2
GROWTH MANAGEMENT WORKPLAN UPDATE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, November 17, 2005, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Work plan components and timing identified in this report be adopted as the Growth Management Public Information and Engagement Work Plan for the Region's Growth Management initiative.

2. That staff report back to Committee and Council on an as needed basis and with the results of the Phase 1 of the Public Information and Engagement work plan in the fall of 2006.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to advise Committee and Council of work plan components and timing of public information and engagement initiatives to accompany the Region's Growth Management work.

3. BACKGROUND

The Region's Official Plan was approved in 1994 after a comprehensive public participation process. The process informed, educated, consulted and in many respects collaborated with members of the public and special interest groups to develop the Official Plan that Council ultimately adopted and the Minister approved.
Reviews of the plan have been undertaken in 1998 with the Region's Report Card exercise and in 2002/2003 with a series of update amendments dealing with Population and employment forecasts, a human services amendment and finally with the Regional Centres and Corridors Amendment.

In the past several years, the context of growth and planning has been changing in South Central Ontario. The changes have been brought about through a number of initiatives including:

- The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan in 2001
- The release of the new Provincial Growth Forecasts in January 2005

- Approval of the Greenbelt Plan in February 2005
- Anticipated release of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in late 2005
- The use of Sub-Area Growth Strategies to provide more detailed planning within specific areas of the greater Golden Horseshoe
- The investment in transit within York Region
- The advocacy of compact urban form by the Region in it's Centres and Corridors work and the Province through its Provincial Policy Statements

As a result, there is a need to undertake a comprehensive Growth Management Review and Official Plan update.

Regional Council at its meeting of October 21, 2004 adopted Clause 3 of Report 9 of the Planning and Economic Development Committee which articulated the elements of the Growth Management Work Plan and committed to a series of reports to further articulate the technical details of this Growth Management Work and the process to be followed. The need for a Public Information and Engagement was identified in the 2004 report. Further, Regional Council has, through a series of resolutions linked Growth Management to the provision of significant infrastructure investment.

On October 2, 2005, in part as a result of the discussions by the Region's *Towards Sustainability in York Region Advisory Group*, Regional Council adopted a report supporting a Regional Sustainable Development Initiative. As such it is anticipated that the Regional Growth Management work will be assessed against the triple bottom line sustainability principles of economic development, social equity and environmental value.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The *Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area* included an updated forecast for York Region of 1.5 million people and 780,000 jobs by 2031. In addition, the *Draft Growth Plan* outlined a 40 percent intensification target for new growth to occur within a municipality's existing built up urban boundary.

This scale of growth indicates that by 2031, the Region's Population is expected to increase by approximately 600,000 people from the July, 1 2005 estimate of 904,000. Similarly, employment is anticipated to increase by approximately 330,000 jobs from the current estimate of approximately 450,000. This growth will create significant pressure on the Region's infrastructure, program delivery and human service requirements.

