

Clause No. 24 in Report No. 9 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on May 15, 2014.

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2010-2014 COUNCIL ACCOMPLISHMENTS PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendation contained in the report dated April 16, 2014 from the Executive Director, Corporate and Strategic Planning:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council receive this report for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report highlights some of the major accomplishments, events and successes of Regional Council during the 2010 – 2014 term through the Planning and Economic Development section of Committee of the Whole.

3. BACKGROUND

Council approved program and initiatives that support planning policies, development approvals, economic development and geographic information analytics

The Planning and Economic Development section of the Committee of the Whole is committed to the long-term development of complete and sustainable communities in York Region. It does this through collaboration and innovation in growth management policies, planning development approvals and economic development complemented by geographic information analytics.

Council continues to plan and forecast for the population growth associated with the Province's *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan)*. As implemented through the Official Plan, the forecasts see York Region growing to 1.5 million residents, 510,000 households and 780,000 jobs by 2031. To accommodate additional legislated growth, the Region completed a Growth Management Strategy, resulting in updated population and employment forecasts to 2031, and a new official plan.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

During this term of Council, a number of programs and initiatives have been approved that advance the Region's long-term planning goals. The following outlines the major accomplishments, publications and awards of Council.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The Region is planning to accommodate continued population, employment and household growth to 2031

Vision 2051 updates Vision 2026

With *Vision 2051* being Council's long-term planning document that establishes the overall blueprint for the Region's future articulated in goals and actions areas, it informs all other strategies and initiatives through more detailed strategic initiatives and plans approved by Council.

York Region Official Plan, 2010 Approved by MMAH

On September 7, 2010, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing approved the majority of the updated *York Region Official Plan, 2010*, subject to a number of modifications. In 2006, the Province enacted the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, which provides direction on a wide range of growth issues, including transportation, infrastructure and land use planning, urban form, housing, natural heritage and resource protection in the interest of promoting economic prosperity. With the Province's implementation of this plan and others such as the *Greenbelt Plan*, and the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan*, York Region updated its Growth Management Strategy and its Official Plan through a comprehensive review.

Regional Consultation and Formal Comments for Provincial Initiatives

To ensure that Region's interests are taken into consideration, Council continues to provide formal comments related to the development and review of various Provincial planning policies, such as:

- Review of Draft *Provincial Policy Statement, 2012*
- Land Use Planning and Appeals and Development Charge Systems Review
- *Greenbelt Plan* Review
- *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan* Review
- Enhancing Provincial Electricity Planning and Siting Processes
- Amendment 2 to the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* for new population and employment forecasts to 2036 and 2041

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

Regional Official Plan provides a strong new planning framework for Local Official Plans and Secondary Plans

As the majority of the Region's Official Plan has been approved, local municipalities are taking an active role to have their official plans, community plans and secondary plans conform to the Region's Official Plan as well as key provincial plans. Regional staff continue to work alongside local municipal staff to ensure conformity with Regional policies and regularly participate in local public consultation on the proposed plans. Several local municipalities updated their Official Plans to align with and support the Region's Official Plan policies. The following official plans were endorsed by the Region:

- Town of Aurora Official Plan
- Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan
- Town of Richmond Hill Official Plan
- City of Vaughan Official Plan

Regional centres align with the Centres and Corridors policies within the Regional Official Plan and support the provincial urban growth centres as part of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Council endorsed the:

- Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Urban Growth Centre (ROPA 4)
- City of Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

Employment areas attract a wide range of businesses requiring large parcels of land with prominent Regional road and provincial highway access. These areas also contribute to supporting the Region's Centres and Corridors initiatives. New secondary plans were approved which will provide significant economic opportunities for York Region and they include:

- Vaughan 400 North Employment Area Secondary Plan
- West Vaughan Employment Area Secondary Plan

Community plans and secondary plans help to create complete communities which include new residential areas and employment lands. Plans recently approved include:

- Aurora 2C Secondary Plan
- Sutton/Jackson's Point Secondary Plan
- Vandorf Preston Lake Secondary Plan
- Stouffville Secondary Plan

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Council approved a number of implementation programs that support growth and development initiatives

Regional Centres and Corridors Best Practices Discussion Paper

Best Practices for Planning Centres and Corridors discussion paper will help to continue dialogue around city-building and will highlight the importance of the Region's Centres and Corridors as the focus of a substantial portion of future growth and economic development in the Region. The Best Practices for Planning Centres and Corridors is one tool of many in our toolbox aimed at continued and ongoing implementation of Council's vision for Centres and Corridors as the areas of greatest density, mix and range of uses and as the places where people want to live work and play.

