

# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Thursday, February 2, 2023

York Regional Council – Thursday, January 26, 2023

Live streaming of the public session of Council and Committee of the Whole meetings is available on the day of the meeting from 9 a.m. until the close of the meeting. Past sessions are also available at [York.ca/councilandcommittee](https://york.ca/councilandcommittee)

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## 2023 budget tabled at Regional Council

York Region's proposed [2023 to 2026 budget](#) was tabled at the Thursday, January 26, 2023 meeting of York Regional Council.

The operating budget focuses on day-to-day expenses and providing funding for asset rehabilitation and replacement, while the capital budget covers major infrastructure requirements. Together, they outline how York Region will use its finances to deliver essential services to our residents.

The proposed 2023 \$3.9-billion budget includes \$2.9 billion in operating costs and \$894 million in capital spending. These form part of a 10-year capital plan of almost \$10 billion in spending. The \$3.9-billion budget also includes the 1% Rapid Transit / Infrastructure Levy, similar to the 2022 budget.

The proposed 2.9% tax levy increase equals approximately \$78 per household on average and the 1% Rapid Transit / Infrastructure Levy averages an additional \$27. This brings the total average household increase to \$105.

York Region's strong financial position is bolstered by a multi-year budget process to coincide with Council's term of office. The proposed outlook tax levy increase for the remaining term of council was also tabled on Thursday, January 26, 2023, and includes:

	2024	2025	2026
Tax Increase	2.75%	2.6%	2.6%
Rapid Transit / Infrastructure Levy	1%	1%	1%

Departmental presentations to Regional Council will be presented in February, with anticipated budget approval on Thursday, February 23, 2023.

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## Yonge North Subway Extension Update

Regional Council received an update on the [Yonge North Subway Extension project](#), a project the Province of Ontario/Metrolinx is responsible for planning, design and construction, and owning the resulting assets.

Regional Council confirmed the need for a defined project scope, including details regarding station access, bus terminals, train storage, service levels and operations/maintenance obligations for the [Yonge North Subway Extension project](#) to allow York Region and the Ministry of Transportation to agree on the Region's financial contribution and merits of a capped contribution.

The Yonge North Subway Extension is a long-standing transportation priority for York Region and will be a major transit infrastructure project in the Region over the next 10 years. The preliminary capital cost estimate for the project is \$5.6 billion, of which, \$1.12 billion will be York Region's estimated contribution.

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### **Rapid Housing Initiatives support affordable and transitional housing**

York Region is committed to providing complete communities with a full range of housing options to meet the needs of residents of all ages, abilities, income levels and stages of life. To help address the need for affordable housing across York Region, Regional Council [endorsed](#) funding applications under the Federal [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Rapid Housing Initiative](#) to develop three proposed affordable rental housing developments:

- Whitchurch-Stouffville Community Housing Development, 5676 Main Street, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Men's Emergency and Transitional Housing Development, 14452 Yonge Street, Town of Aurora
- Box Grove Community Housing Development, 7085 14th Avenue, City of Markham

If York Region is successful in securing this funding, the projects must be completed within 18 months after approval.

The Region will continue to work with key stakeholders, including all levels of government, to find affordable housing options for current and future residents. Updates on funding applications will be shared with Council later this year.

More information on housing affordability, York Region's role and Housing York Inc., is available at [york.ca/housing](http://york.ca/housing)

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### **Provincial Audit and Accountability Fund**

Regional Council received an update on efficiency reviews completed as part of the Provincial Audit and Accountability Fund, which demonstrate York Region's long-standing commitment to continuous improvement.

Established by the Government of Ontario in May 2019, the \$7.3-million [Audit and Accountability Fund](#) provides large urban municipalities with an opportunity to conduct third party reviews of service delivery and expenditures with the goal of finding efficiencies while protecting and modernizing critical front-line services.

In December 2021, York Region received \$400,000 in funding for two separate project reviews and an additional \$254,000 in January 2022 for the following three reviews:

- [Court Services Modernization Opportunities](#)
- [Development Application Tracking Tool \(YorkTrax\) Modernization Opportunities](#)
- [Organizational Efficiencies and Performance Accountability Review](#)

All three projects provided York Region the opportunity to review current service delivery models and consult with various stakeholders and partners to identify occasions for enhanced alignment, collaboration and standardization.

Organizational changes, modernized solutions, shared service delivery and cost savings identified through the third-party reviews are expected to improve and build on York Region's high-quality program and service delivery. Actionable recommendations will be considered for implementation through the Region's [budget process](#).

Findings from the three audit and accountability reviews can be found at [york.ca/Accountability](https://york.ca/Accountability)

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### **Traffic signals to be installed at 15th Sideroad in the Township of King**

Regional Council approved the [Township of King's request for traffic signals](#) to be installed on 15<sup>th</sup> Sideroad at the entrance to the future Township Wide Recreation Centre in the Township of King.

The traffic signals do not currently satisfy the Region's [Traffic and Pedestrian Signal Policy](#); however, installation is recommended at this intersection based on connectivity and forecasted demand.

The signals will be fully funded by the Township of King.

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### **Pedestrian crossover to be installed at Mount Albert Road in Town of East Gwillimbury**

Regional Council approved the [Town of East Gwillimbury's request for a pedestrian crossover](#) on Mount Albert Road near Countryman Road to enhance pedestrian safety and support connection to the Radial Line Trail and future development and trails.

The crossover does not currently satisfy York Region's Pedestrian Crossover Policy; however, it is recommended for public safety, connectivity and forecasted demand.

The Town of East Gwillimbury is responsible to fully fund installation of the pedestrian crossover.

