

## 2003 – 2006 Accomplishments for Community Services and Housing Committee and Department

*"Working together to sustain and enhance the well-being of individuals and families today for stronger communities tomorrow."*

| Branch or Program/Service Area | Accomplishment 2003 -2006                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| Family and Children's Services | <p><b>Goal: To improve access to services for children and improve opportunities for families.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this three year period the number of subsidized child care spaces has increased with the Council approval of the Provincial Early Learning and Child Care Initiative, resulting in 236 additional child care subsidies, and Council approval of funding for the implementation of the Best Starts Initiative, resulting in an additional increase of approximately 1,000 licensed child care spaces and 400 additional subsidies. As a result, the monthly average number of children subsidized has increased 22% from 2,801 in 2003 to 3,425 in June 2006.</li> <li>• In May 2006, the Branch completed "Child Care Matters", the Child Care Service Plan for York Region. This plan included Best Start components in response to the federal/provincial Best Start initiative.</li> <li>• In 2005, the Best Start Child Care Transition Plan and Child Care Infrastructure Plan to expand the child care system in York Region was completed by the Branch.</li> <li>• Council approved an average increase of 3% in Regional Schedule of Rates for Child Care Fee Assistance, effective January 1, 2006. The increase will contribute to the availability of subsidized spaces in York Region by encouraging operators to maintain or increase the number of spaces they make available for fee assisted children.</li> <li>• The monthly average number of special needs children served by Early Intervention Services has increased from 889 in 2003 to 1,066 in 2006.</li> <li>• Between 2003 and 2006 the number of programs under the Family Strengthening Programs portfolio grew with the introduction of new programs such as Positive Leisure Activities for Youth (PLAY) and Lead Experience and Development (LEAD) the York Region Youth Leadership program. Accordingly, the number of children participating in Family Strengthening Programs increased from approximately 2,849 in 2003 to 8,740 in 2005. It is anticipated that the number of children participating in Family Strengthening Programs will continue to grow with the recent announcement of York Region's successful application for Communities in Action Fund.</li> <li>• Coordinated and managed contracts for the delivery of the Swim to Survive Pilot Program through partnerships with school boards, all nine area municipalities and the Lifesaving Society. Through the Pilot Program, 2,452 Grade 3 children in selected schools learned basic swimming skills. The success of this initiative informed the Province's decision to make funding available for this program province-wide.</li> <li>• Improved supports to the Domiciliary Hostels Program through the development and distribution of an Operator's Handbook and the implementation of the Quality of Life Initiative</li> </ul> |

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| Employment and Financial Support | <p><b>Goal: To streamline service and enhance skill development and job opportunities for Ontario Works participants.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between January 2003 and March 2006, over 2,600 Ontario Works participants found employment through education, training, volunteer opportunities and job search supports.</li> <li>• The Branch introduced a Mental Health Resource Model in collaboration with community mental health service providers. The model uses a team-based approach to case management and referral to support participants in addressing mental health barriers and participation in a full range of employment services and community supports.</li> <li>• The Branch successfully responded to provincially mandated changes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Transitioning from a provincially directed intake screening unit for Ontario Works applicants to a streamlined process using the Department's Contact Centre, enhancing customer service and efficiency.</li> <li>○ Transitioning from an employment assistance funding model based on participation in different activity levels, to a model that is based on employment outcomes.</li> <li>○ Development of a <i>Joint Implementation Plan</i> with local Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and ministry staff that supports the ministry's increased requirement for ODSP spouses and dependent adults to participate in Ontario Works employment activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Branch centralized ODSP related cases in its Georgina office to provide a single point of contact for ODSP recipients and ODSP pending clients, and for community agencies providing services to these clients, enhancing customer service and efficiency for all.</li> <li>• The Employment and Financial Support Branch continually promotes training for staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in assisting Ontario Works participants. Branch staff has completed training in advanced case management, mental health, and dealing with family violence.</li> <li>• In partnership with local agencies, the Branch developed employment networks and job readiness training courses in key employment sectors. Ontario Works participants completed skill training in the key sector areas of: Hospitality, Forklift, Call Centre, Office Coffee and Vending and Construction Craft Worker.</li> <li>• The Branch has participated in discussions and continues to monitor the implementation of the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) and Labour Market Partnership Agreement (LMPA) to ensure effective access to available training and return to work services for Ontario Works clients.</li> <li>• In the summer of 2005, the Branch launched an Emergency Outreach Project in an effort to prevent homelessness and reduce recidivism rates in emergency shelters.</li> </ul> |

