Transportation & Works - Transit

Initiative: Viva Bus Rapid Transit System

What we have done differently:

In September 2005, Viva was launched as a new bus rapid transit (BRT) initiative. Under development since 2002, Viva is the first phase of York Region's plan to implement a rapid transit network with service operating along Yonge Street and Highway 7 to connect Vaughan City Centre, Richmond Hill Centre, Markham Centre and Newmarket Regional Centre, where much of York Region's future growth will be concentrated.

Improvement in efficiency:

The primary objective of York Region's new BRT service is to increase transit ridership. Viva Phase 1 was designed to provide more frequent service and reduced travel times. Viva provides 15-minute frequency throughout most of the day with 5 to 10 minute frequency during weekday rush hour periods.

To improve travel times, Viva combines a number of innovative elements. Viva operates on a prepaid, proof-of-payment fare system, resulting in reduced vehicle dwell times at stations and terminals, as passengers no longer have to file past the bus driver to deposit cash or tickets into a fare box. In addition to ticket agent sale locations at municipal offices and high traffic retail outlets, automated fare vending equipment is provided at all Viva stations and terminals. The fully accessible rapid transit vehicles feature multiple wide doors, low floors and spacious interiors to reduce the amount of time it takes for passengers to board and alight from vehicles. Queue jumping lanes, bus bays and transit signal priority facilitate an exclusive through movement for buses at congested intersections along the routes. Computer aided dispatch, GPS vehicle location, digital voice and data communications and other intelligent transportation systems support centralized control and operations.

Improvement in effectiveness:

Viva operations have been integrated with YRT's conventional bus service. For a single fare, passengers can travel on both systems and transfer easily between them for a period of up to two hours. By providing extensive transit coverage throughout York Region, this combination of YRT and Viva routes delivers a viable, cost-effective alternative to automobile travel while supporting York Region's long-term plans for sustainable, transit-oriented development within the four emerging urban centres. Service ratings indicate that Viva is exceeding customer expectations in terms of reduced travel times and clean, comfortable service.

Barriers to further improvements:

York Region is actively seeking funding from both Federal and Provincial levels of government to move forward with the implementation of dedicated transitway segments for Viva Phase 2.

Initiative : Fleet and Route Expansion

What we have done differently:

Following the amalgamation of municipal transit in 2001, York Region has supported the expansion of transit service along with significant growth in population. In 2005, additional service was introduced primarily in transportation corridors which would connect to the new Viva service, such as the new route from Whitchurch-Stouffville to Markham. By the end of 2005, the YRT/Viva network comprised over 70 routes. To support this network, 106 vehicles (85 for Viva) were added to the Viva/YRT fleet and improvements were made to bus stops, shelters and terminals throughout the Region. Associated service hours increased by approximately 19%.

Improvement in efficiency:

In 2005, transit ridership increased by 10.1%. This was the fourth consecutive year with a double digit ridership increase. The number of weekday trips is now over 55,000. This provides greater efficiency in fleet utilization and in providing service to residents.

Following the launch of Viva service, ridership from September through December increased to 5.3 million, a growth rate of more than 20% over the same period in 2004 (4.4 million boardings). Total system ridership for 2005 exceeded 15 million passenger trips for the first time.

Improvement in effectiveness:

Since the launch of Viva, customer feedback has been very positive. The implementation of Phase 1 has also generated interest from developers and the business community. Millions of square feet of new, transit-accessible development has begun along Yonge Street and Highway 7 and within the four urban centres.

By promoting transit as a preferred mode of transportation, York Region is actively working to reduce traffic congestion as well as the cost of building new roads. The increase in overall transit ridership is very encouraging.

Barriers to further improvements:

The barriers for further improvements include ongoing financial investment in transit infrastructure from the Federal and Provincial governments. Also of concern is the continuing rapid growth in York Region which is placing additional burden on roads and highways that are already congested.

Initiative: Transit Accessibility

What we have done differently:

The Specialized (Mobility Plus) Service component of YRT underwent significant change in 2005. This included the expansion of service within the City of Toronto as far south as Highway 401 on a one-year trial basis. The scope of this trial is restricted to 38 designated locations involving major medical, social and educational institutions as well as three TTC subway stations (Don Mills, Downsview and Finch). This enables all registered Mobility users to complete their journey without the need to transfer between transit agencies.

Significant operating and fiscal efficiencies are anticipated to occur with the introduction of Performance Based Contracts for bus, accessible minivan & sedan transportation.

Improvement in efficiency:

The selection of the designated high volume locations has improved the opportunity of share riding thus addressing demand and reducing overall trip costs.

Prior to 2005, Mobility Plus passengers (other than those located in Vaughan) were required to physically transfer between vehicles (e.g., to TTC Wheel-TRANS service) in order to complete trips that ended south of Steeles Avenue. Now these passengers are able to ride in one vehicle to designated locations.

Additional efficiencies were gained through the implementation of performance based contracts with transit operating agencies on a fixed cost basis.

Improvement in effectiveness:

The provision of selected cross-boundary destinations on a one year trial will allow Mobility Plus the opportunity to address service effectiveness within the limitations of fleet resources.

