

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

**REPORT NO. 1
OF THE COMMISSONER OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**For Consideration by
The Council of The Regional Municipality of York
on November 23, 2006**

**1
TOWN OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE BUSINESS RETENTION AND
EXPANSION (BR&E) PROJECT**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Regional Chair and Regional Clerk be authorized to sign on behalf of York Region, the necessary agreements with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville for the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Project, subject to review by Legal Services.

2. PURPOSE

To authorize the Regional Chair and Regional Clerk to sign the necessary agreements for the Whitchurch-Stouffville Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Project. The Province of Ontario requires both York Region and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville to be signatories on the agreement to implement the BR&E Project.

The Business Retention and Expansion Project is an important component of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville's economic development program. The project will commence in November 2006 and be completed by early February 2007.

3. BACKGROUND

In June 2006, York Region was approached by the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville to support their funding application to undertake a Business Retention and Expansion Initiative by partnering with the Town.

The Business Retention and Expansion (BR & E) Project is a community based volunteer-driven economic development tool to encourage growth and stability of local business. BR & E works to improve the competitiveness of local businesses by evaluating and addressing their broader needs and concerns. Businesses that stay competitive are more likely to remain and expand within the community.

On June 26th York Region confirmed its support for the project. The Province issued a news release on October 26th announcing the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville had been awarded the provincial grant.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Business Retention and Expansion (BR & E) Project will involve an analysis of key business sectors within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville: manufacturing, distribution, tourism, retail, commercial and home-based businesses to assess the current business climate and to develop strategies to further strengthen the local economy.

4.1 Process

A project coordinator, Paul Blais of Blais & Associates Economic Development Consulting, has been hired under contract to oversee the project. He will organize a team of community leaders from the Town who will be invited to join the Business Retention & Expansion Task Force. After participating in a comprehensive training session, the team of community volunteers will conduct a survey with each of the identified businesses. Upon completion of each survey, a program coordinator will review the data and respond to any immediate concerns identified during the meeting.

4.1.1 Outcomes

The survey data will be entered into specifically designed software, ensuring that business information remains confidential. A statistical analysis will be conducted and a final report prepared for the Task Force. Based on the findings of the report, the Taskforce will determine further direction and action plans to be pursued. The Town plans to have a full economic development strategy developed later in the year.

4.1.1.1 Funding

Funding for the Business Retention and Expansion (BR & E) Project has been allocated from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Rural Economic Development (RED) program following a competitive application process supported by the Region and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. Each of the three partners will provide cash or in-kind

contributions. The Ministry requires that the financial partners sign the agreement. The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is supported by the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce and the Stouffville Business Improvement Area.

4.2 Relationship to Vision 2026

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville's Business Retention and Expansion (BR & E) Project will assist in assessing the current business climate within the Town which is part of the Region's economic structure. The project will help to promote economic development contributing towards the Region's Vibrant Economy Goal identified in Vision 2026.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total projected expense for the project is \$40,000 with in-kind expenses of \$6,000. The provincial government will contribute \$20,000 towards this initiative. The Region is committed to providing \$5,000 in cash and \$1,000 for in-kind contributions and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is contributing \$15,000 in cash and \$5,000 in-kind contributions.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Region works in partnership with the local municipalities and senior levels of government to deliver support services and programs for business. The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville's Business Retention & Expansion Initiative is a program that supports business retention and expansion and will assist in promoting development in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, thereby enhancing and strengthening the Region's economy.

7. CONCLUSION

Supporting the growth and expansion of business enterprise is a cornerstone of the Region's Economic Strategy. The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville's Business Retention and Expansion (BR & E) Project is an important component of the Town's economic development program. Staff recommends that Council approve the Agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the Region.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

Respectfully submitted,

**November 23, 2006
Newmarket, Ontario**

**B. Tuckey
Commissioner of Planning and
Development Services**

(Report No. 1 of the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services was adopted, without amendment by Regional Council at its meeting held on November 23, 2006.)