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VISION 2026: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE REGION, FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT ON INDICATORS OF PROGRESS FOR THE YEAR 2005

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the following:

1. The presentation by Laura Atkins-Paul, Senior Planner, be received; and
2. The recommendations contained in the following report, February 20, 2006, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be adopted:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council adopt this report and *Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable Region, Fourth Annual Report on Indicators of Progress*.
2. That *Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable Region, Fourth Annual Report on Indicators of Progress* be widely circulated to the public, stakeholders and staff and to local area municipalities.

2. PURPOSE

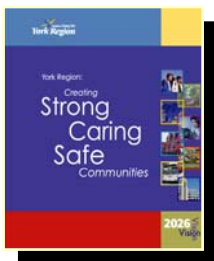
This report provides members of the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee and Regional Council with highlights of *Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable Region, Fourth Annual Report on Indicators of Progress* (Attachment 1).

3. BACKGROUND

Vision 2026 along with the Region's program-specific strategic plans, e.g. the Regional Official Plan, Greening Strategy, and the Rapid Transit Plan, provide a strong policy basis for sustainable development in the Region.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Vision 2026 is the Region's overarching strategic document and is intended to guide our daily corporate decisions to ensure the Region's high quality of life now and in the future.



Through Vision 2026, the Region has committed to enhance our communities and quality of life by continuing to develop and build on initiatives like the Greening Strategy and reporting out to the public in

initiatives like the State of the Environment Report as well as continuing to use our key strategic documents, like the Regional Official Plan, Transportation Master Plan, and the Human Services Strategy to set sustainable policy and implementation guidelines.

4.1. York Region's Vision Towards Sustainability

In 1987, the United Nations, through the Brundtland Commission, defined sustainable development as “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*” The goal of sustainable development is to integrate and balance the three elements of environmental protection, economic growth and social equity. The basis of sustainable development theory is about legacy in which we strive to answer the question: “what type of world do we want to leave for our children and grand-children?”

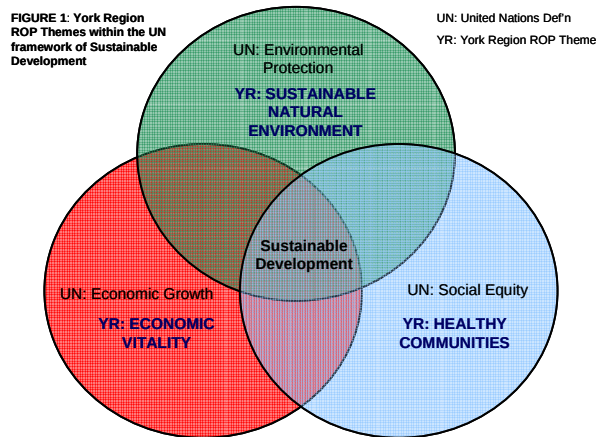
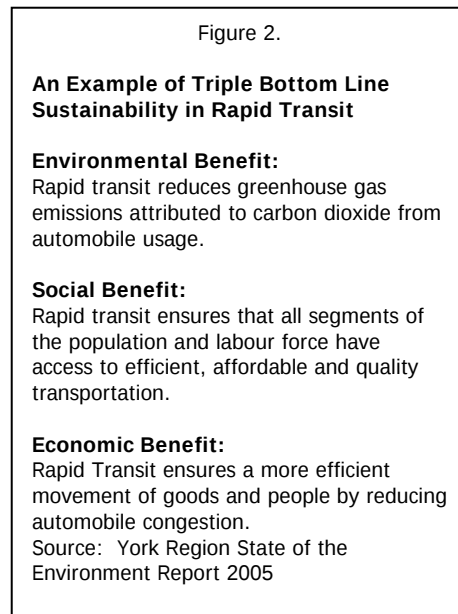


Figure 2 provides a York Region specific example of the three cornerstones of sustainability in action.



Vision 2026 incorporates many of the sustainable development principles highlighted by the United Nations and speaks to triple bottom-line sustainability through its goal areas.

The document calls for engagement and interaction between the public, all relevant stakeholders and Regional Staff. Educational and awareness campaigns are promoted. Moreover, a monitoring system and documentation are in place for annual performance evaluations.

Regional Council at its meeting of October 27, 2005 (Clause 2, Report 8) endorsed the proposed workplan for a Sustainable Development Initiative for York Region that will help in moving the Corporation forward to a more sustainable Region, including the incorporation of a sustainable development theme into the ongoing and future Growth Management workplan.