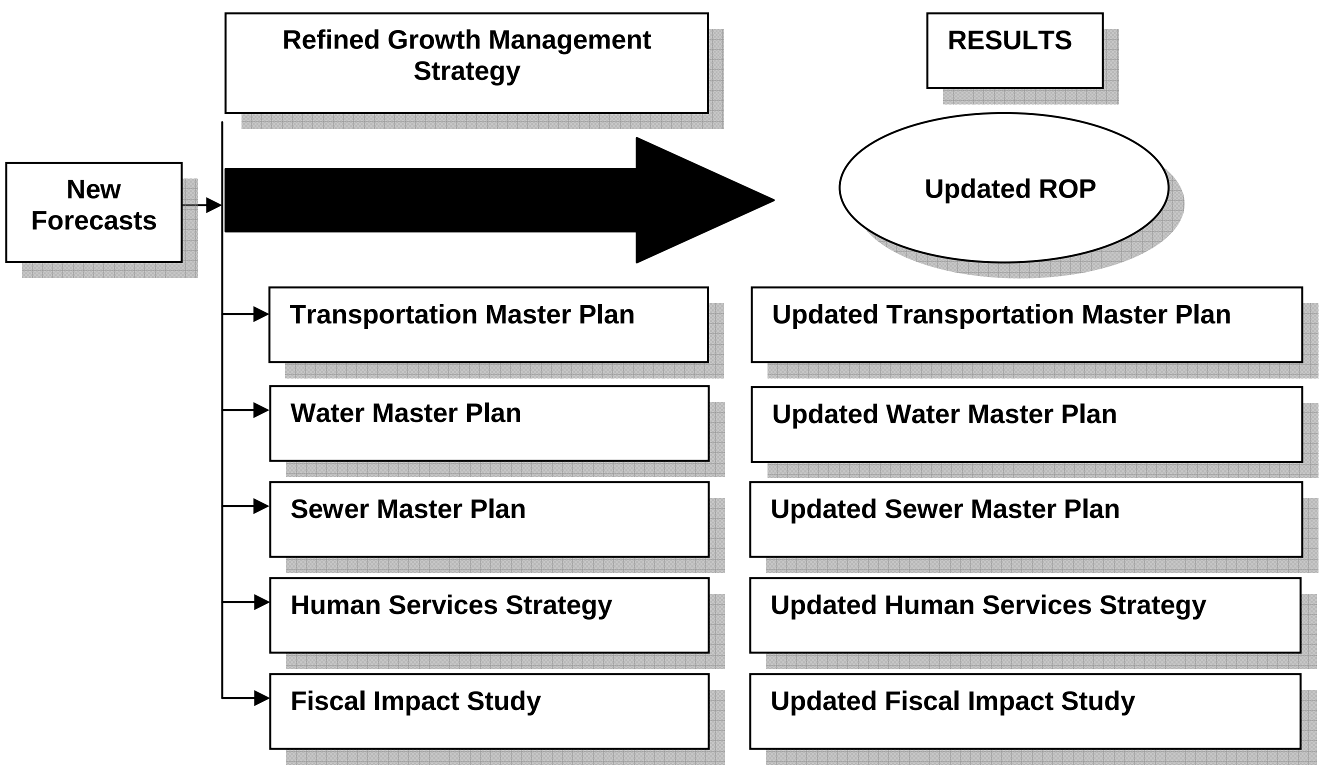
In October of 2004, staff outlined to Planning Committee a growth management work plan that included a number of separate tasks in determining the amount of growth the Region will accommodate over the next 26 years and where and how this growth will occur. The key components of this work plan include:

- The preparation of an updated forecast for York Region and the nine local municipalities.
- An inventory of both vacant employment land and vacant residential land to be used as input into the need for additional employment and residential lands outside of existing urban envelopes.
- An examination of intensification opportunities to determine what the provincial 40% intensification target means to York Region and how this target can be achieved.
- A land budget (land demand/supply) exercise to determine how much land will be required to accommodate the future population and employment growth.
- A fiscal impact analysis exercise to assess the costs of infrastructure and services required by growth.

A status update and description of each of these key components is detailed below.

4.1 Status Report on On-going Growth Management Work

The provision of revised forecasts and development of an updated urban structure will also require the review and update of a number of key strategic plans at the same or in a sequential time period. The range of strategic documents impacted by such work is shown in *Figure 1* below.



This represents an extremely ambitious program that will take considerable York Region staff time from several departments as well as municipal, agency and stakeholder involvement. The timing of all these initiatives will be coordinated with the growth management work outlined in *Attachment 1*.

This process has already begun with an initial meeting on January 24, 2005, to brief local municipal planners on the background forecast report prepared for the *Draft Growth Plan*. Preliminary meetings have also been held with internal Regional staff as the Transportation, Water and Sewer Master Plan updates will be undertaken with the forecasts used as a benchmark. In proceeding forward with the work plan, Regional planning staff will be meeting with both internal staff and with all nine local municipalities on a regular basis to discuss growth distribution and its related impacts.

4.1.1 Updating York Region's Forecast Model

Regional staff are in the process of conducting a detailed analysis and review of the updated forecast in the *Draft Growth Plan* using the Region's own in-house forecasting model. The analysis includes an update of the Regions population and employment forecast model with input from the local municipalities, to determine the local distribution of growth.

A number of forecast scenarios will be developed that will consider the range of growth options available to the Region. Staff anticipate that a preliminary draft of the forecast scenarios will be complete and available for discussion purposes with the local municipalities before year end. York Region staff have the expertise to complete the forecast work in house and there may be some outside consulting input at the end of the exercise as part of the final review. Staff will also be consulting on a regular basis with local municipal staff in the preparation of the revised and updated forecasts.