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| Housing Services               | <p><b>Goal: To increase housing options and develop strategies to reduce homelessness.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opened Armitage Gardens in the Town of Newmarket, providing 58 units of new seniors housing while partnering with Long Term Care to provide supportive housing in 26 of these units.</li> <li>• Blue Willow Terrace scheduled to be opened in fall 2006 in the City of Vaughan. Blue Willow Terrace is a mixed-use seniors facility that will include up to 60 seniors' residences.</li> <li>• Completed construction on the Sutton Youth Multi-Service Centre which will provide emergency shelter and transitional housing for young people, as well as programming and recreational facilities operated by the Town of Georgina.</li> <li>• In fall 2006, the ground breaking of Tom Taylor Place is planned. Tom Taylor Place will provide a 50 unit low rise rental apartment building on the Stickwood development site in the Town of Newmarket.</li> <li>• In 2006 pre-development work on a seniors residence with up to 85 units on the Vaughan Civic Centre site will commence.</li> <li>• Construction is scheduled to begin early in 2007 of a 15 suite family shelter in the Town of East Gwillimbury.</li> <li>• Strengthened partnerships with Private Sector Landlords through the Rent Supplement Programs (Commercial Rent Supplement Program and the Strong Communities Supportive Housing Programs) to provide up to 495 York Region households with rent supplements. The Rent Supplement Programs are vital to increasing the Region's capacity to respond to the needs of the almost 5,500 singles, families and seniors waiting for rent geared to income housing.</li> <li>• In partnership with the Salvation Army across York Region, helped 804 households maintain their housing through the Region's Homelessness Prevention Program between 2003 and 2006.</li> <li>• Developed a comprehensive inventory of the social housing units modified for persons with disabilities to enable eligible applicants to make more informed housing choices.</li> <li>• Successfully implemented the 2006 funding benchmark costs and revenues for provincial reform housing providers. Discussions with the Province resulted in direct savings to the Region in the amount of \$500,000 per year.</li> <li>• Completed a comprehensive review of building conditions across the housing portfolio, laying the groundwork for a region-wide asset management strategy and building training and technical support for housing providers in securing the life of critical public assets over the long term.</li> </ul> |