Residential Sustainability Incentive Program Review

Building sustainably as an everyday practice is one of the key purposes of the residential incentive programs. The program review resulted in the update of the Region's high rise Sustainable Development through LEED® program and the replacement of the grade-related Sustainable Home Incentive Program (SHIP) with a water and wastewater focused Servicing Incentive Program (SIP). Council's direction to provide high quality servicing infrastructure is achieved through the use of additional servicing capacity assignment incentives to encourage developers to incorporate higher levels of sustainable building practices into new residential developments. These programs help support and implement the objectives of the Sustainable Buildings policies of the Regional Official Plan.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

Council continues to plan for sustainable and complete communities while protecting the natural environment and resources

York Region Source Water Protection Planning (ROPA 5)

Council adopted the Regional Official Plan Amendment that introduces new policy and mapping to implement the findings of the Ministry of the Environment-approved Assessment Reports and Source Protection Plans required by the *Clean Water Act, 2006* related to Highly Vulnerable Aquifers, Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas and Intake Protection Zones.

York Region Archaeological Management Plan (ROPA 6)

York Region has a rich and diverse cultural heritage which enhances quality of life and contributes to a sense of place. Appropriate Regional Official Plan policies are an essential tool in protecting an important component of the Region's distinct cultural heritage. The Archaeological Management Plan introduces new policy to implement Provincial legislation regarding Archaeological Assessments and archaeological resources. These policies provide a trigger for the required archaeological assessment in the development review process, suggest appropriate methods to protect significant archaeological resources, set out the procedures to follow in implementing the province's archaeological assessment process, including in the case of unexpected discovery of a burial site, and commit the Region to investigating a secure reinterment site and interpretation site.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Council continues to foster economic vitality

Economic Development Action Plan

The *Economic Development Action Plan* is built on the solid foundation provided by the 2005 Economic Strategy and direction from various Council-approved strategy documents. Building on existing successful programs and partnerships, the Action Plan focuses on the identification and development of innovation through the following six goal areas:

- Goal 1 - Develop a greater post-secondary and research presence
- Goal 2 - Provide connectivity infrastructure to support innovation
- Goal 3 - Develop the innovation network connecting businesses to opportunities
- Goal 4 - Develop a strong, common marketing message
- Goal 5 - Creating the place to live, work and invest, including appropriate real estate
- Goal 6 - Develop a viable workforce

Investment and Marketing Program

Council's *Invest in York* Investment and Marketing program impacts local economic growth and job creation by facilitating targeted business expansion and attraction across York Region's local municipalities. The program leverages its extensive partnership network to position York Region as a business location of choice within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), in the context of an increasingly competitive environment for retaining and attracting quality employers.

York Region Innovation Hubs

Innovation hubs that support research, commercialization and business formation through targeted collaborations within these clusters and outside supports, are an important way for Regional Council to support its key economic sectors. Through the *Economic Development Action Plan*, staff have provided a plan for realizing those opportunities and providing support to the business community to encourage investment in ideas and technologies through the Innovation Hubs of ventureLAB, Southlake Regional Health Centre, Seneca College's SenEMAC and the green building of the Kortright Centre for Conservation.

York Region Broadband Strategy

The York Region Broadband Strategy is a collaborative effort of the Region and area municipalities to examine the broadband capabilities across the Region and identify opportunities for developing improved connectivity. The goal of the Strategy is to increase the amount of high speed connectivity that is available in the Region to stay ahead and remain competitive. The Strategy will identify a series of approaches and projects that will help develop this critical infrastructure across the Region through both public and private sector stakeholders.

York Region Employment Survey

With the support of Council, the York Region annual Employment Survey monitors the Regional economy to analyze industry and employment trends. The data gathered is analyzed and reported within key publications such as the *Growth and Development Review*, the *Employment and Industry Review* and the *York Region Business Directory*. The survey has been conducted in partnership with all nine local municipalities since 2002.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND ANALYTICS

Geographic information, analytics and visualization enables knowledge-based decision-making supporting the delivery of quality Regional programs and services

YorkInfo Partnership

The YorkInfo Partnership is an information collaboration partnership amongst all nine local municipalities, two conservation authorities, two school boards and the Region. Data is created during the business process resulting in one source of authoritative data that is shared with others who deliver services to a common taxpayer. Priorities include establishing Region-wide standards for digital development application submissions; providing self-service environment for data, and the institution of multi-year work planning to identify key projects that will advance the Partnership's goals and maximize investments in the geographic infrastructure that supports the management of our communities.

