

**York Region "Towards a Sustainable Region" Symposium
March 3, 2006 Kortright Centre of Conservation
General Feedback Comments**

1. How could the Symposium be improved to better understand how the Region's sustainable development and growth management initiatives relates to you and your community, business or organization?

"Better Venue."

"Disconnected framed efforts by Province, Feds and Municipalities."

"Actions speak louder than word and thick documents. Break-out sessions were too short and the goals were too large."

"York Region has symposiums on sustainability, the environment etc. But, York Region's political leaders do not necessarily care about sustainability or the environment – nor does the Chair."

"Need to put money where your mouth is. Need to allow more intensification opportunities."

"Just a start, this should be moved down to working with lower-tiers, partner with them to hold more concurrent-based meetings. After, and as part of the workshops, really go community-based."

"No explanation of growth management initiative given. Thought we were identifying how to do sustainable development."

"More time for panel discussions."

"Could be clearer about the intended outcomes or at least next steps – seems a bit fuzzy. I was looking for more discussion of links to provincial growth initiatives – planning, growth, infrastructure, transportation etc."

"Interesting discussion – think tank, many interest groups represented. Next Steps important - as is follow up with attendees."

"Address technology malfunctions of slide show presentations"

"Much of the material had been heard before in different wording. The focus was not clear, we approached sustainable development on more fronts than we had time to address."

"More involvement of citizens."

"Municipal/ Province must receive a copy of recommendations as an outcome."

“More break-out groups, either 2 or 3 sessions to increase communication.”

“Perhaps a little more on the growth management part of it.”

“It seems like a great start! Execution will be the key.”

“Talk is good, but what material action will come of it?”

“Not to make just a governmental/ politicians level symposium, invite the local people, community leaders, the ethno-cultural (new) residents. More for the people who make York Region their home, work and play.”

“‘Triple bottom line’ but please remember, we exceed the carrying capacity of this planet.”

“Session good but time compressed; break out sessions were too superficial and speakers/contributors were selected politically. Not everyone had equal opportunity to provide input.”

“Long line for coffee and very cold. Long time sitting in theatre.”

“Well done!”

“Break out session felt short.”

“Implement the ideas.”

2. Do you have any suggestions for how these public engagement opportunities could be improved?

“Progress towards detail and implementation i.e. Don’t repeat this one at the next meeting.”

“Although the (Kortright) Centre is a great location, it may be too small for the interest generated. Other levels of government should perhaps have more direct involvement.”

“Take risks and put some of these leaders together to brainstorm, out of the box. Look at diversity in audience – could we do more to get more engagement?”

“Does the general public know about this symposium? Will they?”

“More time – always difficult to clear next steps ideas. More information ahead of time to frame discussions. Great Job.”

“Utilize Parent/ School Board communication opportunities if possible i.e. School Community Updates/ Reports.”

“Provide alternative methods/ accessibility of commute options. Introduce the session on a local city level... take this on tour to businesses.”

"More time needed for discussion! Facilitators worked hard – great, but not enough time to do their job. Good to see the broad view of growth management. Great to see focus on people, not things."

"More speakers using specifics; generalities."

"Where are the women? All the speakers on panel discussion were men! Have more vegetarian sandwiches. Don't just have cookies with raisins."

"Start by first setting better examples for the public – you can't expect individuals to behave one way and the Region to behave another. Actually do what you preach. Tell Council to do the same!"

"A little shorter, more break-outs – 3.5 hours more."

"Ratchet them down to the community level. This needn't exclude the corporate or higher order stakeholders. Bring them in as residents/people of York Region."

"This was excellent – keep doing it"

"Expand session (i.e. all day) whereby panel would have more time."

"Break out session needs a better facilitator with such strong personalities in the Room and politicians. Very difficult for a York Region staff person to keep people on track when they may be politicians or community leaders in Business."

"Be clearer about the products and process."

"Use of larger facility to accommodate attendees i.e. Kingbridge Centre. Promote event in local newspapers to get better turnout of stakeholders. Keep communication and follow-up information sent to attendees, i.e. email, website, special section on sustainability. Thank you to all staff that made this event the successful symposium workshop that allowed for valuable input from the stakeholders."

"More public participation, not just government folks."

"Select a venue that is more appropriate for a large gathering in terms of seating and group rooms. Our group met in an open space that was used as a passage way. It is more productive to discuss a proposed plan item to range over several different themes. Start on time! Thanks for organizing this symposium which was very interesting and worthwhile, despite my comments."

"Examples (speakers) from other government jurisdictions that are now looking at the same issues."

"Continue to involve public."

"More information provision in advance. Mail out to all community boards, and committees prior to event. More time allowed for Keynote Speaker. Technical problems had an impact on morning presentations. Overall, very good."

"Open it to more public, not just government/ groups."

"People may want follow-up meetings or a forum to continue to exchange ideas."

“Break-out group discussions could be better facilitated.”

“Seats in theatre poor.”

“Have more often.”

“I think it was extremely well done. Perhaps needed to have a little bit longer for the break-out session – always hard to predict. Excellent!”

“Conduct them at location accessible by public transit, e.g. along the VIVA transit route.”

“Repeat annually to drive progress.”

“Should be organized at regular intervals. Exchange of information in break-out session was really useful and informative.”

“Compressed into too little time.”

“Keep evolving with the same pace as York Region – new communities evolve and grow! More for people as they look for Quality = Value/Price.”

“...without imperilling any quality of life.”

“More time, more women leaders.”

“Please repeat annually and develop, take away action items. Work with the community and share ideas widely. We need MORE two way communication with the community and all planning stakeholders.”

“Less ‘agency’ people, more public.”

“Continue to dialogue with the community through a variety of options – in person, electronically etc...”

“We need more community leaders to become involved. Municipal and Regional leaders need to participate in these talks.”