Since the 2001 amalgamation, the Mobility Plus bus service has been staffed by drivers who were York Region employees. As demand for the service increased, growth was accommodated by contracting out to independent businesses (primarily taxi firms). During 2005 efforts to fully contract out the service were completed and the employee drivers were redeployed within YRT and the Region.

Barriers to further improvements:

The only barrier is financial. YRT includes capital funding each year to purchase new or replacement units. The 100% accessible goal is on schedule to be achieved over the next 5-6 years.

Transportation & Works - Roads

Initiative: Winter Road Maintenance – Pre-wetting of Road Salt

What we have done differently:

Road salt has traditionally been applied to the road surface in its natural dry state. During the 2005/6 winter season a trial program was introduced to improve the effectiveness of our road salt and reduce the amount required during extreme cold weather. The program involves pre-wetting stockpiles of road salt with a cost effective vegetable juice mixture that lowers the freezing point of moisture.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

The introduction of this environmentally friendly additive to road salt has reduced the quantity of salt that is required to maintain safe road conditions. This is particularly beneficial during periods of extreme cold weather when large quantities of salt are normally required. The salt and juice mixture reduces the frequency with which salt has to be re-applied and the lower freezing point helps to improve road safety.

Barriers to further improvements:

There are no barriers to further improvement.

Initiative: Transit Signal Priority

What we have done differently:

The introduction of our Viva rapid transit system has been supported with a new initiative called the Transit Signal Priority system. Transit vehicle operators now have the ability to temporarily adjust signal timing to reduce delays at traffic signals when the buses are running behind schedule.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

Transit Signal Priority allows for a faster public transit system without the cost of expensive dedicated transit lanes. This increases the attractiveness and viability of this type of transportation which can lead to fewer cars on the road and therefore less congestion.

Barriers to further improvements:

There are no barriers to further improvement.

Transportation & Works - Water and Wastewater

Initiative: OPTimize Works

What we have done differently:

OPTimize Works is a best practice initiative, undertaken as part of an overall service improvement program. Its focus is on the implementation of activities to optimize performance from existing and future operational assets, the Branch's skilled staff, and technology solutions being deployed.

Improvement in efficiency:

OPTimize Works is an overall efficiency improvement program aimed at York Region's water and wastewater services and products. Technology is used as a strategic tool to provide enterprise-wide information to minimize costs. Information collected is shared. This allows staff the flexibility of making modifications to their work processes to increase efficiency. OPTimize Works best practices embody a proactive repair and replacement program which extends the life of key assets in the system. As such, municipalities can move to investing in assets with the lowest life cycle ownership costs to meet service level objectives in order to maximize long term financial savings and minimize maintenance costs. Maximization of the life cycle of physical and technology assets helps to facilitate asset management practices across the divisions and departments. The benefits to be recognized from the program are increased value to the community and customers.

Improvement in effectiveness:

Another key initiative of the OPTimize Works program was the consolidation of operations and maintenance functions into one business unit. Operations teams were organized into geographic "hubs" for improved response and reduced travel time to the hub facilities. Hub teams have been effective in managing all water and wastewater operations as well as routine linear and plant asset maintenance activities and data analysis. The roll out of divisions has been occurring at various rates.

Barriers to further improvements:

Demands on regulatory compliance reporting, coupled with the need to manage processes using performance indicators has placed greater emphasis on the quality and the verifiability of data. The barrier will be overcome in 2006 with the implementation of a Data Management Standards and a Data Model project. The main objectives of the projects are to document standards for core business data that are necessary to support regulatory and performance reporting, ensure integrity and audit-ability of all regulatory and performance management data and the implementation of a method to manage changes in the reporting requirements.

Transportation & Works - Solid Waste Management

Initiative: Introduction of a Three Stream Waste System

What we have done differently:

Three stream waste system encompasses blue box materials, organics and residual waste. Diversion of blue box and organics is part of a long-term strategic initiative to reduce the Region's landfill usage. With the commissioning of the East Gwillimbury Waste Management Center in July 2005, the Region is better able to accommodate three stream processing. This facility has the capacity to process 90,000 tonnes/year of blue box materials and the ability to transfer 35,000 tonnes/year of waste and source separated organics (SSO). The Region also transfers source separated organics at a transfer station in Markham.

Improvement in efficiency:

York Region residents can now combine all recyclables into one blue box. Using new technologies, the recently constructed waste management facility is able to efficiently separate these co-mingled materials, such as plastics, metal and glass, for preparation for sale and eventual recycling. The facility was also designed to accommodate additional materials such as plastics numbers 3 through 7, empty paint and aerosol cans, polycoat (gable top) cartons and aluminium foil.

Improvement in effectiveness:

Co-mingled blue box curbside pick-up has resulted in greater residential use of the blue box program. By eliminating the need to sort these products and also, by increasing the number of qualifying products, blue box diversion increased by 19% from 2004. Source separated organics provide organic compost which is beneficial for the environment. By enlarging the organics program, the Region was able to increase tonnage diverted from landfill by 10,984 tonnes compared to 2004.