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| <b>Implementation of the <i>Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001</i> (ODA)</b> | <p><b>Goal: To lead the development of York Region's plan for meeting the requirements of the <i>Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001</i></b></p> <p>Under the ODA the Province requires that all municipalities develop an annual accessibility plan. The Community Services and Housing Department, on behalf of the Region, leads the development of York Region's annual accessibility plan. Amongst its achievements the Region has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed <i>Understanding Barriers: York Region's First Annual Accessibility Plan, Moving Forward: York Region's Second Annual Accessibility Plan, and Removing Barriers: York Region's 2006 Accessibility Plan</i>, with input from each corporate department and through broad consultation with York Region residents including individuals and organizations that represent or provide services to people with disabilities.</li> <li>• Appointed York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC); AAC members actively participated in the development of the Region's Annual Accessibility Plans.</li> <li>• Annual Accessibility Plans have resulted in enhanced accessibility through the identification and elimination of barriers in programs and services across all departments, including York Regional Police.</li> <li>• Successful implementation of the ODA resulted in the Province of Ontario developing a case study outlining the Region's accessibility planning process. This case study is currently being used by other organizations across the Province.</li> <li>• The Regional Chair and CEO and other York Region representatives participated in consultations for the development of the new <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i> (AODA); many of the Region's suggestions were included in the draft legislation.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Community Development</b>                                                    | <p><b>Goal: To enhance the Region's role in community capacity building and service planning.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented a Community Development and Investment Fund (CDIF). Between 2003 and 2006 CDIF directed \$8.6 million to over 130 projects for the delivery of services to more than 30,000 York region residents and their families each year.</li> <li>• The strategy enhances support by helping agencies to work in collaboration with one another, which in turn, creates a network of community-based supports in York Region.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Other supports to our residents</b>                                          | <p><b>Goal: To improve access to regional community services.</b></p> <p><b>Contact Centre</b><br/> Implemented a "first-call" Contact Centre for residents seeking program information, referral, and application services. The Centre offers residents the experience of dealing with government through a simpler and seamless approach to customer service. The Contact Centre helps improve access to Regional community services for</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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|                                                        | <p>York Region residents.</p> <p><b>Ensure the provision of emergency social services to residents</b><br/> As part of York Region's SARS emergency response, the Community Services and Housing Department's Emergency Operations Centre served 2,152 households and 3,286 individuals in need of emergency social services.</p> <p><b>YorkLink</b><br/> An annual community services directory that provides comprehensive information on over 700 community service providers and related government agencies in York region. YorkLink is available both online and by hard copy.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><b>Understanding the needs of our residents</b></p> | <p><b>Goal: To gain a better understanding of the needs of our residents to enhance program and service delivery.</b></p> <p><b>York Region's Low Income Population, Report Highlights, 2004</b><br/> These research highlights use the 2001 Census to provide a profile of the social and economic circumstances of residents living on low incomes in York Region including: age; gender; family type; education levels; work activity; and source of income. The profile supports York Region and other service providers in planning and delivering responsive services.</p> <p><b>Preventing Homelessness in York Region – Taking the Next Steps, 2004</b><br/> The report reviews what has been done to address homelessness since The Regional Municipality of York was designated as the Service System Manager in 1998, describes the scope and risk of homelessness, and recommends future action to prevent homelessness from escalating as the Region continues to grow.</p> <p><b>Our Children – A Preliminary Status Report on York Region's Children, 2004</b><br/> This report addresses a recognized need for baseline data on York Region's children. It is a tool for gauging and comparing progress in improving children's lives in the Region by identifying and reporting on indicators of children's well-being. The indicators used in this report were determined by a community reference group, drawing on recommendations from previous documents and the goals of both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Canada's National Children's Agenda.</p> <p><b>Housing and Our Economy, 2004</b><br/> In 2005, York Region's Community Services and Housing and Planning and Development Departments received the Canadian Institute of Planners Award for the <i>Housing and Our Economy, Remaining Competitive, 2004</i> report. The report explores the relationship among the resident labour force, employment, housing</p> |

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|                                | <p>availability and affordability in York Region and the adjacent municipalities. It also provides an overview of population, labour force, employment and housing in each of the nine local municipalities in York Region.</p> <p><b>Community Snapshots: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region, 2006</b><br/> Based on Statistics Canada's 2001 Census, the report looks at the socio-economic characteristics of York Region's recent immigrants. The report enhances the Community Services and Housing Department's service planning knowledge of socio-economic and demographic trends, program development and that of other organizations, agencies and the general public.</p> <p><b>Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Quality of Life Reporting System</b><br/> The Quality of Life Reporting System (QOLRS) was developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to measure, monitor and report on changes in social, economic and environmental factors to assess the quality of life in Canadian urban municipalities. There are 72 indicators of quality of life which form the basis of the QOLRS. York Region has been a participant in the QOLRS since 1998. On behalf of York Region, Community Services and Housing Department staff participate on FCM's Quality of Life technical team. In 2005, the brochure entitled "Quality of Life in York Region" was published. The purpose of the brochure was to raise awareness of quality of life issues in York Region and what residents can do to improve it.</p> |