4.1.2 Vacant Employment Land Inventory Update

In September of this year, Regional staff presented to Committee an update of the supply and demand of employment lands within York Region. The inventory indicated that there are currently 2,862 net hectares (7,073 net acres), or an 18.5 year supply of vacant employment land.

A large number of these lands are currently classified as encumbered, meaning they are not available for development in the short to medium term due primarily to infrastructure constraints. Excluding the encumbered lands and industry on private services lands from the analysis, there are currently 1,754 net hectares (4,336 net acres), or an 11.8 year supply.

The report to Committee in September included a regional demand/supply analysis of vacant employment lands. The report noted that there are long term supply issues in some municipalities. The City of Vaughan accounts for 48% of the total vacant employment land inventory and the local municipalities of Aurora, Newmarket and Richmond Hill are approaching complete build-out.

Once the updated local municipal forecasts have been completed, a more detailed demand/supply analysis at the local level will be brought forward to Committee early in the New Year.

4.1.3 Vacant Residential Land Inventory Update

In addition to the vacant employment land inventory, staff are undertaking a vacant residential land inventory update to assess the potential to accommodate future residential growth within existing urban areas and to determine the need for extending urban boundaries onto greenfield areas.

This review will include an inventory of the supply of residential units in registered and draft approved and pending plans of subdivision as well as an estimate of unit potential on lands with no application that are within Official Plan approved settlement areas. As with the vacant Employment Land Inventory study, this information will be discussed and verified with each of the area municipalities in the region.

The results from this review are anticipated to be brought forward to Committee in the New Year.

4.1.4 York Region Residential Intensification Opportunities

As mentioned above, the Province's Draft Growth Plan includes a 40% intensification target. Section 2.3.2 of the that document stipulates that municipalities will *"plan for a phased increased in the yearly percentage of intensification so that by the year 2015, a minimum of 40 percent of all residential development occurring annually within each upper- or single-tier municipality will be within built-up areas."* Regional staff are currently working with the Province in determining York Region's built boundary.

Staff are currently undertaking an examination of residential intensification opportunities to illustrate what the Provincial target of 40% intensification means to York Region in terms of absolute numbers and built form, and how this target can be achieved.

A staff report is included in the November 30th Planning Committee agenda that summarizes the issues and opportunities associated with intensification and outlines the progress that has been achieved to date. Staff will report back to Committee and Council on further findings from this analysis early next year.

4.1.5 Land Budget (Land Demand/Supply) Update

Regional staff will use the updated forecasts, the vacant residential and employment land inventories and information from the intensification opportunities work as input towards a Region wide land budget, or land demand/supply, analysis. This analysis will help to determine how much land will be required to accommodate the future population and employment growth and the potential level of intensification required in the existing urban boundary.

The intensification potential will include an analysis to determine how to use the current built form in the most efficient manner to accommodate the forecast growth.

The land budget exercise will determine whether an urban boundary expansion is required within the Region. The analysis will take into account the regional structure of centres and corridors and allow for the continuation of stable residential communities at lower densities within areas outside of the centers and corridors. This approach will allow for a variety of development densities for both population and employment and for a diversity of housing types and wide array of employment uses.

York Region staff will be consulting on a regular basis with local municipal staff in the preparation of the land budget.

4.1.6 Fiscal Impact Analysis

The impact of the amount and distribution of forecasted growth in the Region and the costs associated with this growth is an important consideration for both private and public sector interests. The updated forecasts and updated Master Plans will be used to assess the costs of infrastructure and services required to accommodate the forecasted growth in the Region.

A 25 year fiscal impact analysis was completed for the Regional Official Plan in 1994. This work will be reviewed and updated in keeping with the revised forecasts and urban structure. The project scope and detail will be the subject of a separate staff report in 2006.

4.2 Growth Management Public Engagement

The Region has a number of difficult planning issues to face, debate and resolve over the coming months. Included in a preliminary list of issues are:

- protecting our natural heritage
- maintaining our high quality of life
- accommodating significant population and employment growth
- addressing traffic congestion
- ensuring that human services keep pace with growth
- ensuring that there is appropriate infrastructure investment to support growth rates.

At the outset, the objectives of a public education and engagement process for the Region are:

- To foster a public/stakeholder discussion on issues and choices facing the Region
- To begin to create a broad public consensus on the public policy decisions that need to be made
- To discuss issues and identify solutions
- To ensure that decisions are evaluated against the triple bottom line sustainability principles of economic development, social equity and environmental value.