Combined, the blue box and organics initiatives reduced the need for landfill by 21,642 tonnes in 2005. This is equivalent to 676 fewer trucks travelling to Michigan landfill sites. It also increased our diversion rate by 6.9% from 2004.

Barriers to further improvements:

Additional operating costs and future upgrades to the facility will put added pressure on budget limitations as the remaining municipalities in the Region start the SSO program. Source Separated Organics have a much higher cost per tonne to process than landfill waste. Currently the cost is $154 per metric tonne, compared to landfill at $72 per metric tonne.

Health – Public Health

The Falls Intervention Team (FIT) Project

What we have done differently:

The issue of unintentional falls among seniors is a major health problem that has resulted in significant costs to the health care system.

The Falls Intervention Team (FIT) project is a collaborative falls prevention project for seniors that has been developed by Baycrest, Toronto Public Health and York Region Health Services, in collaboration with numerous community service partners, veterans and seniors. FIT focuses on identification of and intervention for modifiable risk factors in the frail elderly. The program consists of standardized client assessment/intervention and a series of home visits by a public health nurse and a physiotherapist. Assessment results are used to identify modifiable risk factors and develop an individualized treatment plan in order to reduce risk factors and falls in the frail elderly, and to optimize activity, mobility and community integration. A rigorous program protocol that includes a three-month intervention period and a six-month follow-up has demonstrated remarkable results.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

With the emphasis on quality service, timely access to client care information and evaluation, all parties agreed to share a standardized work process that includes a clinical and administrative database and health records. This enabled immediate analysis and reporting throughout the project, and statistical analyses to evaluate outcomes of the intervention.

Key findings include the following:

a) the reduction in falls in participants at discharge and at follow-up as compared with baseline is highly statistically significant

b) the reduction in number of modifiable risk factors for falls in participants who completed the intervention was highly statistically significant

c) changes in outcome measures over time were highly statistically significant

d) the improvement in participants' satisfaction with their social participation was highly statistically significant

e) rates of calendar return and exercise adherence were very high for the period between baseline and discharge at 89 and 94 percent respectively

f) clients and caregivers expressed overall satisfaction with the content and format of the intervention

g) staff feedback was generally very positive

h) the intervention showed that it was cost effective when compared with a similar effective program implemented in the United States

i) similar data anticipated for current phase of FIT in Fall 2006

Barriers to further improvements:

Project is staff intensive.

Physiotherapy services secured for a time limited basis only.

Advocacy for the project as a best practice model and seeking opportunities for partnership in program expansion continue to be priorities for Baycrest, Toronto Public Health and York Region Health Services.

Clinic Booking Process at Baby Place Breastfeeding Clinics

What we have done differently:

On January 3, 2005, the first phase of a new booking process was implemented for women seeking breastfeeding and feeding support from Public Health Nurses (PHN's) in our Baby Place Breastfeeding Clinics.

Prior to implementation of this system a drop-in model was used from 2000 to 2004. A growing demand for breastfeeding support services by mothers in our community resulted in:

- Long wait times for clients resulting in stressed babies, families and staff
- Staff dissatisfaction due to frantic work pace
- Inefficient use of staff time
- Inability to predict daily volume of clients
- Inability to effectively inform clients of changes in clinic hours or closures

The new booking process enabled:

- Health Connection staff to make referrals directly to breastfeeding clinic and communicate their assessment and health teaching to clinic staff to improve continuity of care to clients
- More effective allocation and utilization of staff
- Reduced waiting times through better pacing of visits
- Improved client interactions as visits were more organized and less likely to be interrupted
- Improved communication with client regarding clinic changes or closures (bad weather)
- Ability to respond to same day referrals during clinic days

All client bookings were coordinated through Health Connection. Physicians, midwives and PHN's could refer and clients could self refer. Once client information was obtained, clinic support staff would contact and book an appointment time and location with the client. Immediate concerns that were identified through Health Connection, were brought to the attention of Breastfeeding Program PHN's for triage, health teaching and follow-up including a same day visit to the clinic if appropriate.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

For 2005, total visits to our Baby Place Breastfeeding clinics increased to 2,113 visits – a 27% increase over 2004. In addition to the total number of visits increasing, the wait times for clients were reduced once this change was implemented. In 2004, 60% of clients were seen within 15 minutes, whereas in 2005, 80.7% of clients were seen within 15 minutes.

Staff reported improved satisfaction with their work environment. Scheduling allowed staff the opportunity to have breaks, to complete their charting in a timely manner as well as the improved pacing of client visits and decreased wait times for clients. A client satisfaction survey was conducted after the implementation of this change in process and indicated that 81% of clients were very satisfied with the booking process.

Barriers to further improvements:

- Outlook provides limited technology to support booking process
- Multiple programs required to document and administer the appointment process – Outlook to receive referral, Excel to record client calls and collect statistics, Outlook calendar to book appointments and Access database to track client demographics and clinic visit information
- Limited access to computers in clinics
- Limited staff to meet increasing demands

Health – Long Term Care

Convalescent Care Program

What we have done differently:

In partnership with Ministry of Health Long Term Caree (MOHLTC), local hospitals and Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) the Newmarket Health Centre implemented a convalescent care program to better utilize health sector resources, reduce hospital pressures, prepare clients for community reintegration and maximize self sufficiency of the client.

