

January 9th Members' Meeting



Our next members' meeting will be on Monday **January 9th, 2017 at 7:00 pm** at the **Pan Am Centre in Committee Room 2.**

Special guest, Rick Farrell, General Manager for York Region Housing, Community and Health Services, will present the **York Region Affordable Housing Strategy.**

We look forward to seeing you on Monday, January 9th 2017.

2017 York Region Budget

On December 15, 2016, York Region Council approved a \$3 billion budget for 2017. \$2.1B is for support core services and \$0.9B for new infrastructure. The budget includes a tax increase of 2.87%. This equates to \$66 per average residential property. Highlights of the budget include:

- ✓ Record-level investment in roads, including significant capital work over the next five years on projects near Unionville. Specifically, additional 404 crossings, Bayview Avenue and 16th Avenue (Leslie to Woodbine) widening and many intersection and signal improvements
- ✓ Continuing investment in transit expansion that include the Spadina Subway extension (expected operation late 2017), design work on the Yonge Subway extension and continued VIVA and YRT growth
- ✓ Hiring extra police and paramedic staff
- ✓ Beginning construction of the new Region Administrative Centre Annex in Newmarket

2017 Markham Budget

On December 13, 2016 Markham council approved a 2017 budget with a 3.64% (\$38 per average residential property) tax increase. Together with the York Region increase, the average Markham residential property will go up by \$104. Council has also approved a 7.80% water rate increase to sustain operations and maintenance.

The \$443 million 2017 budget is down by \$25 million as compared to last year. The main change is a \$40 million reduction in the capital budget due to completion of the Markham Road Library and elimination of the Hwy 404 and Hwy 7 ramp allocation.

Below are highlights of the 2017 Markham Budget:

- ✓ \$10 million flood control program in West-Thornhill as part of a 30 year, city-wide initiative to improve drainage capacity and help protect private properties
- ✓ \$12 million for 16 new parks totalling 92.8 acres with expedited implementation of a three acre Beckett Farm NE park in the fall of 2017
- ✓ 10 km off-rail trail from 16th Avenue and Kennedy to Bob Hunter Memorial Park as part of the multi-year Rouge Valley Trail project
- ✓ \$1.42 million contribution to York Region's 90 km Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario Cycling and Walking Trail
- ✓ \$5.6 million for the Train Whistle Cessation safety upgrades to 13 crossings between Kennedy and Major Mackenzie
- ✓ development of a master plan for the Milne Dam Conservation Park in partnership with Toronto and the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA)



York Region's 10 Years Housing Plan



The average cost of detached home in York Region is more than \$890,000. Furthermore, virtually no new private-rental housing has been built in the last decade. To address this discrepancy, in 2010 the York Region developed a 10-Year Housing Plan - Housing Solutions: A place for everyone.

The York Region Housing Strategy goals are to:

- ✓ increase rental housing supply
- ✓ sustain existing rental housing supply
- ✓ support home ownership affordability
- ✓ reduce homelessness and improve housing stability

York Region's Official Plan requires that 25 per cent of new housing units be affordable and for 35 per cent of new housing units in Regional centres and key development areas be affordable.

Affordable ownership housing thresholds are calculated annually for each local municipality and for the Region.

Affordable rental housing thresholds are based on the average rent of recent (since 1990) rental builds rather than the average rent of the entire region.

York Region Housing Plan (continued)

The 2014 progress report shows that:

- ✓ the maximum affordable ownership price is \$443,874
- ✓ 6,840 condos are available for rent; a 21% increased from 2013
- ✓ 11,000 people are waiting for social housing with 1,000 more added every year since 2009
- ✓ the Region provided 4,925 income-based subsidies to low-income households
- ✓ over \$45 million secured for Affordable Housing Extension Funding for: 1) 202 Richmond Hill Housing and Community Hub units worth \$22.7 million; 2) Woodbridge redevelopment project with 150 proposed units worth \$16 million

York Region and Markham both have rental housing shortages so providing affordable housing remains a challenge for the following reasons:

- ✓ NIMBYism: Not-in-My-Back-Yard
- ✓ disincentives for developers
- ✓ lack of coordination among stakeholders

Existing tools municipalities use include waiving development fees, allowing or zoning for parking space reductions, allowing unit-size reductions, density bonusing and priority processing for affordable rental application permits.

York Region is also considering a new provincial inclusionary zoning concept where municipalities can peg affordable housing in return for higher densities – similar to the Section 37 funding model.