Because the products of the Growth Management work plan are somewhat diverse, undertaking a meaningful public engagement process presents a significant challenge, not only to articulate the information to audiences but also to frame the issues that must be addressed. As such, Regional staff propose a three part process over the next 24 months to achieve the objectives identified above. As discussed in section 5 of this report, budget allocations are proposed for Phase 1 in the 2006 budget, however, Phases 2 and 3 of this work Plan will require subsequent budget allocations in the 2007 and potentially in the 2008 budget year. Such allocations would be subject to the normal budget process.

4.2.1 Phase 1 - Information Sharing and Identification and Discussion of issues

As identified in the previous Council reports and in Section 4.1 of this report, Regional staff has been working to bring forward a number of Technical reports that form the basis for information sharing. These reports deal with and discuss:

Updating York Region's Forecast Model
Vacant Employment Land Inventory Update
Vacant Residential Land Inventory Update
York Region Residential Intensification Opportunities
Land Budget (Land Demand/Supply) Update
Fiscal Impact Analysis

These reports will be brought forward to Planning Committee over the coming months. The revised forecasts and updated urban structure will also necessitate a review of associated key strategic plans including the Transportation Master Plan, Long Term Sewer and Water Plan, Housing Supply Strategy, the 10 year Capital Plan, the Development Charges and the Human Services Plan. Regional staff will also continue to monitor in detail development applications and the scheduling of key infrastructure required to service the projected growth in population and employment.

In addition to information relating to current and ongoing work there is a need to provide information on the past growth of the Region, it's current housing and employment achievements, water and sewer servicing, transportation and transit, greening and the Region's approach to Sustainable Development to frame the discussions and assist with issue identification.

It is proposed that this Growth Management public information and engagement process be started by a Sustainable Development Symposium to be held in Mid February 2006 and be followed by a series of Focussed Panel and Roundtable Discussions commencing in late February through July 2006 and covering issue areas identified at the symposium and including Population and Employment Growth, Natural Environment, Economic Development, Human Services, Transportation and Transit, Infrastructure Planning and Community Design.

Phase 1b - Feedback to Community and Council – "What Was Heard"
Feedback the Symposium, workshops and Public meetings in the February through July 2006 period, will be provided to stakeholders on a continuous basis through the website and stakeholder contact lists as well as more detailed reports to Committee and Council.

While verbal updates can be undertaken during the process at Committee meetings in the March through June timeframe, Regional staff anticipate a final report of the Phase 1 feedback, including a "What Was Heard" document on issues raised and conclusions drawn on the initial round of public engagement at the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting of September 2006.

As proposed, the work plan provides Council with both the information to discuss growth related issues and on-going feedback from stakeholders during the latter half of 2006.

There will also be a need to bring the results of the growth management discussion back to the new Regional Council in early 2007 to ensure that there is both an understanding and clear direction for staff from the new Council.

4.2.2 Phase 2 - Choices for the Future – Identifying the Options

Phase 2, to be undertaken early in 2007, will involve Regional Committees and Council and stakeholders and will take feedback heard during Phase 1 to inform the development of future growth options by Regional staff and Council.

Based on the feedback received as well as Regional Technical reports and Provincial context, Regional staff will develop a series of growth options for Council and public discussion. Phase 2 debates will follow a similar public involvement to Phase 1 during the late March and April 2007 period with public forums and/or Town Hall meetings and discussion of the alternatives.

Regional staff will also undertake evaluation of the options against the triple bottom line sustainability principles of economic development, social equity and environmental value.

Results of Stakeholder discussions on scenarios will be brought back to Council in the fall of 2007 in a further "What was heard" document with recommendations of a preferred growth scenario for Council consideration.

4.2.3 Phase 3 – Growth Strategy and Regional Official Plan Amendment

Phase 3 involves preparation of revised Master Plans as well as a Regional Official Plan Amendment or Amendments to implement the revised and updated urban structure and elements including the population and employment projections, community planning principles and policies, servicing and transportation strategies, human services and environmental protection and investment in Greenlands. The Regional Official Plan as it currently exists provides a basis for this review, but it is anticipated that amendments will be required.

Processing and consultation on Official Plan Amendments is prescribed, under the *Planning Act.* It is anticipated that this process will commence in the fall of 2007.