Clients are appropriately assessed to ensure suitability and success in the program by a multi agency team, as opposed to one. Care is provided through multi disciplinary assessment and TEAM goal setting.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

- Better use of community health sector resources
- Reduced local hospital pressures
- Maximized self sufficiency of the client and clients prepared for community reintegration
- No additional cost to the Region

Measurables:

- # of hospital days freed up by program - 1179 days
- Number of clients discharged from program: 17
- Number clients reaching targeted goals - 89%
- Average length of stay: 49.5 days
- A reduction in the tax levy requirements of approximately $30,000 is projected for fiscal 2007 as this program will be able to fund additional administration and facility costs that are currently funded by tax levy subsidy

Barriers to further improvements:

- Not applicable. The program has been highly successful. Additional beds have been awarded to the Newmarket Health Centre based on the success of the initiative to date.

Community Services & Housing – Social Assistance

Mental Health Resource Model

What we have done differently:

Individuals with mental health issues may face periods of time when they are unable to work and are in need of financial supports.

In 2005, the Social Assistance Division fully implemented a community-based Mental Health Resource Model to assist staff to better serve Social Assistance participants with diagnosed or suspected mental health issues. The goal of the Mental Health Resource Model is to build on the Division's capacity to effectively address mental health issues that may be affecting individual Ontario Work's participants. The model will assist staff to better recognize participants with suspected and diagnosed mental health issues, ultimately supporting improved access for participants to vital community programs and services.

The model includes the development of a Mental Health Resource Team where Social Assistance staff, using case scenarios, obtain practical case management and referral strategies from community mental health partners. The Team is comprised of Social Assistance staff and other Department staff, and community mental health providers including the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Crosslinks Housing and Support Services, York Support Services Network (YSSN) and the Krasman Centre.

Under the model, staff received training to enhance sensitivity and to support them to more effectively recognize, assist and refer participants with mental health issues.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

The Mental Health Resource Model is a collaborative, community based initiative that has enhanced the Division's ability to effectively address mental health issues of Ontario Works participants by building on existing community mental health capacity and expertise. This model has been implemented at a minimal cost to the Region.

Through case conferencing with community mental health professionals, staff are able to more effectively recognize participants with suspected and diagnosed mental health issues and develop comprehensive case management strategies to address them. This initiative has improved the quality of referrals for participants and increased clients' participation in mental health community programs and other community services.

Training has enhanced staff awareness of the mental health issues experienced by participants and increased staff knowledge of available mental health programs and services. As a result, this has increased participant ability to access community programs and services required in addition to the full range of employment opportunities provided by Ontario Works in York Region.

Barriers to further improvements:

There are no barriers to further improvement.

ODSP Pending Model

What we have done differently:

The Social Assistance Division of the Community Services and Housing Department has made changes to better serve people with disabilities. The Division has centralized a number of functions in one office location, aimed at providing better customer service for persons pending or receiving Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits.

Changes include:

- The centralization of cases awaiting a decision of ODSP eligibility under the provincial ODSP application process. This provides a single point of contact for clients, community agencies and ODSP staff. Two designated Social Assistance staff are assigned to these cases and have specific expertise in supporting clients through the process.
- Clients in receipt of ODSP, who require additional benefits not covered by ODSP, have one dedicated Social Assistance staff to process requests for benefits. This staff member specializes in handling requests from ODSP clients with extraordinary needs.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

The implementation of the ODSP Pending Model has improved the quality and efficiency of service for persons pending or receiving ODSP by:

- Streamlining service delivery through a single point of contact in one office location.
- Creating efficiencies in service to clients by centralizing all ODSP pending cases with two staff members.
- Designating staff with specific expertise who can effectively support clients through the ODSP application process.
- Increasing the number of ODSP-pending cases adjudicated and granted ODSP benefits.
- Supporting new and existing relationships with community partners.

Barriers to further improvements:

There are no barriers to further improvement.

Community Services & Housing – Policy & Program Support

Web Site Redesign

What we have done differently:

The Department reorganized the information on the Web site to be more client focused. Commonly-requested information and helpful tools, such as forms, publications and contact information were added to the Web site and made much easier for clients to find. In addition, the content was reviewed and the Department's web information was made easier to use and understand. Lastly, the Department drastically improved its online forms, making them more user-friendly and accessible. Online forms can now be filled out online and offer users two format options, PDF and WORD.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

The Community Services and Housing Department Web site redesign has improved customer service by making the information easier to find and understand. The Department's monthly average Web page views by the public increased by over 450%, from 8,546 to 47,058. The redesigned Web site has improved usability and accessibility by offering information in multiple formats that is compliant with the latest assistive technology. The project has also improved business process by allowing forms to be completed online. Forms are now more legible and easier for staff to process.

Barriers to further improvements:

There are currently no barriers to prevent further improvement.

