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PLANNING FOR TOMORROW SUSTAINABLE GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, February 16, 2006, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Committee and Council receive this report for information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Committee and Council about the work plan components and timing of York Region's the public information and engagement initiatives scheduled to date, for the Region's Growth Management work, *Planning for Tomorrow*.

3. BACKGROUND

In December 2005 through its adoption of Clause 2 of Report 10 of the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee, Council endorsed the Growth Management Public Information and Engagement Work Plan for the Region's Growth Management initiative. The purpose of this initiative is to have a broad public/stakeholder discussion on the major growth management decisions that face the Region. The program will be entitled "*Planning for Tomorrow*" and will involve distribution of information, initiation of dialogue and solicitation of ideas/potential approaches.

Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee received a verbal presentation on these work plan components at its February meeting.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

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.

The provision of revised forecasts and the development of an updated urban structure will require the review and update of a number of key strategic plans at the same time or in a sequential time period. The range of strategic documents impacted by such work includes the transportation, water and sewer master plans, the human services strategy and a fiscal impact study. The timing of all these initiatives will be coordinated with the growth management work.

The public education and engagement process with the tagline *Planning for Tomorrow* has a number of objectives including:

- 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.

This Growth Management public information and engagement process starts with the Sustainable Development Symposium on March 3, 2006 and will be followed by a series of *Planning our Tomorrow* Open Houses and public discussions commencing in late March through April 2006. *Planning for Tomorrow* will focus issue areas identified at the symposium including Population and Employment Growth, Natural Environment, Economic Development, Human Services, Transportation and Transit, Infrastructure Planning and Community Design.

4.1 Getting the Message Out

In order to inform and facilitate discussion of these issues so far, Regional staff have arranged the following:

- **Sustainable Development Symposium:** Scheduled for March 3, 2006, the “by invitation only” event will be held at the Kortright Centre for Conservation from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The Symposium will help York Region, its partners and stakeholders to identify key issues and develop ideas for sustainable growth management in York Region.
- **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 Open Houses** from March and April 2006, *Planning for Tomorrow* open houses are scheduled to present and discuss growth scenarios and obtain feedback from our stakeholders.

<i>Meeting Date</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Location</i>
Tuesday, March 21	Richmond Hill	Regional South Services Centre Training Room
Thursday, March 23	Markham	Town of Markham Anthony Roman Centre – Canada Room
Tuesday, April 4	Vaughan	City of Vaughan Civic Centre Council Chambers
Tuesday, April 6	Georgina	Georgina Civic Centre Council Chambers
Wednesday, April 12	Newmarket	Regional Administration Centre Seminar Room

Format of the meetings – Open house with Displays 5 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
 Presentation 7:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
 Discussions 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

- **Stakeholder contact lists** for information circulation, involvement and E Newsletters, blast Emails are being developed.
- **Media:** a number of different media opportunities will be pursued including: a series of newspaper articles, media advertising and use of a film of the sustainability symposium.
- **Website Information:** An enhanced *Planning for Tomorrow* link from the York Region's home page www.york.ca will provide:
 - an introduction to the Region's Growth Management initiative and description of the challenges,
 - information on Public engagement opportunities and "What was Heard" reports
 - background information on Growth Management from Regional reports and external growth management links, and
 - an on-line feedback form

4.2 What's Next

4.2.1 Feedback to Community & Council – “What Was Heard”

Feedback about what is heard at the Sustainability Symposium, workshops and Public meetings in the March through April and May 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.

The first of these verbal updates may be anticipated at the May 10, 2006 meeting of the Planning and Economic and Development Committee. 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 Additional Meetings

- **Focussed Panel and Workshop Discussions:** facilitated discussions on issues such as pace of growth, intensification, transit supportive development, natural environment, community design, human services and economic development. These sessions focus on a wide variety of stakeholder groups (e.g. Local environmental groups, HSPC, UDI York Chapter, business groups, agricultural liaison group, and provincial agencies).
- **Presentations:** Staff will be available for presentations/discussions with area municipal councils/committees and other groups, ratepayers, etc when requested.
- **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:** Staff have already established a Technical Advisory Committee with staff of the 9 area municipalities. This group will meet regularly to discuss technical and policy issues such as: vacant land inventories, intensification, population forecasts and land use options. Staff will also brief area municipal planning, works and CAO's through scheduled meetings of this.

4.3 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 costs of *Planning for Tomorrow* are incorporated in the approved 2006 Planning Department budget. 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 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, a municipal Technical Advisory Committee is to be established specifically to provide input to the Growth Management work.

Area municipal Councils and Committees will be briefed on an ongoing basis through the process.

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 interested in issues such as growth, traffic congestion, protection of natural environment, compact urban form, intensification, provision of transit 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 an extensive public information and engagement:

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

The results of this process will result in a "What was Heard" document in 2006 and will lead to a Regional Official Plan Amendment in late 2007.

It is recommended that this update on the public information and engagement process as described in this report be received for information and that staff proceed with *Planning for Tomorrow*.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.