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PLANNING FOR TOMORROW

PART 5

PHASE 2 – PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION – 2007

Regional Council at its meeting on April 19, 2007 had before it a revised Attachment 1 (Communications Strategy).

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The presentation by Paul Bottomley, Manager, Growth Management, Economy and Information Research, Long Range and Strategic Planning, relating to Clauses 6 to 10 in this Committee Report be received;**
- 2. A Regional or Local Councillor from each local municipality be requested to “champion” the *Planning for Tomorrow* series to raise awareness in their communities; and**
- 3. The following recommendations contained in the report dated March 11, 2007, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that Committee and Council endorse the Phase 2, Public Engagement and Consultation program articulated within this report.
2. The Regional Clerk distribute this staff report to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (PIR), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the area municipalities for information purposes.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to outline the steps and timing involved in the Phase 2, Public Engagement and Consultation program for the Region's, *Planning for Tomorrow* - Growth Management Initiative. This Phase of consultation will involve review and consideration of growth scenarios with stakeholders in York Region

This report is Part 5 in the series of *Planning for Tomorrow* reports being brought forward for information and discussion in the spring of 2007. The other reports in the series are:

1. York Region Population and Employment Forecasts

2. 2031 Land Requirements
3. York Region Residential Intensification Strategy
4. York Region Residential Area Analysis - Preliminary Report
5. Phase 2 - Public Engagement and Consultation

All five reports are to be considered at the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting of April 4, 2007 and should be read in the order in which they are listed above.

3. BACKGROUND

Regional Council at its meeting of December 15 2005 adopted Clause 2 of Report 10 of the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee which outlined the overall direction, steps and timing of the Growth Management initiative, including the Public Engagement and Consultation process.

The 2005 Work plan provided for a three part process over the following 24 months, commencing in early 2006. Part 1 of Growth Management public engagement and consultation occurred in the spring of 2006. Phase 2 of the initiative is to occur in the spring of 2007, coordinated with the Region's Sustainability Strategy and Master Plan updates for Water and Wastewater and Transportation. At the same time as public discussion is taking place, Regional staff is discussing growth assumption, projections and proposed scenarios with area municipal staff and Councils, affected agencies and Provincial Ministries. We are now at that stage in the overall process.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The 2005 Work plan established the following objectives for the public engagement and consultation process:

- 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.

The products of the Growth Management work plan are diverse and complicated making the public engagement process a challenging task, not only to articulate the information to audiences but also to frame the issues that must be addressed. The following sections of this report, as well as other reports on this agenda identify the issues the Region is facing and identify proposed growth scenarios that will be taken to the public to obtain input.

4.1 Main Issues heard in Phase 1

The main issues heard at the Town hall meetings conducted in 2006 included:

Pace of Growth

The majority of residents at the public meetings recognized that growth was likely going to happen, however there was significant opinion expressed that the pace of growth was too fast when compared to the impacts associated with the growth and whether our human services, transit and transportation systems and water and sewer services and natural systems can keep up to the demands placed on them.

Natural Heritage

Protection and investment in a linked natural heritage system remains a major issue for the majority of York Region residents. Included within this wider issue is concern over Lake Simcoe and ground and surface water resources.

Intensification

Intensification needs to be done carefully to ensure it is the right location, fits with surrounding uses and is high quality design.

Quality of Life/Urban Design

The maintenance of the quality of life enjoyed by the Region's residents was part of most discussions at the public meetings. Aspects raised included the amount of time spent commuting, the quality of community design and the availability of human services.

Agricultural Lands

The GTA Agricultural Action Plan outlines some 37 recommendations to assist in ensuring that Agriculture remains a viable industry within the GTA. In York Region with approximately 69% of the land area within the Greenbelt (including the ORMCP portion) much of the land area has been protected, however challenges relating to taxation and farmland assessment and diversification of the industry among others remain outstanding.

Sustainability

Many people and organizations expressed concern that future growth and development be sustainable from a number of perspectives including energy, security of food sources, water, air and the natural environment and financial resources. Adoption of a triple bottom-line analysis (natural environment, economy, community) of major decisions would assist in this regard. Since the 2006 public consultation, the Region has prepared the Regional Sustainability Strategy for public review and comment. Once approved (scheduled for June 2007) this Strategy will operationalize sustainability principles into Regional plans, operations and programs. Integration of Sustainability principles into the growth management work is discussed in Section 4.2 of this report.

4.2 Components of Public Engagement Phase 2- 2007

As previously indicated, the components of growth management require a multifaceted approach to seeking input. The following sections identify Regional staff's recommended direction and follow the proposed Work plan endorsed by Committee and Council in 2005.

4.2.2 Discussing the Growth Scenarios - Area Municipal Involvement and Town Hall Meetings 2007

Since the 2006 Town hall meetings, Regional staff has been engaged in discussion with area municipalities and the Province on detailed forecasting calculations and technical background work to provide preliminary assignment of the forecasts to area municipalities as well as growth scenarios. This work is being shared and discussed with area municipalities through the Technical Committee. As well, Regional staff will be pleased to attend area municipal Council meetings to discuss the Region's growth forecasting and scenario work.

Based on the feedback received from Phase 1, the Regional technical reports, further discussion with the Province and area municipalities, Regional staff has developed three proposed growth scenarios which will be discussed with the public. These three scenarios (30% intensification and 40% intensification based on the Places to Grow forecasts (1.5 million population) and 2051 forecast) are the subject of additional reports on the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting of April 7, 2007.