YorkLink Community Services Directory 2006 Enhancements

What we have done differently:

For the 2006 edition of YorkLink, the Department added over 25 new organizations to the directory. A new and improved index was created for the printed directory. The search function on the YorkLink Web site has also been enhanced. Users can now look for community agencies on the YorkLink Web site using the newly enhanced search function. In addition, YorkLink will now provide translation services for three additional languages, 12 in total. An accessible version of the YorkLink Directory is also now available.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

Yorklink's numerous enhancements provide better service to the residents of York Region. An expanded and comprehensive index has made it much easier for users to quickly find the services that they are looking for. Clients can also use the improved search function on the Web site to look for organizations by keyword, agency location, preferred language, or service type. The accessible version of the YorkLink Directory is available for people with visual disabilities and support is now available in 12 languages to allow people who do not speak or read English to access a translation service to help find the information they are looking for.

Barriers to further improvements:

There are currently no barriers to prevent further improvement.

Community Services & Housing – Social Assistance & Housing Services

Provincial Rent Bank and Emergency Energy Funding

What we have done differently:

The Community Services and Housing Department's Social Assistance and Housing Services Divisions, which often provide services to the same households, share the common goal of meeting York Region's residents' basic need for shelter. They both also assist at-risk households to maintain their residence and work towards financial independence.

In 2004, the Province announced funding for two new homelessness prevention initiatives, the Emergency Energy Program and the Provincial Rent Bank Program. York Region was provided with one-time funding of $639,133 for the Provincial Rent Bank Program which Council approved to be delivered over two years to address issues of rental arrears and it was also provided with one-time funding of $125,070 to assist residents with energy related expenses for the Emergency Energy initiative. The purpose of the Provincial Rent Bank funding was to assist households with a maximum of up to two months of rental arrears in order to prevent eviction while the purpose of the Emergency Energy funding was to support low income households with all energy related emergencies, up to a maximum of two months assistance.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

- The promotion of housing stability by assisting low-income households who have short-term arrears avoid eviction and contribute to a reduction of shelter bed use.
- The Provincial Rent Bank and Emergency Energy funding enabled the Region to serve more households at risk of homelessness than previously. In 2005, the Provincial Rent Bank expenditures which totalled $282,408 stabilized 162 households through the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) and 90 households through Ontario Works, funded 100% by the Province. In 2005, the Emergency Energy expenditures totalled $80,070 and assisted 80 households with energy related emergencies, subsequently stabilizing their housing, funded 100% by the Province.
- Ontario Works and Housing policies and procedures were aligned to provide opportunities to households that they were unable to access before.

Barriers to further improvements:

With the heightened awareness of the availability of these supports, it is anticipated that the demand for assistance will continue to grow in 2006. While it is encouraging that the Emergency Energy fund has been annualized, unless the Province extends the Rent Bank funding past December 31, 2006, York Region will be faced with a significant program funding and service gap in 2007.

York Regional Police

Community Safety Village

What we have done differently:

To address the overwhelming number of preventable childhood injuries, York Regional Police partnered with a volunteer Board of Directors to create a Community Safety Village. This interactive facility includes 6 acres of land, a 10,000 square foot learning centre and three classrooms with an overall fundraising goal set at $4.6 million dollars.

Partnerships were formed with both school boards, the 8 local fire departments, York Region Public Health, York Region Emergency Medical Services and several local businesses to create educational programs specifically related to traffic safety, bicycle safety, internet safety, fire safety practices, and stranger awareness.

With a successful Grand Opening in May, 2005, the Safety Village has welcomed over 19,000 visitors from both school visits and several successful special events. Future plans for the Safety Village include developing our programs for members of the community including Safety for Seniors, Women's Defense, Internet Safety programs for parents and Fire Prevention for Seniors. The Safety Village continues to host successful special events including Halloween in the Village, Holidays in the Village, Family Safety Day, Traffic Safety Walkathon and National Safe Kids Week.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

A pilot phase was held to evaluate our educational programs and 89% of teachers rated the learning experience as "excellent." In comparing pre and post test results, students scored an average of 26% higher which proves a definite increase in the level of knowledge.

Barriers to further improvements:

The Safety Village is currently booked every day during the school year with three sets of students per day. The classrooms are also being used in the evenings for various Senior's, Women's and other special interest safety workshops. As demand increases, the physical size of the Village would need to increase. The requirement of capital funds for this purpose would need to be assessed against all other capital funding needs.

Project "IMPACT" - New CAD/RMS System

What we have done differently:

The CAD/RMS (Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management System) is the core information technology application to York Regional Police, containing all of the police records data and handling the dispatching of officers. Efficient response at the front line, continuous uninterrupted access to the corporate information, analytical capabilities behind the scenes, electronic information management, and electronic data exchange with other police agencies and the province are critical for this organization and the public we serve. The new CAD/RMS is an essential component of the technology required to be able to deliver the information expectations identified in the York Regional Police business plan.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

Efficiencies include web based interfaces, one time entry of data, tracking of information real time, instant browse and query, real time reporting, mobile report entry, improvement in statistical tracking and easy user interfaces.

As well, greater effectiveness has been achieved through access to other agencies information, commonality with other agencies in the Greater Toronto Area, access to information for investigation and analysis real time, and redesigned business processes.