York Region's next step is to:

- ✓ track progression of housing and homelessness plans
- ✓ examine international best practices
- ✓ explore new funding models for affordable housing

Ontario Affordable Housing



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

On May 18, 2016, Ontario introduced the Promoting Affordable Housing Act to ensure that Ontarians have better access to affordable and adequate housing. Highlights of the legislation included:

- ✓ \$17 million, over 3 years, to help the Survivors of Domestic Violence Pilot Project
- ✓ \$100 million, over 3 years, to 11,500 households for supportive housing
- ✓ \$324 million annual investment in the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative
- ✓ \$2.5 million, over 3 years, to the Innovation, Evidence and Capacity Building Fund

Ontario's Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy includes:

- ✓ inclusionary zoning by-law that requires developers to provide a portion of affordable housing for rent or purchase
- ✓ portable housing benefit that provides a subsidy that is based on income rather than being tied to a specific housing unit
- ✓ Modernizing Social Housing in Ontario simplified rent geared to income, support vibrant mixed-income communities, increase local flexibility to manage housing assets and meet local needs
- ✓ an Indigenous Housing Strategy that will be developed in partnership with Indigenous communities
- ✓ proposed changes to the Residential Tenancies Act 2006, to encourage small landlords to provide rental housing and to facilitate transitional housing

Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary zoning refers to policies, by-laws and programs that require development proposals to include affordable housing units and controls to keep the units continuously affordable. This approach combines housing policy and land-use planning approvals requiring developers to include below-market-rate rental and/or ownership housing.

Key elements of the proposed legislative framework include:

- ✓ allowing municipalities to determine where and how inclusionary zoning applies through official plan policies and zoning by-laws
- ✓ prohibiting appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) from municipal inclusionary zoning official plan policies and zoning by-laws
- ✓ not allowing municipalities to accept money in lieu of inclusionary zoning units or allow the units to be built on off-site lands
- ✓ requiring municipalities to establish a procedure for ensuring that inclusionary zoning units remain affordable over time
- ✓ requiring owners of inclusionary zoning units to enter agreements with the municipality, which may be registered against the land and can be enforced against subsequent owners to keep the unit affordable
- ✓ restricting municipalities from using Section 37 funding (density bonusing) in addition to inclusionary zoning requirements, except in circumstances outlined by regulations



Bill 73 Smart Growth for Our Communities

To streamline and improve the effectiveness of the Municipal Planning & Appeal process the Ontario government conducted a province-wide review of land-use planning in October 2013. Bill 73 - Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, was put forward in 2015 and took effect on July 1st, 2016. The key changes proposed include:

- ✓ Official Plan and by-law review extended from five to 10 years
- ✓ two-year moratorium on any amendment application on newly approved Official Plan, zoning by-law or site specific zoning
- ✓ upper municipalities can no longer approve plans for lower municipalities
- ✓ Councils now have 75 instead of 15 days to use alternative dispute resolution before appealing to the OMB
- ✓ OMB appeals on provincially-approved matters, such as boundaries, population and provincial legislated land use are no longer allowed
- ✓ OMB appeal non-decision time limit increases from 180 to 270 days
- ✓ OMB appeals require an explanation when decisions contradict provincial policy statements and plans or upper-tier official plans

Several changes applicable to local municipalities include:

- ✓ municipalities are required to have annual reports to Council and the public on density bonuses and parkland dedication fees
- ✓ cash in lieu of park dedication increases from 300 to 500 units for one hectare, but requires municipal park plans before use of the new scheme

OMB Review Survey Submission

On December 19, the URA submitted a response to the provincial government in response to the Ontario Municipal Board Public Consultation. The URA had provided similar input to an earlier, more general request, last September. The latest submission elaborated on the content of the September input with responses to some specific questions.

In general, the URA supports reduction in the OMB's power to impose planning decisions on municipalities. We also support measures that force municipal councils to make politically unpopular decisions, rather than letting the OMB take the heat. Specifically, we suggest that the OMB should be reconstituted as a true appeals tribunal where judgement is limited to confirming the reasonableness of municipal planning decisions. If a decision is judged unreasonable, the OMB can only refer the decision back to local authorities for revaluation. It could not impose its own solution.

For details regarding the proposed changes please refer to <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page14965.aspx> and for Bill 73 (Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015) at <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page11014.aspx>.



What is the URA?

A non-partisan association of the residents of Unionville

- ✓ Boundaries: Warden Ave. to McCowan Rd. and Sixteenth Ave. to Hwy 407
- ✓ Founded in 1974 to protect the interests of the community
- ✓ Registered with the Province of Ontario and the City of Markham

What does URA do?

- ✓ Stays current on events, activities and issues in Unionville
- ✓ Keeps our members informed through regular email broadcasts and monthly meetings with guest speakers on relevant topics
- ✓ Ensures that residents' views are known and communicated to local, regional and provincial government officials
- ✓ Maintains a website that contains information on active issues
- ✓ Organizes special events, such as candidates' meetings

Join Us!!

Together Our Voice
Is Stronger

Membership information can
found at:

<http://www.unionvilleratepayers.com/membership.html>