Phase 2 public discussion will follow a similar public involvement process to Phase 1 during the May and early June 2007 period, with Town Hall meetings to stimulate discussion of the alternatives and stakeholder meetings with other groups including the UDI/GTHBA environmental groups, area municipal councils on request and ongoing discussions with area municipal and Provincial stakeholders. At the present time the schedule of meetings includes:

City of Vaughan, Council Chambers – May 1, 2007
Town of Markham, Canada Room – May 3, 2007
Town of Richmond Hill, O.M.B. Room – May 8, 2007.
Town of East Gwillimbury, Council Chambers – May 10, 2007, and
Town of Newmarket, Regional Administrative Building – May 15, 2007

All open houses will begin at 6:00 p.m., with a presentation between 7:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and discussion following until 9:00 p.m.

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

4.3 Integrating Sustainability, Growth Management and Master Planning

At the same time that growth management work is being undertaken, the Region is also developing a Sustainability Strategy and updating both the Water and Wastewater Master Plan and the Transportation Master Plan. These latter two are being undertaken within the purview of the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

The Region's draft Sustainability Strategy was released in March 2007 and provides a long-term framework for smarter decisions about growth management and municipal responsibilities that better integrate the community, environment and economy. The strategy will inform and improve our implementation and decision-making processes. A preliminary draft endorsed by Council contains over 80 action items under the areas of triple-bottom line sustainability, corporate culture, partnerships, education and engagement and implementation and monitoring. Once approved (scheduled for June 2007) this Strategy will operationalize sustainability principles into Regional plans, operations and programs through practical action. In compliance with this Strategy, the growth management scenarios, as well as all Master Planning initiatives will be undergoing sustainability assessments that consider the following:

- The triple-bottom line assessment to create net gains along environmental, economic and community lines.
- Long-term vision/framework.
- Partnerships, engagement, education and awareness.
- Continuous improvement and innovation in technology.
- Monitoring, target setting and reporting to the public.
- Promotion of sustainable lifestyle and re-evaluation of our consumption and expectations.

4.4 Getting the Message Out to a Wider Audience

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

- **Technical Advisory Committee:** Regional staff has been meeting on an on-going basis with area municipalities and other agencies to discuss the population and employment projections, land budget and growth scenarios and other technical issues. These meetings will continue in order to provide coordination with area municipal growth management work.
- **Area Municipal Councils:** In order to ensure that area municipal Councils and Senior staff are engaged and informed of this process, Regional staff will contact the Clerks and Planning Commissioners of Area municipalities in order to schedule appearances at area municipal Councils with respect to the Region's growth management work.
- **Public Notice of the Open Houses and discussions and Supporting materials:** Notice for the Public meetings will be given in local newspapers throughout the Region during the first two weeks of April. In order to inform stakeholders of

background information and issues, Regional staff will prepare an information brochure for distribution at the town hall meetings as well as displays and other publication materials for distribution.

- **Stakeholder Contact lists:** A stakeholder's contact list was started for the 2006 town hall meetings and with recent additions for Master Plan for Water and Wastewater and Transportation this contact list has now grown to approximately 3200 names and addresses. Where possible this list will be used for information circulation, E Newsletters and blast Emails.
- **Newsletter:** As part of on-going communications, a newsletter/brochure will be prepared for circulation and information as part of the Transportation and Works Works newsletter scheduled for distribution in late April.
- **Website Consultation:** The Regional *Planning for Tomorrow* website was operational for all of the 2006 Public participation and will be maintained, expanded and updated with additional information, staff reports and presentation materials for the 2007 discussions.
- **Communications Strategy:** York Region Corporate Communications has developed a Draft Communications Strategy appended to this report as *Attachment 1*. This Strategy will be used as the blueprint for communication activities for a wider audience. For all phases, Regional staff continue to identify the potential for working and partnering with print and television media to assist with news articles and features to help increase public exposure and stakeholder information on this initiative.
- **Additional Stakeholder and First Nation's Consultation:** As previously indicated, Regional staff will also hold meetings with special interest groups and area municipal Council on request to present the growth scenarios and discuss implications. Regional staff is also currently inviting First Nation's consultation as part of Master Planning and growth management work. Protocols for this consultation are currently being developed to ensure that First Nation's issues are addressed.

4.5 Relationship to Vision 2026

The nature of the growth management strategy speaks to all of the goal areas of Vision 2026, but especially to the goals of "Managed and Balanced Growth", "Infrastructure for a Growing Region" and "Engaged Communities and a Responsive Region".

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

Phase 2 of the Public Consultation is to be undertaken within the approved Planning Department budget allocations and staff complements for 2007.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Area municipalities are being consulted as the Region proceeds with growth scenario development. A number of area municipalities are undertaking their own growth management and official plan update work and consult with regional staff on an on-going basis.

7. CONCLUSION

Regional Planning Committee and Council endorsed the overall public consultation process for the growth management initiative in 2005. This report articulates the plan and timing for Phase 2 of this consultation, commencing with 5 Town hall meetings in May 2007. Regional staff is also meeting with area municipal technical staff on an ongoing basis and will be pleased to attend area municipal Council meetings to present the growth management work.

As well as growth management work, Regional staff is co-ordinating this work with the Region's Sustainability Strategy and Master Planning work in Water and Wastewater and Transportation, and has developed a comprehensive communications plan in consultation with Corporate Communications.

At the present time we are proceeding for the growth management initiative to lead to a Regional Official Plan Amendment in 2008.

For further information about this report, please contact John Waller, Director of Long Range and Strategic Planning at 905-830-4444 ext. 1525 or john.waller@york.ca

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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