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VISION 2026 UPDATE WORKPLAN AND CONSULTATION

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated May 3, 2010 from the Chief Administrative Officer and the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council endorse "Vision 2051" as the timeframe for the *Vision 2026* update.
2. Regional Council endorse the work plan and consultation process in section 4 of this report.

2. PURPOSE

This report summarizes the process, workplan, and consultation program for the update to *Vision 2026*. The update to *Vision 2026* will be led by the Planning and Development Services Department with input from all departments.

3. BACKGROUND

***Vision 2026* is York Region's primary strategic plan**

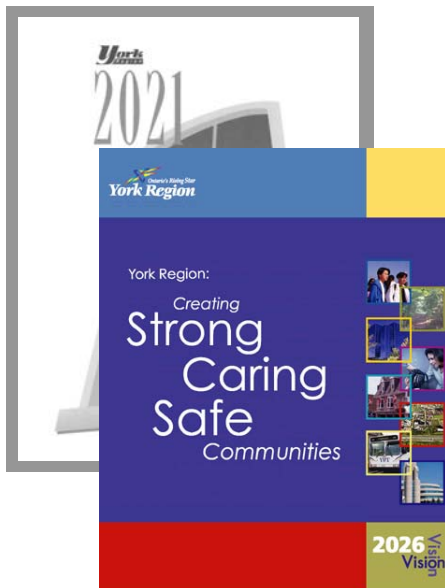
York Regional Council approved its first strategic plan, *York Region 2021: A Vision* (known as *Vision 2021*), in 1993 as an expression of its goals for the York Region community. *Vision 2021* played a valuable role in establishing a unifying document for the Region, which takes a long term perspective. It has guided Regional Council and staff in the development and provision of services to meet the expectations of the York Region community and led to the creation of 450 new Regional programs and initiatives. Many of the Region's success stories, including initiatives – the Regional Official Plan, the Long Term Water and Sewer Strategy, the Human Services Strategy, the work of the Homelessness Task Force and the creation of a regional transit service, among others, have emerged in response to *Vision 2021*.

In 2002, *Vision 2026: Creating Strong, Caring, Safe Communities* was prepared to update *Vision 2021*. Since 2002, *Vision 2026*, which was created in partnership with the community and Regional Council has been the overall blueprint for York Region. It

provides guidance to Regional Council in making decisions and moving ahead to achieve the kind of community our citizens told us they wanted York Region to be in the Year 2026. It outlines key areas of focus for the Region and its partners in the future, sets the context and provides the framework for more detailed corporate and business plans that will be undertaken by the Region.

Vision 2026 informs all Council decisions, the corporate Strategic Plan, departmental plans and budget and individual performance plans. *Vision 2026* is a key component of York Region's strategic planning and business planning processes. *Vision 2026* establishes the overall vision and direction for Regional Council and the Region's employees. It will continue to provide the broad framework from which more detailed plans can be developed for the Region, and for individual departments.

Vision 2026 comprised of a vision statement, eight goals, and action areas within each goal that describe what the public and Regional Council envisioned for the Region to 2026.



Vision 2026 Structure:

- 15 Guiding Principles
- 8 Goal Areas:
 1. Quality Communities for a Diverse Population
 2. Enhanced Environment, Heritage and Culture
 3. A Vibrant Economy
 4. Responding to the Needs of Our Residents
 5. Housing Choices for Our Residents
 6. Managed and Balanced Growth
 7. Infrastructure for a Growing Region
 8. Engaged Communities and a Responsive Region
- Each Goal Area has 2-6 per goal area sub-themes
- Each Sub-Theme has approximately 2-8 action items

York Region's Sustainability Strategy is another key strategic document

In October of 2005, Regional Council endorsed a workplan for a Sustainable Development Initiative, which led to the development of the Towards Sustainability in York Region Advisory Group, and the ultimate creation of the *Sustainability Strategy*. In 2007, Council adopted the *York Region Sustainability Strategy* to provide a long-term framework for making smarter decisions about all municipal responsibilities that better integrate the economy, community and environment. This “triple bottom line” approach also emphasizes the values of engagement, continuous monitoring and improvement.

The Strategy is organized under six theme areas: Corporate Culture of Sustainability; Healthy Communities; Economic Vitality; Sustainable Natural Environment; Education and Partnerships; Sustainability Implementation and Monitoring.