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### **The Women's Support Network of York Region**

York Regional Council endorsed a resolution by [The Women's Support Network of York Region](#) to call upon the Province of Ontario to provide increased and sustainable funding for community-based sexual assault centres.

The Women's Support Network of York Region is a rape crisis/sexual violence centre, providing free, confidential services to individuals in York Region. It has a feminist, anti-racist and anti-oppressive framework and works towards a goal of eradicating sexual violence.

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### **York Region named top employer**

York Region has been named on the [Forbes list of Canada's Best Employers 2023](#), receiving recognition as the second highest-ranking government employer in Canada and ranking 26<sup>th</sup> overall among 300 organizations.

York Region joins other local businesses and organizations, including the City of Markham, on the list of best employers. This reinforces York Region as a destination of choice for attracting a strong and highly educated workforce that helps drive business growth and economic vitality.

This prestigious award is presented by Forbes and Statista inc., the world-leading statistics portal and industry provider.

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### **Alzheimer's Awareness month**

Regional Council recognized January as [Alzheimer's Awareness Month](#) and encouraged residents to learn more about dementia and its impacts on individuals and families.

Through [York Region's Adult Day Programs](#), vulnerable residents suffering from dementia and other cognitive health issues are provided a safe and secure environment to participate in meaningful daily activities and exercises. These programs offer critical support to residents living with dementia and their families and caregivers.

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## **Tamil Heritage Month**

Regional Council recognized January as Tamil Heritage Month and acknowledged the many contributions of Tamil Canadians.

As one to the fastest growing and most diverse communities in Canada, York Region is home to a large Tamil population who add to the social, economic, political and cultural fabric of our communities.

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## **National Non-Smoking Week**

Regional Council recognized January 17 to 23, 2023, as National Non-Smoking Week, which aims to educate on the dangers of smoking, help people quit and assist in the goal of a smoke-free Canada.

York Region Public Health provides several cost-free smoking cessation programs and resources for resident looking to quit at [york.ca/substanceuse](https://york.ca/substanceuse)

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## **Honouring lives lost in air disasters**

On January 8, 2023, York Region recognized [National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Air Disasters](#) and honoured the many lives lost in these tragedies, including the victims of, Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302, Air India Flight 280, Air Ontario Flight 1362 and other smaller crashes.

York Region also marked the third anniversary of the tragic and unnecessary downing of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752, which claimed 176 innocent lives, including 57 Canadians, 26 York Region residents and York Region staff member, Bahareh Karami.

At the January 12, 2023, meeting of Committee of the Whole, Regional Council extended deepest condolences to all who have lost family, friends and loved ones in air disasters.

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## **York Region celebrates the Year of the Rabbit**

Regional Council recognized [Lunar New Year](#) on Sunday, January 22, 2023, and extended best wishes to those throughout York Region celebrating the Year of the Rabbit.

Lunar New Year is one of the most important and celebrated holidays for Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and many other South East Asian communities. It is a time to reflect on the past year and look forward to the year ahead with hope and optimism.

In celebrating Lunar New Year, Regional Council acknowledges and recognizes the tremendous contributions residents have made to the cultural, social and economic heritage of York Region.

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## **Bell Let's Talk**

Regional Council and York Region staff celebrated [Bell Let's Talk Day](#) on January 25, 2023, through a series of events and activities aimed to continue the conversation about mental health and well-being.

The challenges of the last several years have had a considerable impact on the mental health and well-being of all residents, highlighting the critical importance of ongoing work to end the stigma associated with mental health.

Since 2010, the [Bell Let's Talk initiative](#) has helped more than 1,400 organizations support 5.5 million Canadians with access to mental health services and created a national conversation about mental health that continues to create meaningful and positive change.

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## **Remembering the victims of hate and standing up to intolerance**

Regional Council recognized January 27, 2023, as International Holocaust Remembrance Day and January 29, 2023, as National Day of Remembrance for the Quebec City Mosque Attack, honouring the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and the victims of the Quebec City act of terror.

Together, these sombre days of commemoration provide an opportunity to learn from the past and continue to take a stand against hate and intolerance. In acknowledging these days, Regional Council reaffirms its support of building welcoming and inclusive communities for everyone who lives and works in York Region.

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## **Celebrating York Region hockey stars**

Regional Council extended congratulations to both Canada's 2023 World Junior Men's Hockey team and Canada's Under 18 Women's World Hockey team on their recent World Championship gold medal performances.

Included among the many talented young players representing Canada were Adam Fantilli from the Township of King and Abby Lunney from the Town of East Gwillimbury. In extending congratulations, Regional Council also expressed their appreciation to both individuals for demonstrating the best of Canadian sportsmanship.

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## **Mary-Frances Turner Retirement**

Regional Council extended appreciation and thanks to [York Region Rapid Transit Corporation](#) (YRRTC) President Mary-Frances Turner, who will retire from the role at the end of February 2023.

For more than 20 years, Mary-Frances has been the driving staff force behind the implementation and continued development of rapid transit in York Region. She joined YRRTC from the City of Markham in 2001 and helped lead the public/private partnership team that launched rapid transit in York Region.

In extending best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement, Regional Council also express their gratitude for Mary-Frances' dedication and commitment to the community.

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## **Next meeting of York Regional Council**

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, February 23, 2023, at 9 a.m. in the York Region Administrative Centre Council Chambers, located at 17250 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket. The meeting will be streamed on [york.ca/live](http://york.ca/live)

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The Regional Municipality of York consists of nine local cities and towns and provides a variety of programs and services to 1.2 million residents and 54,000 businesses with over 650,000 employees. More information about the Region's key service areas is available at [york.ca/regionalservices](http://york.ca/regionalservices)