Geographic Information for Programs and Initiatives

Creation, management and analysis of geographic information are essential to support the decision-making processes of the corporation and effectively communicate with the public. The volume and complexity of the information has grown. Tools and processes have been put in place to make information management more efficient. Detailed digital aerial imagery is a high-impact tool that results in informed decisions for a rapidly changing region.

Open Data for York Region

The Open Data program for York Region has been approved by Council, which will make raw data available to the public for download. This adds economic value to the

information York Region collects as part of its operations. A protocol is in place to ensure data published fits with privacy legislation.

Enhanced YorkMaps

YorkMaps is an interactive web mapping tool for residents and local municipal and Regional staff to access the Region's mapping information. YorkMaps was re-designed to be easier-to-use and responsive to user needs. Customized YorkMap views have been designed to support mobile applications. YorkMaps provides access to up-to-date, authoritative data (such as roads, parcels and address points), as well as special map views designed to meet specific business processes.

2010-2014 PUBLICATIONS

Vision 2051

York Region Council approved *Vision 2051* in May 2012. *Vision 2051* is the Region's long-term planning document that updates *Vision 2026*. *Vision 2051* is an award winning strategy that helps guide the Region to ensure "strong, caring and safe communities" are designed with sustainability in mind. This blueprint for the Region's future establishes and outlines the approach to achieve this vision through eight goal and action areas.

New Communities Guidelines

The *New Communities Guidelines*, completed in June 2013, ensures that new community areas in the Town of East Gwillimbury, City of Vaughan and City of Markham are planned as healthy, inclusive and sustainable. These compact and complete communities are planned with a priority on people and liveability, offering a variety of housing and transportation choices, supported by mixed land-uses and high quality, attractive urban design.

Housing Matters: A Review of the Housing Market in York Region

The *Housing Matters: A Review of the Housing Market in York Region*, approved by Council, provides leadership in expanding affordable housing options. The document serves to update information and data, inform housing debate and policy, identify housing issue areas, and define "affordable housing" in order to implement and monitor affordable housing targets in the Regional Official Plan. The updated study will also help meet Provincial requirements for a Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Employment and Industry Report

The *Employment and Industry Report* is an annual review that highlights employment growth trends by industry sector and by areas within each municipality, highlighting the changing employment patterns and emerging industry sectors. Economic trends at the national and provincial levels are also examined in the report.

Growth and Development Review

Produced twice-a-year, the *Economic and Development Review* provides a number of key economic indicators and development statistics integral to the economic development of the Region. The report includes vital information such as population growth, migration data, employment and labour market conditions, residential and commercial property

market information and recent development trends. The report also examines data with respect to long-term trends and York Region's development targets.

2010-2014 AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Region received a number of awards in recognition of its achievement through Planning and Economic Development initiatives

- In 2010, York Region received the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) Award for Planning Excellence for the 2009 Transportation Master Plan Update.
- York Region received the Ontario Professional Planners Institute Excellence in Planning Award for the Region's Official Plan 2010.
- York Region received the Ontario Professional Planners Institute and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario's special joint Healthy Communities Award for the York Region Official Plan 2010.
- The Region received funding from the 2010-11 Creative Communities Prosperity Funding for York Region's Archaeological Management Plan.
- Vision 2051 received 2013 Award for Planning Excellence in the category of City and Region Planning from the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP).
- Geographic Information Services Branch won two gold awards from the Urban Regional Information Systems Association, Ontario Chapter (URISA OC): the *Best Web GIS* for demonstrating excellence in publishing and sharing of geographic information and the *Innovation in GIS* award recognizing new or refined innovation in the field of GIS and geospatial technology.

Link to key Council-approved plans

The achievements and accomplishment of the Planning and Economic Development section of the Committee of the Whole support the goals and strategic priority areas of *Vision 2051* and the *2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan* that were approved by Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. The costs of implementing the programs and initiatives cited in this report have been managed by Council in its administration of annual budgets between 2010 and 2014.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Regional staff has to date, and will continue to work closely with local municipal staff to ensure efficient and effective coordination of policies that are supportive of the strategic goals of the local municipalities.

7. CONCLUSION

The 2010-2014 Planning and Development section of Committee of the Whole and Council has continued to build on past successes and continue to position the Region for a future that is committed to excellent service to its residents. Through collaboration and innovation in planning policies, development approvals and economic development complemented by geographic information analytics, significant progress has been made in the overall strategy of growth management to successfully plan for the future to balance the needs of a growing and aging population.

For more information on this report, please contact Dino Basso, Executive Director, Corporate and Strategic Planning at Ext. 71500.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.