As Figure 1 illustrates *Vision 2026*, the *Sustainability Strategy*, along with the Regional Official Plan, represents the Corporation's 'foundation documents' that inform all Council decisions. The Region's Strategic Plan, departmental plans and budgets, and individual performance plans operationalize these strategic documents on a more detailed and specific basis.

The update of *Vision 2026* will be influenced by the theme and action areas within the *Sustainability Strategy*.

Figure 1: York Region Strategic Plan Hierarchy

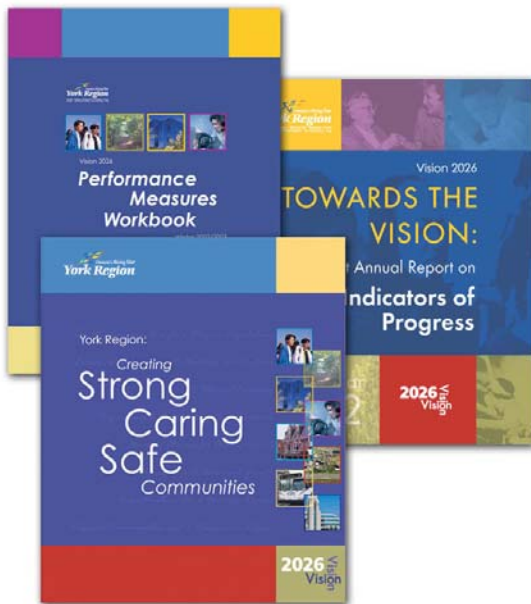


***Vision 2026* has influenced many Regional successes**

Since the approval of *Vision 2026* in 2002, *Towards the Vision*, annual progress reports have been released cataloguing the successes achieved in implementing *Vision 2026* and where progress needs to be made in the continuing years.

Continually monitoring the progress, successes and action areas maintains commitment to *Vision*, and ensures that there are measurable indicators of progress.

This year, the reporting on *Vision 2026* was consolidated with the reporting on the successes and achievements on the Region's *Sustainability Strategy*. This report was approved at the May 20, 2010 Regional Council. In addition, Council Accomplishments were presented to Regional Council in April 2010 for the 2007-2010 term. These reports provide Council with a comprehensive listing of successes.



Some of the key successes of *Vision 2026* are:

- York Region Sustainability Strategy: Towards a Sustainable Region.
- The Regional Official Plan, 2009.
- Infrastructure Master Plans: Moving on Sustainability: Transportation Master Plan Update, Water and Wastewater Master Plan: Servicing for a Safe and Healthy Environment.
- Water for Tomorrow Program and Rebate Programs that conserve approximately 21.5 million litres of water per day, which is equivalent to servicing a community of about 90,000 people.
- Corporate Clean Air Strategy.
- Established the Human Services Planning Board of York Region.
- Three Accessibility Plans under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* containing 265 initiatives to make York Region's programs, services and facilities more accessible to people with disabilities.
- Awarded Top 100 Employer in Canada and Top 75 Employer in GTA.
- LEED® Sustainable Building Policy, Sustainable Development through LEED® and Sustainable Home Incentive Program (SHIP).
- York Region wide transit system (VIVA/YRT) + 10% year since 2001.
- Long-Term Tourism Destination Development Strategy: 2009-2019 and Long Range Tourism Investment Strategy.
- 10 Year prioritised Capital Works plan.
- Affordable Housing Strategy and York Region Housing Strategy.
- Economic Strategy.
- Centres and Corridors Strategy.
- Greening Strategy: Since the program's origin in 2001 over 879 hectares (2,189 acres) of conservation lands have been secured and 750,000 trees and shrubs planted.
- The State of the Environment Report 2005.

- Energy and Environmental Management System (EEMS).
- York Region International Investment Attraction Program.

The updated Vision document will build on the successes of the past, and create a progressive path forward for more Regional successes.

Emerging issues and trends influence the path forward

Trends serve to influence the services required by residents in the future. In understanding global and local trends, Regional Council can respond effectively to needs with high-quality services and programs. While many of the trends that served to influence the development *Vision 2026*, there are many additional trends that the Region needs to take into consideration when forging ahead with an updated Vision. Table 1 identifies a number of emerging trends for consideration. These are issues that Regional Council will want to consider when updating Vision.