Barriers to further improvements:

None identified.

Municipal Act – Section 300

Volunteer Programme

What we have done differently:

York Regional Police has a rich history of volunteerism and the new volunteer programme will provide opportunities for community-oriented individuals to assist our sworn and civilian members allowing York Regional Police to continue to provide superior quality service to our various communities.

The activities for volunteers will fall into three general categories:

- Volunteers to supplement and enhance existing functions
- Enhancing public safety and services
- Improving community relations

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

Use of volunteers to perform "greeter" functions, direct public enquiries, hand out crime prevention materials and assist in setting up community displays and presentations will allow York Regional Police officers and civilian staff to perform their other duties more efficiently.

Volunteers will be used for youth and seniors programs providing a bridge between these groups and York Regional Police by developing contact lists, by providing feedback in the design of specific programmes and by allowing citizens from these groups to volunteer their time with York Regional Police.

Barriers to further improvements:

Volunteers are not designed to replace sworn or civilian employees. They will not perform any of the duties of a police officer as outlined in the Ontario *Police Services Act.* They will be used in accordance with the Adequacy Standards, approved by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, regarding the use of volunteers.

Mental Health Support Programme

What we have done differently:

The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) has been operational for one year. The team is a partnership between the York Regional Police and the York Support Services Network and is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The MHST has significantly enhanced our abilities to deal with people in crisis and offer them alternatives and supports that greatly enhance their quality of life. The team's proactive approach has reduced the demands for uniform personnel to apprehend persons in crisis and to transport them to the hospital for admittance and has significantly enhanced the rapport between the police and the three hospitals within York Region. The members of the team have been utilized for training purposes to outside social and health agencies as well as participating on a variety of community committees. In the past, front line officers were left to deal with calls involving emotionally disturbed persons without the benefit of specialized training and without the support of social services expertise.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

The time spent on EDP calls has been drastically reduced often saving hours of time for front line officers. The MHST stays with the EDP person through the admittance process in local hospitals allowing the officers to move on to other duties. As the MHST has developed close working relationships with hospital staff, efficiencies have been found in the admittance process. Just recently, an admittance that would have taken up to 7 hours in the past was reduced to 1 hour.

Members of MHST are trained to handle the special needs of emotionally disturbed persons and as a result are more effective in dealing with these cases and obtaining the services required.

Barriers to further improvements:

The Region of York is growing and as a result the increases for service will increase as well. The York Support Services Network has identified this growth potential and will be presenting a proposal for additional funding to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to expand the program by two more officers for 2007.

Corporate Services – Human Resources

Non-Union Salary Administration

What we have done differently:

In 2005, the Region moved away from time-based, automatic salary increases in our non-union group to a system of full merit-based salary increases.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

From an efficiency perspective, an entire administrative process was eliminated wherein time in the job was monitored and notifications to managers were sent out. Instead York Region moved to an annual salary review process for all which resulted efficiencies from economies of scale. Furthermore this initiative served to reinforce the concept that salary increases are not automatic entitlements, and also gave the ability to recognize differences in performance and for outstanding performers; there was a way to reward staff.

Barriers to further improvements:

There are no barriers to further improvement, this was a one-time policy change.

Corporate Services – Human Resources

Employee Turnover Reduction

What we have done differently:

In 2005, the Region's employee turnover was reduced from 10% to 6%. This was done through a number of initiatives aimed at improving employee satisfaction.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

Studies show that turnover is expensive and the costs range from 1 – 3 times annual salary in recruitment costs, staff time, productivity losses, increased sick usage (for those left behind to pick up the slack) and morale implications. Based on turnover costs of one times salary, for every 1% reduction in turnover, the Region avoids costly recruitment and productivity losses in the neighbourhood of $ 1.5 million that occur due to employee turnover. Based on this figure, the Region avoided costs of approximately $ 6 million.

Barriers to further improvements:

The Region continues to take employee satisfaction seriously and will continue to monitor and respond to employee concerns.

Corporate Services – Property Services

Development of a Roster of Pre-qualified & Approved Building/Construction Trades

What we have done differently:

Working in conjunction with the Branch's Facilities Management Section and the Supplies & Services Branch of the Region's Finance Department the Property Services Branch developed a roster of approved trades that they can now draw from to assist with the development of capital projects and facilities related maintenance work. This roster is reviewed bi-annually.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

This initiative reduces administrative costs and time associated with having to obtain multiple quotations from General Contractors & Sub-Trades for capital or maintenance projects that will not exceed $50K in total cost. Not only does this roster save administrative time but it also enables the branch to provide more timely service to our clients. Finally it enables the Region to develop a long standing relationship with designated contractors which results in a greater degree of reliability both from a scheduling and quality of product point of view.

Barriers to further improvements:

There are no barriers to further improvement.

