

7

REPORTING ON SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AND BARRIERS

The Finance and Administration Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, March 2, 2006, from the Commissioner of Finance:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. This report outlining York Region's submission to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) Municipal Act, Section 300, Reporting on Service Improvements and Barriers be received;
2. In accordance with the Section 300 of the Municipal Act, Council authorize staff to submit the report to MMAH and post the report on York Region's website.

2. PURPOSE

This report outlines York Region's submission to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) as it relates to the Reporting on Service Improvements and Barriers and is provided for information purposes.

This report provides notice to MMAH and the public of initiatives undertaken by York Region to improve the efficiency and/or effectiveness of service delivery and barriers to achieving further improvements. This report strives to demonstrate how the improvement is more efficient or effective and how the municipality or community will benefit from the changes. The report endeavours to promote a greater understanding among citizens of the choices York Region has made.

3. BACKGROUND

Section 300 of the Municipal Act requires municipalities to provide yearly notice to the public of improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of their service delivery and barriers to achieving further improvements. This requirement was previously considered to be satisfied by the Municipal Performance Management Measurement Program (MPMP). The MMAH has provided clarification of the requirements of Municipal Act, Section 300 and indicated the report is to be distinct from the MPMP response. The report is to include only those service areas for which improvements or barriers exist. The method of delivering the information to the public is as determined by the municipality.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Through this reporting requirement, the MMAH has introduced an opportunity for the Region to demonstrate annually in a qualitative fashion what initiatives have been undertaken by the Region to further the effort to contain tax levy increases through efficiencies and enhance the value of each tax dollar through improvements in effectiveness.

York Region undertakes a variety of performance measurement activities to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of Regional operations including the performance measurement framework used by York Region, the benchmarking activities of OMBI and the performance measures included in the MPMP. The benefits of the initiatives, which translate into improvements efficiency and effectiveness are likely to be evident in the above mentioned performance measurements.

York Region scrutinizes its operations to determine whether its efforts have resulted in improvements and to take corrective action in the absence of measurable improvements. As well, this information further enhances the data available on which decisions of resource allocation in the budget development and review process are made.

As all municipalities are required to report improvements, the information provided by other municipalities allows for the sharing of ideas and best practices and the opportunity for further improvements in York Region.

4.1 Highlights of York Region's Service Improvements and Barriers

Attachment 1 provides a detailed listing of service improvement initiatives and barriers by business unit.

In 2004 a number of key initiatives were undertaken in the Transportation & Works department resulting in improvements in efficiency and/or effectiveness. The Transit branch has actively promoted the use of conventional transit as a viable alternative to the more costly Mobility Plus service and more broadly, to the use of personal motor vehicles. This has resulted, in the case of specialized transit considerable per trip savings and in conventional an improved cost recovery ratio. The new Transit terminal at Vaughan Mills contributes to the viability of Transit as an option for residents.

The Roads branch has realized significant efficiencies through the conversion of incandescent traffic control signals to light emitting diode technology. As well the Roads anti-icing program introduced the application of salt brine to roads to compliment the traditional granular salt application with annual savings estimated between \$100,000 and \$150,000.

Solid Waste Management piloted a Source Separated Organics program in Markham and successfully reduced landfill needs by 36%, requiring 2 fewer trucks per week going to a

Michigan landfill site during the test period. As this program is twice the cost of landfill waste additional resources are required to promote and educate consumers on the benefits of Source Separated Organics.

Health Services implemented the GIVE – Get Involved, Volunteer in Education program to provide parenting and healthy lifestyle information to populations often not reached by Health Services Programs. Economies in program delivery were achieved by sharing the costs of the program with partners. As well 70% of attendees reported an increase in parenting skills. Health Services also adopted a train-the-trainer model to build internal expertise in infection control in Long-Term Care Homes. Fewer staff was required from the Health Services Department to reach a large number of staff in Long-Term Care Homes.

Community Services and Housing Department fully implemented the central Contact Centre. This first-call centre has reduced operating cost and eliminated the need for clients to make multiple calls to access different programs within the department. The department also implemented a funding strategy that eliminates the need for agencies to prepare multiple proposals and allows the department to review and strategically commit funds to specific social issues through an organized call for proposals.

York Regional Police opened a Community Resource Centre in the south end of the Region to provide collision reporting and other services such as clearance letters and volunteer screenings previously only available at the Regional Headquarters. As well, to vet community traffic issues and complaints and establish a database of traffic concerns, Traffic Safety Committees have been established in Markham, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury. As with the Community Resource Centre, the cost benefit ratio may not be such to permit similar facilities and /or Committees to be located in every municipality.

In Corporate Services, Property Services has developed a software system to monitor and track electricity and natural gas consumption and savings. The Human Resources branch has moved Long Term Care to a model of self-insurance for Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and has realized savings of approximately \$66,000.

In Finance a new Purchasing By-Law was introduced by Supplies and Services that enables individual departments to authorize purchases up to \$50,000 thereby allowing staff to respond more quickly.

Information Technology has developed a York Region Information Technology Strategy to establish a methodology for prioritizing technology projects, establish clear roles and responsibilities and formalize a governance structure, for managing technology projects. The IT group also developed a Disaster Recovery Plan designed to protect the delivery of regional services highly dependent on technology in the event of a major disaster. Additionally, IT introduces the Electronic document management system (eDocs) to enhance productivity and time savings.

4.2 Relationship to Vision 2026

Through incremental improvements in both efficiency and effectiveness York Region is proactively meeting the needs of our customers and setting a high standard for customer services which are both components of Goal 8 of Vision 2026 “Engaged Communities and a Responsive Region”.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Region of York endeavours to provide services to its residents and businesses in a cost-effective manner. This report demonstrates some of the Region’s efforts to pursue opportunities to realize efficiencies and/or improve service with regards to tax levy and user rates.

Additionally, this report is an opportunity to highlight the consequence of capping on subsidy in some programs cost shared with the Province. In cases, such as Emergency Medical Services subsidy and Ontario Works administration subsidy, the cap has effectively eroded the level of support by the Province resulting in the Municipality bearing an increasing proportion of the financial burden of the program.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The effort to improve service outlined in this report will benefit residents and businesses throughout York Region. All municipalities are required to report publicly and provide a report to the MMAH.

7. CONCLUSION

This report outlines York region’s submission to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as it relates to the requirements of the Municipal Act, Section 300 Reporting on Service Improvements and Barriers and details the information York Region will communicate to taxpayers through York Region’s website.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the agenda for the March 2, 2006 Committee meeting.)