Table 1
Emerging Global and Local Trends

Global Trends	Local Trends
Climate Change	Transit/Transportation
Poverty	Growth Management
Water: availability, access, safety	Stable Economy
Environment	Infrastructure
Housing	Water and Energy Efficiency
Technology	Aging Population
Globalization	Housing
Food Production and Security	Human Health & Community Design
Energy Use, Generation, and Distribution	Ethnically Diverse Population
Resource Consumption	Local food
Urbanization	Natural Heritage
Pandemics	Human Services
Social Isolation	Fiscal Management
Obesity	Pace of Growth
Cardiovascular disease	Quality of Life
Mental health	Job Creation

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

It's an appropriate time to refresh and update *Vision 2026*

Vision 2026 was created to be a living document, continually being monitored for progress and updated as appropriate to respond to emerging issues and trends. Implementation and monitoring are important components of a plan's success. To ensure *Vision 2026* is successful, the Region must measure how goals are being achieved and to monitor the appropriateness of these goals as the Region advances, or as circumstances and trends change.

Since 2002, there have been a number of innovative and progressive policies and initiatives developed by the Region, in addition to a number of key Provincial initiatives that have influenced the Region does business. York Region needs to ensure that the Vision reflects and builds on the concepts in these initiatives, builds on York Region's successes, and take the Region to the next level.

The landscape in York Region has changed significantly since 2002. In the face of a significant amount of growth, there is a greater emphasis on sustainability coupled with an increasing concern with respect to climate change and energy, pressure on York Region's transportation, waste, water, and social infrastructure, the Region's increasingly diverse and aging population, and meeting the housing, human services and safety needs of our population. Vision will respond to this changing landscape and establish priorities and actions to guide York Region.



Given the significant progress made since 2002, the changing landscape in York Region over the last 10 years, the progressive policy pieces, and a new term of Regional Council, it is appropriate timing to update and refresh *Vision 2026* to be more responsive, innovative document.

The new Vision document should be innovative and durable enough to address emerging issues and trends and bring the Region forward.

The development of *Vision 2026* during 2001 had a number of objectives, and these remain applicable to the *Vision 2026* update:

- To reflect changes and emerging issues in the Region
- To recognize the Region's expanded mandate
- To co-ordinate strategic initiatives
- To guide business planning in the Region
- To provide an opportunity for residents to think and talk together as a community about what kind of place they want York Region to be

In addition the following objectives could be considered:

- To build on key policies including the Sustainability Strategy, the Regional Official Plan, Climate Change Discussion Paper, Best Practices for New Communities Discussion Paper.

The *Vision 2026* update should have a time horizon of 40 years to Vision 2051

There are numerous options for consideration in the timeframe for the update. The previous Vision Documents were based approximately a 25 year horizon.

- *Vision 2021* prepared in 1993 (28 year horizon)
- *Vision 2026* prepared in 2002 (24 year horizon)

There is a compelling reason to take a longer term view for the next update to Vision. To inform the new Regional Official Plan update, growth scenarios supported by infrastructure master plans examined the levels of growth and infrastructure needed to service that growth to 2051.

The Regional Municipality of York was created by the Province of Ontario on January 1, 1971, making 2011 is the 40th anniversary of York Region. It is recommended that the next Vision document be entitled Vision 2051 and take a 40 year time horizon; build on the 40 years of the past and look 40 years ahead. This too will be a living document, continually being monitored and updated to respond to emerging trends and shifting priorities.

A longer term outlook will by necessity need to be a truly visionary document that is resilient while being adaptable to changing circumstances, progressive and realistic

enough to make meaningful actions to stand the test of it term. A longer term outlook is what is needed to address some of the most significant trends, and truly inform the next round of strategic policy documents at the Region. As a strategic document, it has the ability to live beyond and influence the next round of planning documents, and looking out beyond horizon of the official plan (25 year horizon).

The Vision Update will be completed mid 2011

The Vision update will occur throughout the balance of 2010, and be completed in mid-2011. The proposed work program is as follows:

Initial Report to Planning and Economic Development Committee	June 2010
Consult with Residents, Stakeholders, and Regional Staff	Q3-4 2010
Provide Regional Council with feedback on the consultation and emerging themes	Q1 2011
Input from Council	Q1-2 2011
Draft of Vision 2051	Q2-3 2011
Final Vision 2051 adopted by Regional Council	Q3 2011

Vision 2026 Update will have a focussed consultation program

Like Vision 2021 before it, *Vision 2026* was based on direct input from members of Regional Council. Council was informed by the input from the public, stakeholders and regional staff. .

The consultation on the Vision 2026 update will be primarily web-based, and focussed; building on the extensive consultation over the last 4 years on the Regional Official Plan and the Infrastructure Master Plans. The consultation on these plans has provided feedback on resident and stakeholder interests, issues, and needs. The proposed consultation on *Vision 2026* update will serve to enhance this feedback on trends, guiding Principles, goal areas, and actions.