Administrative Centre Energy Retrofit

What we have done differently:

An energy retrofit of the 497,000 ft^2 Administrative Centre in Newmarket was completed. This comprehensive retrofit includes lighting, mechanical and water upgrades. An “Energy User Guide” was created for all York Region employees to increase ownership in the energy and environmental improvements being undertaken and to provide useful tips for energy conservation at work. Accessed grants through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Natural Resources Canada to cover 100% of the costs to conduct the building energy feasibility study and partially offset the implementation cost through grants offered by Natural Resources Canada and Enbridge Gas Distribution.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

The energy and environmental technology upgrades help control lighting, temperature, ventilation and water throughout the building, reducing wasted energy and water and making for a more comfortable work environment. The retrofit was completed at a gross cost of approximately $1.4 Million and a payback of approximately seven years. Beginning in 2006, the retrofit is expected to achieve $200,000 in annual energy savings.

Barriers to further improvements:

There are no barriers to further improvement.

Utility interface to the Energy and Environmental Management System

What we have done differently:

Partnered with our local utilities (e.g. Powerstream) in an electronic utility invoice data initiative and engineered an interface which allows for seamless transfer of utility bill data to the award-winning Energy and Environmental Management System (EEMS). The Region has sold licenses to this EEMS system to enable other municipalities to track and report on energy consumption and savings.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

Increases accuracy of utility tracking and monitoring, reduces lag time in receiving utility billing information, reduces and/or eliminates potential gaps in utility information and frees up staff time from data entry

Barriers to further improvements:

Regulatory uncertainty regarding smart meters, rate schedules and commodity structure.

Finance and Administration – IT

Enterprise Finance, Budgets and HR/Payroll System

What we have done differently:

PeopleSoft Financials was upgraded and implemented at the Region to deliver the following:

- Timely human resources and financial data for management reports
- More efficient and effective deployment of Regional staff through streamlining of business processes
- Fully integrated relational database system whereby data is shared among all components of the system

The implementation successfully completed the rollout of the component modules to supply accounting and corporate reporting services, accounts payable, purchasing, and billing and receivables management. It also completed the rollout of the payroll module, as well as several components of the Human Resources Information System (HRIS), including personnel administration, benefits management, training, and recruitment. In the case of the HRIS, the implementation was a major advance in the use of technology for these services. This implementation was followed with the rollout of the PeopleSoft Budgets application, to deliver a system to assemble, analyze and provide reporting for the Region's annual business planning and budgeting cycle.

The PeopleSoft system is providing innovative solutions for the Region in several ways:

1. Central repository to support Emergency Management and Workforce Deployment: The PeopleSoft HRIS has been positioned as the central repository for all personnel information, and has been utilized by departments to track staff skills inventories, training, licences and certification.
2. Central integration broker for Business Applications: The PeopleSoft Enterprise Warehouse provides an integration point for all internal PeopleSoft transactions, including messaging agents, an operational data store and data warehouse.
3. Extending process integration through 3rd-party systems: The design approach used for the PeopleSoft system is to focus on standard integration points for all common transactions. In this way, the development of interfaces and integrations is simplified, reducing maintenance and re-development in the event of frequent upgrades.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

Since the implementation, there have been many advances in the utilization of PeopleSoft and its capabilities to integrate the Region's business systems:

- PeopleSoft has delivered on providing a centralized, integrated business system: The combined systems are the corporate record for financial, budget, payroll and personnel information. They provide a primary resource for all corporate and operational reporting.
- PeopleSoft has delivered efficiencies and qualitative improvements to the Region's business processes: Since their implementation, the embedded processes within the applications have allowed the Region to absorb 40% Full Time Employee (FTE) growth and more than 100% growth in payroll and financial transactions, with only nominal growth in support staff. In addition, the Region has substantially increased its information base across its business transactions, enabling it to better analyze its operations and make more effective decisions.
- PeopleSoft has increased the access to information through reporting and services: The combined user base for the PeopleSoft applications is more than 450 people. These users participate directly in the processing of transactions, reviews and inquiries and reporting from the system.

- PeopleSoft has delivered on providing new services: Continued rollout of services has delivered increased value from the system. These projects have included the rollout of the Time & Labour module to support workforce analysis and attendance management, as well as the streamlining of payroll processing. PeopleSoft provides an integration point for business systems, receiving financial transactions for payment processing and accounting, as well as supporting personnel record requirements for a number of 3rd-party department applications.

Barriers to further improvements:

There are no barriers to further improvement.

Anywhere eDesktop

What we have done differently:

This project was the catalyst in creating the design for the Regions' virtual framework. This innovation ensures that the ongoing savings of over $5m during the four year implementation period will be realized primarily due to the extension of the thin client life cycle over the current desktop PC.

Anywhere eDesktop is a desktop computing innovation that will not only let you work at your Region workplace but anywhere you have access to the internet – and nowadays – that's just about anywhere. It does not matter whether you are in the office, at an offsite office location, in a library, or at home your computing experience will be the same. You access the same Region's electronic file directories, you can print to the same printers, copy files in the same manner, and have access to all your specialty applications.