Many of the leading edge municipalities across Canada and the world that originally embarked on visioning exercises have since broadened their strategic vision documents into sustainable development plans. The process to develop these plans, along with the documents themselves have added the dimension of triple-bottom line accountability to the framework while continuing to provide corporate and community direction and to measure progress around an enhanced set of indicators.

Towards a Sustainable Region, continues to meet Vision's commitment of reporting on progress to staff, Council and the public and highlights how York Region's corporate decisions support and further the goals of *Vision 2026* through our programs and business areas. It also positions the Region well to build on our successes and address challenges through the additional lens of sustainability.

Towards a Sustainable Region indicators are based on information the Region already collects including Key Performance Indicators, mandatory provincial reporting indicators, and information used by the Region such as the State of the Environment Report.

Endorsed by Council, these indicators are meant to be meaningful and representative, providing a "barometer" of progress.

To date, strategic corporate initiatives like *Understanding Barriers: York Regions First Annual Accessibility Plan*, the Economic Strategy and *The Profile of York Region's Low Income Population* have used *Vision 2026* as their broad framework.

Over the past three years, the *Vision 2026* team have also been working across the corporation to integrate *Vision 2026* in to the business planning and budget process, and the performance agreement process.

4.1.2 Are We Making Progress?

Over the last four years, York region has made major headway on a number of *Vision 2026's* Goals. This progress has helped us move forward on action areas that speak to quality of life, environment, economy, growth management, and sustainable communities.

Some of the highlights from areas of progress in this fourth year of reporting include:

- Viva Rapid Transit launch
- All 9 area municipalities now have both conventional and specialized transit services
- Moving Forward: York Region's Second Annual Accessibility Plan
- Focus on Our Environment – York Region's State of the Environment Report 2005
- On a New Financial Deal: Advocating for Legislative and Funding Changes
- Opened Community Safety Village at Bruce's Mill Conservation Area
- GTA Agricultural Action Plan
- Regional Energy & Environmental Management Program
- York Region Economic Strategy
- ROPA 43 – Regional Centres and Corridors
- York Regional Police increased overall levels of service presence in the community.
- York Region's forest cover is 40,025 hectares or 22.5% of total land area in 2005. The Regional Official Plan target is 25%.
- The Region has set an aggressive 35% energy reduction target and began implementation of initiatives in 2005 to work towards this target
- The Primer for a Sustainable York Region
- The Region has maintained an average diversion rate of 34% and has made major strides in putting programs in place to increase this rate from 25% in 2001
- Continued high quality of life (89% approval rating by residents)
- Overall satisfaction with York Regional government at 71% consistent with the past three years.

However, there is a need to improve our performance in areas where we have influence.

Residents have told us some of the major concerns include congestion, growth management and environment and that they support the Region's efforts in areas like rapid transit and compact urban growth to address these issues. Employers in York Region have told us that diversity, mix and affordability of housing are important for continued economic growth and employment.

In 2006/07, York Region has an ambitious program to address these concerns through the sustainable development and growth management workplans.

4.1.3 Vision 2026 Staff Information Brochure

Some of the feedback we have received from Regional staff and management indicates the need for a short and clear communications piece around *Vision 2026*.

The attached brochure (Attachment 2) has been developed in consultation with the Vision 2026 Advisory and Steering Committees as a tool to help staff understand how they help to implement *Vision 2026* on a daily basis.

The brochure will be available on the Region's web site and will be distributed to all employees in late spring pay envelopes.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable Region, Fourth Annual Report on Indicators of Progress and brochure have been completed with existing staff. The budget for the publication, printing and wide distribution of *Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable Region, Fourth Annual Report on Indicators of Progress* is provided for in the Council approved 2006 Business Plan and Budget as is the budget for the publication, printing and distribution of brochure to staff.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Throughout the *Vision 2026* process, it has been recognized that the area municipalities are key stakeholders in contributing to a collective Vision for York Region's future.

Staff of the area municipalities were consulted on the creation of *Vision 2026* and on the Performance Measures Workbook. We will continue to dialogue with the area municipalities and share information with interested municipal staff.

In addition, area municipalities will be fully consulted and engaged in the York Region Sustainable Development Initiative.

7. NEXT STEPS

Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable Region, Fourth Annual Report on Indicators of Progress will be made widely available to the public, staff, and stakeholders through mailings and the Region's website. The staff brochure will be available on the Region's web site and will be distributed to all employees in late spring pay envelopes.

8. CONCLUSION

Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable Region, Fourth Annual Report on Indicators of Progress is the fourth in a series of annual reports that strive to communicate our progress towards implementing *Vision 2026*.

Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable Region, Fourth Annual Report on Indicators of Progress will be made widely available to public, stakeholders and staff.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachments referred to in this clause are included in this report.)