of employment and human service supports

"Many families and individuals in York Region, often educated and working, are struggling to make ends meet," said Town of Newmarket Regional Councillor John Taylor, Co-Chair of the Human Services Planning Board of York Region. "The *Making Ends Meet* initiative will engage the broader community in solutions to improve the well-being of low and moderate income families and individuals."

"Through the support of York Regional Council, the Board has accomplished a great deal in its first year," said Susan LaRosa, Director of Education for the York Catholic District School Board and Co-Chair of the Human Services Planning Board of York Region. "*Making Ends Meet* provides useful information about the financial composition of our communities and promotes dialogue among human services organizations that ultimately will enhance the quality of life in York Region."

The HSPB-YR is comprised of 24 members that include leaders and decision-makers from the Region's hospitals, school boards and police department, as well as a cross-section of individuals from other human services organizations and networks, community leaders and senior levels of government. The inaugural board members will retain their appointment until November 2014, coinciding with the next term of York Regional Council.

York Regional Council also received an updated profile of York Region's low income residents based on the 2006 Census of Population for Canada.

"A Profile of York Region's Low Income Population focuses on the social and economic characteristics and risk factors that are often related to an individual's low income status, and where possible, tracks trends from the 2001 and earlier Censuses," said Town of Newmarket Mayor Tony Van Bynen, Co-Chair of the Consortium and Community Reference Group. *"The Making Ends Meet in York Region* initiative was informed by and builds upon the *Profile of York Region's Low Income Population*."

Using Statistics Canada's Low Income Before Tax Cut-Offs and Census data, low income families are those who spend more than 55 per cent of their gross income on food, shelter and clothing.

The low income profile also highlights the following key trends:

- The majority of low income residents have post-secondary education, are employed and own homes
- They include two parent families with children and both Canadian born and immigrants
- A growing "working poor" population
- Increasing low income rates among all family types and age groups (except seniors)
- Changing patterns of where low income residents live

A Profile of York Region's Low Income Population will be shared with York Region's nine municipalities for local analysis and community-level service planning.

In 2005, York Region partnered with key community organizations to form a Consortium to lead the Community Social Data Strategy (CSDS) projects. Members of the York Region Consortium include:

- The Regional Municipality of York
- The United Way of York Region
- York Regional Police
- York Catholic District School Board
- York Region District School Board

The Consortium, together with various community organizations, are the Community Reference Group (CRG). The CRG is chaired by Mayor Tony Van Bynen, Town of Newmarket and Daniele Zanotti, CEO, United Way of York Region. The CRG gives input into CSDS products and helps share the data broadly with smaller community agencies and organizations.

For more information on The Regional Municipality of York, please visit www.york.ca

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