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GROWTH MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS FOR YORK REGION

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The presentation by John Waller, Director, Long Range and Strategic Planning, be received; and**
- 2. The recommendation contained in the following report, September 22, 2004, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be adopted:**

- 1. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

1. Staff proceed with the proposed workplan as outlined in this report and that the additional budget implications be referred to the 2005 budget process.

- 2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the work plan staff propose to undertake over the coming months and through 2005 related to the ongoing regional and provincial initiatives dealing with growth management and urban development.

- 3. BACKGROUND**

The Province has recently embarked upon a number of key initiatives dealing with growth management and urban development issues in Ontario. In 2003 the Minister of Municipal Affairs (MMAH) introduced Bill 26 - Strong Communities Act, and Bill 27 – Greenbelt Protection Act.

Bill 26 proposes a series of amendments to the Planning Act to provide greater control for municipalities, while Bill 27 would establish a greenbelt in the GTA outside of existing urban areas that would incorporate the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara escarpment. Discussion papers on Bill 26, the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and Ontario Municipal Board Reform and on the Greenbelt protection plan were released in 2004.

On July 12 2004, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, The Honourable David Caplan, released the discussion paper *Places to Grow- A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*. The discussion paper proposes a detailed and comprehensive Provincial 30 year growth plan to provide a vision of growth management for the 16 upper tier municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Staff have reported to Committee and Council on each of these initiatives.

These key initiatives illustrate the Province's recognition of the need to take a leadership and visionary role in the future development of the Golden Horseshoe area.

The provincial initiatives support York Region's own key strategic growth management initiatives including the Regional Official Plan, York Rapid Transit Plan, the Greening Strategy, the Housing Supply Strategy, the Region's Centres and Corridors Strategy and the proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment 43 – Centres and Corridors.

Provincial efforts have direct implications for the future growth management work staff will be undertaking over the coming months and through 2005 and this report provides committee with an update on staff's proposed work plan.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The *Places to Grow* discussion paper proposes a growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe area that puts emphasis on transit supportive compact development and intensification. Based on current growth forecasts an additional 4 million people will be living in the area by 2031.

Updated forecasts are currently being prepared for the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. These new forecasts will be higher for the GTA and Hamilton area. Forecasts for York Region, although not finalized, will be higher than the current 2026 figure of 1.28 million people.

York Region has been experiencing a growth rate of close to 40,000 annually over the last five years. Over the next 27 years an additional 400,000 to 500,000 new residents are anticipated to be living in the Region. The scale of this growth has significant implications on where and how the Region will grow.

York Region currently has a 10 to 15 year supply (23,000 acres) of vacant developable urban land and 6,500 acres of vacant developable employment land. Updated forecasts that are higher than the current forecast of 1.28 million will be used to determine future land supply requirements that may result in a possible urban boundary expansion within the Region.

Staff are proposing to undertake a number of separate tasks in determining the amount of growth the Region will accommodate over the next 27 years and where and how this growth will occur. The review will include the following key components which are discussed in more detail below:

- The preparation of an updated forecast for York Region and the nine area municipalities to 2026.
- A land budget (land supply/demand) exercise to determine how much land will be required to accommodate the future population and employment growth.

- An inventory of vacant employment land to be used as input into the need for additional employment lands outside of existing urban envelopes.
- A fiscal impact analysis exercise to assess the costs of infrastructure and services required by growth.
- An extensive communication program to inform the public of the social, economic and environmental benefits of compact development required to implement the desired growth patterns.

Staff propose to present a series of reports to Committee on each of the work plan's components. Regional Planning have the in-house capability to undertake the forecast, land supply and the vacant employment land inventory update. It is proposed that contract staff be employed to carry out the enhanced communication strategy.

On-going work that complements the work listed above will be completed over the next few months including the completion of the Centres and Corridors ROPA 43 and the Centres and Corridors financial study.

4.1 York Region Forecasts

The Province, the Region's of Halton, Durham, Peel and York and the cities of Hamilton and Toronto retained Hemson consulting to prepare updated population, household and employment forecasts for the GTA and Hamilton and the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. These forecasts are based on the most recent 2001 Census material and are anticipated to be complete before the end of 2004.

York Region staff will be preparing revised York Region forecasts that are consistent with the work being undertaken for the GTA and Hamilton. York Region staff will be consulting on a regular basis with local municipal staff in the preparation of the revised and updated forecasts for York Region and the nine local municipalities. Staff have the expertise to undertake this work in-house.

4.2 York Region Land Budget

The updated and revised York Region and local municipal forecasts will be used to determine future land supply requirements that may result in a possible urban boundary expansion within the Region. This work will take into account the regional structure of centres and corridors and allow for the continuation of stable, residential communities at lower densities within areas outside of the centers and corridors. This approach will allow for a variety of development densities for both population and employment and for a diversity of housing types and wide array of employment uses. York Region staff will be consulting on a regular basis with local municipal staff in the preparation of the land budget. Staff have the expertise to undertake this work in-house.