Through the Growth Management and Infrastructure Master Plan consultation exercises, a contact list of over 1400 stakeholders has been created. This contact list will be used for direct consultation and feedback for the *Vision 2026* update process.

Regional Council will be informed and engaged by staff reports through the Planning and Economic Development Committee. Staff also recommend that a Council Workshop occur in early 2011 with incoming Regional Council.

Consultation with Regional Staff will comprise of the following:

- Technical Advisory Committee will be formed comprised of key managers/directors.
- Broader staff consultation will occur through Know York/Lunch and Learn sessions, advertisements through York Beat to direct staff to participate in web-based consultation described below.

***Vision 2026* will use the internet as the primary consultation tool**

As stated above, the *Vision 2026* update process will use the Region's website as the primary medium for consultation. A number of the local municipalities have been making greater use of their websites for gathering feedback and input from their residents and stakeholders including Markham's "Click with Markham" opinion questionnaire; Richmond Hill's "People Plan Talk Consultation" which used online blogs and questionnaires and social networking, and Vaughan's "Vaughan Tomorrow and Vaughan Quest" interactive on-line consultation. It is proposed that the *Vision 2026* update process use an interactive feedback process similar to the above examples from Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.

Conducting the *Vision 2026* update primarily through the internet allows us to provide an engaging and interactive forum for a wide range of constituents, and can overcome language, accessibility, and other barriers to participation in public forums. The internet allows people to provide the Region with feedback at their time, pace, and leisure. The use of on-line blogs, social networking sites, and videos can allow us to provide a consultation forum that is engaging to a wide range of constituents, younger and older, and may ensure greater participation rates.

In addition to the website it is also proposed that the Region use contact list to direct stakeholders to *Vision 2026* update website; that the Environics survey in Fall 2010 to ask questions related to *Vision 2026* update; and where necessary, use paper-based feedback forms and questionnaires.

A study conducted by Stats Canada in 2007 shows that Canadians are making greater and more diverse use of the Internet. Almost three-quarters (73%), or 19.2 million Canadians aged 16 and older, went online for personal reasons during the 12 months prior to the survey. This was up from just over two-thirds (68%) in 2005 when the survey was last conducted. Ontario is above national average at 75% usage.

Sixty-five percent of residents living in small towns or rural areas accessed the Internet, while just over three-quarters (76%) of urban residents did so. In addition, a Stats Canada study in 2005 found that an estimated 8.2 million adult Canadians accessed government information and services online in 2005, making the Internet an important channel for governments, and a valuable tool in the *Vision 2026* update process.

Vision Update will be linked to a 4-year strategic Plan for Council

The *Vision 2026* update process will be co-ordinated with the corporate Strategic Plan. The corporate Strategic Plan will take the direction within Vision and provide direction to corporate plans, departmental plans, business plans and Budget, to individual performance plans. The strategic plan will be updated every 4 years to coincide with the terms of Regional Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The updated to *Vision 2026* is being completed within the existing Regional Staff complement, and within the approved 2010 business plan and budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Throughout the *Vision 2026* process, it has been recognized that the local municipalities are key stakeholders in contributing to a collective Vision for York Region's future. The update to *Vision 2026* will build on the contributions of the past and ensure that local municipalities are fully consulted and engaged in the update process.

7. CONCLUSION

Vision 2026 was created to be a living document, continually being monitored for progress and updated as appropriate to respond to emerging issues and trends. Since 2002, there have been a number of innovative and progressive policies and initiatives developed by the Region, in addition to a number of key Provincial initiatives that have influenced the way we do business in York Region. York Region needs to ensure that the Vision reflects and builds on the concepts in these initiatives, builds on successes, and take York Region to the next level.

Given the significant progress made since 2002, the progressive policy pieces, and a new term of Regional Council, it is appropriate timing to update and refresh *Vision 2026* to be more responsive, innovative document.

The update to *Vision 2026* will take a more long term horizon to Vision 2051. The update will start in summer 2010 with a primarily web-based public consultation process, in addition to internal staff consultation including a Technical Advisory Committee, and will be completed with incoming Regional Council in mid 2011. The update to *Vision 2026* will be led by the Planning and Development Services Department with input from all departments.

For more information on this report, please contact Karen Antonio-Hadcock, Senior Planner, at Ext. 1532 or John Waller, Director of Long Range and Strategic Planning at Ext. 1525.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.