4.3 Getting the Message Out

In order to inform and facilitate discussion of these issues, Regional staff proposes the following:

- **Sustainable Development Symposium:** Proposed for mid- February 2006, the Region would choose speakers to educate members of the audience about a sustainable development process, highlight sustainable development case studies from the municipal sector in the Province and other jurisdictions and engage the attendees in discussions on the topic of sustainable development, community values and issues that should be addressed in the York Region growth management work.

- **Focussed Panel and Workshop Discussions:** From late February through May 2006, the Region will hold facilitated discussions on issues such as pace of growth, intensification, transit supportive development, natural environment, community design, human services and economic development. These sessions will endeavour to reach as wide an audience of stakeholders as possible.

- **Information Kit Development and Publication:** In order to inform stakeholders of background information and issues, regional staff will prepare fact sheets, pamphlets, and other displays and publications for distribution.

- **Community-Based Town Hall** meetings to present and discuss growth scenarios and obtain feedback.

- **Stakeholder contact lists** for information circulation, involvement and ENewsletters, blast Emails.

- **Website Consultation:** To be developed for stakeholders for all project phases containing timely information, from previous display and published materials to illustrate growth management aspects, such as fact sheets, density and community planning illustrations and the ability to submit on-line feedback.

- **Partnering:** For all phases, Regional staff will identify the potential for partnering with print and television media to provide feature stories, information and coverage of events to increase initiative exposure and stakeholder information.

- **Technical Advisory Committee's:** It is important in this process that the views and issues raised by area municipalities in the Region and external agencies involved in growth and planning in the Region be given a forum for discussion and issues identification. As such, Regional staff propose the formation of two advisory committees one involving the area municipalities, the second involving Provincial Government Ministries and the Conservation Authorities. In addition, Regional staff will undertake to partner with area municipalities and others to engage business, environmental and ratepayer groups, the agricultural community through the Regional Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group and others in discussions at local levels on growth management issues.

4.4 Timing

As previously indicated, Phases 1 through 3 will be undertaken over the next 24 months, with the start of the process in February 2006 with a proposed Sustainable Community Symposium.

Figure 2 to this report contains the proposed timeline for this work plan

4.5 Relationship to Vision 2026

Vision 2026 contemplates the on-going updates required by the changing context of planning in South Central Ontario. Moreover, Vision 2026 stresses the requirement for ongoing stakeholder involvement and engagement.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed 2006 Planning Department Budget has allocated $50,000 to cover the costs of the public engagement. While it is anticipated that Phase 1 project costs will be within this allocation, additional funding will be required within the 2007 and potentially the 2008 budget year for Phases 2, 3 and the Regional Official Plan Amendment process. These further budget allocations will be negotiated as part of the on-going Corporate budget process.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Area municipalities play an integral and pivotal role in the Regional Growth Management work since many of the aspects of this growth management exercise will be implemented by the Region and its area municipal partners. In order to ensure a high level of co-ordination between the Regional work and work being undertaken at the municipal level, it is recommended that a municipal Technical Advisory Committee be established specifically to provide input to the Growth Management work.

It is also recommended that the agencies including the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Natural Resources and the Conservation Authorities be invited to sit on an inter-agency Technical Advisory Committee to provide input to the Regional work.

7. CONCLUSION

The Region has a number of difficult planning issues to face, debate and resolve over the coming months. These include accommodating significant population and employment growth, protecting our natural heritage and ensuring a legacy for existing and future residents and making sure that both human services and infrastructure keeps pace with growth.

Moreover, the context of planning in South Central Ontario has changed over the past several years, stakeholders are becoming increasingly concerned about issues such as growth, traffic congestion, protection of natural environment and ground and surface water resources. These factors require a comprehensive review of the Region's Growth Management systems as well as the Region's Master Planning strategies for Transportation and Water and Sewers.

The conduct of a comprehensive public information and engagement process is critical to the success of the Region's Growth Management initiative. Regional staff proposes a three Phase process for public information and engagement over the next 2 years involving:

- public open houses and forums
- media involvement
- on-going feedback
- use of internet and publication materials.

The results of this process will culminate in a Regional Official Plan Amendment in late 2007.

Funds are proposed to be allocated through the 2006 budget process to undertake Phase 1, with additional funds required in the 2007 and 2008 budget years to undertake Phases 2 and 3 and the Regional Official Plan Amendment.

It is recommended that the public information and engagement process as described in this report be adopted and that staff proceed with the initial phases early in 2006.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)