4.3 Inventory of Vacant Employment Lands in York Region

The last comprehensive region wide update of vacant employment lands was completed in 2001. Regional staff have been working on updating the regional inventory on the supply and demand of employment lands over the summer months. This work is anticipated to be complete prior to the end of the year. Staff have consulted extensively

with local municipal staff and have used local municipal data when available to compile the updated inventory.

Information from the inventory of vacant employment land will be used as input into the need for additional employment lands outside of existing urban envelopes. Staff intends to update the vacant employment land inventory on an annual basis.

4.4 Fiscal Impact Analysis

The impact of the amount and distribution of forecasted growth in the Region and the costs associated with this growth is an important consideration for both private and public sector interests. The revised and updated forecasts will be used to assess the costs of infrastructure and services required to accommodate the forecasted growth in the Region.

The 25 year fiscal impact analysis that was done in 1994 will be reviewed and updated in keeping with revised forecasts and urban structure. This work will be the subject of a separate staff report.

4.5 Growth Management Communication Strategy

The proposed work plan outlined in this report will result in a major Regional Official Plan Amendment that will create an updated Urban Structure Plan for the Region for the next 25 years. The Amendment will include results from the forecasts, the land supply/demand analysis and the Provincial *Places to Grow* and *Greenbelt* initiatives.

The growth management analysis and policy development will be provided by existing staff. A significant public consultation effort will require a contract senior planner, publication and advertising funding as follows:

Contract Senior Planner and Benefits	\$90,000
Public Meetings and Advertising	\$40,000
Growth Management Documents	\$45,000
Pamphlet distribution and Printing	\$50,000
Total	\$225,000

This more extensive public consultation would involve all stakeholders. A similar approach was employed very successfully by the Region in preparation of Vision 2026 and during the Regional Official Plan Report Card exercise. The approach would blend in-house corporate wide staff with contract staff to prepare a first class process and product.

Rudimentary consultation as required by the Planning Act could be done within the existing staff budget. However, given the significant public interest regarding growth and congestion, a thorough public discussion would be valuable and prudent.

4.6 Other Issues

Population, housing and employment forecasts are an essential step in assessing the future impact of growth on services and programs throughout the Region. They are used as a basis for land use designations, transportation requirements, sewer and water capacities, social programs and to provide information to industrial and commercial establishments for investment decisions.

There are a number of critical issues associated with accommodating an additional 400,000 to 500,000 people within York Region that staff will address as part of the work plan including:

- Achieving a balance between intensification and greenfield development
- The timing, costs, and approvals for infrastructure delivery
- Traffic congestion
- Implementing the centres and corridors strategy
- Maintaining and enhancing the quality of life residents enjoy
- Delivering human services
- Matching employment to population growth
- The level of required investment and the fiscal impact of assessing the costs of providing the services to accommodate the forecasted growth.

It is anticipated that revised forecasts and an updated urban structure will require a review of associated key strategic plans like the Transportation Master Plan, Long Term Sewer and Water Plan, Housing Supply Strategy, and 10 year Capital Plan.

4.7 Work Plan Schedule

The work plan will commence this fall. The vacant employment land inventory will be completed before year end. The other components of the work plan (forecasts, land budget, fiscal impact, and communication program) will be completed in 2005.

The resulting major Regional Official Plan Amendment will be brought forward later in 2005.

4.8 Relationship to Vision 2026

The proposed work plan for managing growth in the Region supports and complements all eight goals of Vision 2026, including Quality Communities for a Diverse Population; Enhanced Environment, Heritage and Culture; A Vibrant Economy; Housing Choices for Our Residents; Managed and Balanced Growth; Infrastructure for a Growing Region; and Engaged Communities and a Responsive Region.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed work plan has costs above and beyond the current resource base. Staff will be able to work on the forecasts, land budget and updated vacant employment land inventory within existing budget allocations. Additional resources will be required to complete a comprehensive public consultation public program. The estimated budget for

the enhanced communication strategy is \$225,000, which would be considered as part of the 2005 business planning and budget process.

The existing 25 year Fiscal Impact Study and the 10 year Capital Plan will have to be revisited in light of revised forecasts and updated urban structure. This will be addressed in a separate report to Finance and Administration Committee with the associated financial implications related to its preparation.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Regional staff will continue working closely with the local municipalities throughout the work plan. The local municipalities have played a key role in previous growth management initiatives including the York Region Centres and Corridors Strategy and the proposed ROPA 43 – Regional Centres and Corridors. The work outlined in this report will provide further opportunities for this collaboration to continue. Local municipal staff will have a key role in the communication strategy and outreach program to the public.

7. CONCLUSION

York Region has been very successful in managing growth in a comprehensive manner. The Regional Official Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, the York Region Transit Plan, the Greenlands and Securement Strategy, the Human Services Strategy and the Centres and Corridors strategy form the basis of the Region's growth management approach.

Updated population and employment forecasts and a series of Provincial growth management initiatives provide the basis for an update of the Regions Growth Management Strategy.

The key work plan elements outlined in this report complement the existing strategies in place and will provide further direction for managing growth in the Region over the next 25 years.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.