The Region of York is a leading municipality in the use of this technology. The Region of York created a virtual server farm environment providing access to over 100 applications from anywhere. This environment allows the Region to implement lower cost thin client devices.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

This initiative provided the following efficiencies:

- Reduce Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) by implementing thin client devices as an alternative to the desktop PC.
- Reduce application deployment and application upgrading costs by moving over 100 applications to the Citrix server farm. Applications deployed in minutes not in months.
- Ability to easily manage growth by simply adding virtual servers to the Citrix server farm. Softricity then instantly deploys applications.
- Improve efficiency and responsiveness of client/server and GIS applications.

- Reduce the rate in which physical servers are required by using VMWare to virtualize servers on underutilized physical servers.
- Reduce desktop maintenance costs by implementing thin client devices.
- Reduce costs associated with repairing desktop pc's affected by adware/spyware and viruses by implementing thin client devices.
- Reduce TCO by improving staff productivity. Staff can access their applications from anywhere at anytime (hence '"Anywhere eDesktop".) The importance of this is enhanced in times of emergencies such as SARS or other pandemics, since staff can continue to provide services to citizens from anywhere.
- The simpler thin client equipment provides staff with more work surface space.
- Security is improved since no data in transmitted over the WAN/LAN. Coordinates of screen updates are only transmitted.
- Reduction in Network traffic because Citrix transmits smaller packets.
- We can even securely add staff from outside agencies to facilitate partnerships and collaboration. So Tele-Working or visiting an offsite consultant, councillor, municipal staff or other colleagues to reference documents and working files are only a few clicks away – think of the possibilities to collaborate, to be more effective, and to improve customer service!
- The Citrix Metaframe Presentation Server is the backbone to this infrastructure. The infrastructure consists of two separate “farms”. One “farm” is located at the Region of York Administration Centre and the second “farm” is located at the Regions’ South Service Centre (SSC). This redundant environment ensures 100% uptime. The current infrastructure is sized to support 500 concurrent users and in 2006 will support 1800 concurrent users.

Barriers to further improvements:

There are no barriers to further improvement.

ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE (EA)

What we have done differently:

The Regional Municipality of York has established Enterprise Architecture frameworks and models to provide guidance in building and maintaining Information Technology (IT) systems and infrastructure to further align IT with the goals and objectives of the organization, as part of the York Region Information Technology Strategy (YRITS) and Vision 2026.

An Enterprise Architecture is a framework for both business and IT, which:

- guides investment and design decisions;
- specifies standards, shared components, consistent interfaces; and

- rules for the construction, deployment and management of IT assets.

Enterprise Architecture provides the "city plan" for business and IT "building blocks." Enterprise architectures for organizations are seen as a key to business success and are comprised of two major components; the Business Architecture, which is driven by Business Strategy and deals with how the organization is segmented and carried out, and the IT Architecture, which complements Business Strategy and IT Strategy and deals with Applications, Information, and technology models and frameworks.

The Enterprise Architecture delivered the following items:

1. Established a framework for Enterprise Architecture that can be employed by York Region to optimize its investment in information technology
2. Established the basic components and models for the conceptual framework (Business Architecture Model, Information Architecture Model, Application Architecture Model, Technology Architecture Model)
3. Established a set of Principles that can be used to guide decisions related to information technology investments and the Enterprise Architecture
4. Provided knowledge transfer to York Region staff to effectively participate in future EA initiatives
5. Engaged department client groups through their direct involvement and participation in the EA process
6. Translated concepts to create a logical work plan for physical implementation
7. The EA project established over 40 Principles, covering all areas of IT service delivery

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

Enterprise Architectures typically produce both tangible and intangible benefits in several areas:

1. Increased Flexibility/Agility in Responding to Business Change
2. Greater Alignment of Vision and Principles between the Business and IT
3. Improved Communications between Stakeholders
4. Optimization of IT Resources
    a. Integration of systems, applications and data
    b. Leveraging existing resources and investments
    c. Increased speed and consistency of IT decision-making
    d. Centralized information including a technology inventory
5. More Effective Use of IT Resources
    a. Focus on the needs of the business
    b. Better evaluation of priorities

   c. Cost avoidance/reduction through proactive management and reduction in redundancy
   d. Positions IT as an Enabler

6. Specific Benefits of a Sound Business Architecture:
   a. Provides a transformation vehicle that allows a business strategy to be effectively translated into an implementation plan using processes, information/knowledge, organization/people and technology resources
   b. Identifies areas of focus for business change
   c. Provides a business driven framework for the subsequent definition of an IT Architecture that will support the business goals and objectives

Barriers to further improvements:

There are no barriers to further improvement.

Finance and Administration – Finance

Procurement to Payment Process

What we have done differently:

Taking advantage of a feature in the financials system that provides the ability to directly load a flat file with accounts payable data directly into the system, the need for data entry by an AP clerk has been eliminated. Court Administration was a pilot and results were so positive the pilot has been extended to dental and child care service providers among others.

Direct journal entry load by user departments was also implemented, again eliminating the data entry effort in accounting.

Improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness:

The combined impact was the redeployment of one staff person whose duties were transactional in nature to an area where more analytical work was required, thereby maintaining our FTE complement and avoiding the need to request additional staff at budget time. (approximate salary/benefit savings of $42,000).

Barriers to further improvements:

There are no barriers to further improvement.