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Town of Aurora  
**Memorandum**  
Office of the Mayor

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**Subject:** York Regional Council Highlights of February 23, 2023

**To:** Members of Council

**From:** Mayor Mrakas

**Date:** March 28, 2023

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### **Recommendation**

- 1. That the York Regional Council Highlights of February 23, 2023, be received for information.**

# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Tuesday, March 14, 2023

York Regional Council – Thursday, February 23, 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](http://York.ca/councilandcommittee)

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## **Regional Council approves 2023, \$3.96 billion budget and three-year outlook**

York Regional Council approved the [\\$3.96 billion budget](#), the first of a multi-year budget to align with the current term of Council. In addition to a 2.9% tax increase for this year, Council also endorsed the budget outlook for the remaining three years of the 2023 to 2026 term of Council.

As part of the 2023 Budget deliberations, Regional Council reconfirmed its commitment to add an additional 1% to the tax levy to help fund the Region's \$1.12 billion portion of the Yonge North Subway Extension.

The 2023 budget includes [\\$3.06 billion in operating costs](#) and [\\$894 million in capital spending](#), which forms part of a 10-year capital plan of almost \$10 billion in spending.

The budget includes a key initiative to [invest \\$12.8 million annually](#) for the next four years to address critical issues related to housing, homelessness, mental health and community investments.

The combined 3.9% levy adds approximately \$105 to the average residential property bill.

The operating budget focuses on day-to-day expenses and contributions to reserves to support asset management, while the capital budget covers major infrastructure requirements. These budgets outline how York Region will use its finances to deliver essential services to our residents.

Additional information is available at [york.ca/budget](http://york.ca/budget)

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## **York Region invests \$894 million in capital projects for 2023**

As part of the [2023 Budget](#), Regional Council approved a 10-year capital plan of almost \$10 billion, with [\\$894 million](#) approved for 2023. Capital Budget spending consists of projects to meet growth needs and renewal of existing assets.

Highlights of the 2023 Capital Budget include:

### **Public Works: \$655 Million ([Environmental Services](#) and [Transportation Services](#) combined)**

- Invest \$377 million into roads and transit infrastructure to support growth and maintain assets in a state of good repair
- Invest \$268 million in water and wastewater infrastructure to deliver capacity needed for growth and ensure existing water and wastewater system reliability

### **Community and Health Services: \$76 Million**

- Advance construction of 362 new community housing units, including 265 units for seniors at the Unionville Home Society campus
- Continue infection, prevention and control measures in long-term care homes

### **York Regional Police: \$27 Million**

- Purchase a replacement police helicopter to continue serving growing communities
- Invest in police vehicles, information technology and specialized and communications equipment

### **YorkNet: \$41 Million**

- Build an additional 296 kilometres of fibre network, providing 265 regional and municipal facilities with better connectivity
- Advance work on the Rural Broadband Initiative to improve connectivity in underserved and unserved areas of the Region

### **Corporate Management and Governance: \$84 Million**

- Invest in new and upgraded platforms, systems and applications to improve customer service and maintain efficient and secure service delivery to residents
- Implement capital investments in Regional facilities to maintain efficient service delivery to residents and keep assets in a state of good repair

Additional information is available at [york.ca/budget](http://york.ca/budget)

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## **York Region commits to \$3.06 billion in operating expenditures for 2023**

Regional Council approved an [operating budget of \\$3.06 billion](#) to deliver services today and save for future needs. All components of the [2023 Regional budget](#), both operating and capital, support the [Region's Strategic Plan](#) priorities as realized through four areas of focus: Economic Vitality, Healthy Communities, Sustainable Environment and Good Government.

Highlights of the 2023 Operating Budget include:

### **Public Works: \$1.2 Billion ([Environmental Services](#) and [Transportation Services](#) combined)**

- Return transit ridership back to pre-pandemic levels by 2026
- Maintain a safe and efficient road network and transit system
- Address climate change through Corporate Climate Change Action Plan
- Continue to maintain high rates of waste diversion

### **Community and Health Services: \$1.06 Billion**

- Implement Council-approved Paramedic Services Master Plan
- New permanent positions to meet mandated requirements in long-term care
- Maintain the COVID-19 response, such as managing vaccine supplies, operating clinics, and continued focus on case, contact and outbreak management, infection prevention control measures and inspections.
- Continue to implement the Canada-Wide Early Learning Child Care system to reduce cost of child care and increase wages in the sector

## **Corporate Management and Governance: \$141.5 Million**

- Enhance the organization's ability to mitigate risk and keep services responsive and efficient
- Provide residents with better access to information, through streamlined operations and service delivery
- Develop and Implement an *Environmental, Social and Governance Reporting Framework* for the Region.
- Support all regional program areas by helping staff and key partners with strategic planning, emergency preparedness, budgets, audit, technology, legal advice, recruitment, and with communication to residents

## **York Regional Police: \$430 Million**

- Add 41 staff to contend with serious and violent crimes, support organizational transformation and a continued focus on safer
- Modernize processes and build stronger relationships with members of the public

Additional information is available at [york.ca/budget](http://york.ca/budget)

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### **York Region Fiscal Strategy creates financial stability**

Regional Council adopted an updated [fiscal strategy](#) and [long-term debt management plan](#). First introduced in 2014, this strategy enables York Region to assess its current and future needs through the prudent management of its capital plan, reserves and use of debt.

Financial sustainability means York Region keeps the cost of growth affordable while maintaining its existing infrastructure in a state of good repair. It also means having some financial flexibility to respond effectively to unforeseeable events.

The fiscal strategy is guided by the following four key principles:

- Keeping growth affordable and the existing infrastructure in a state of good repair
- Maintaining a “AAA” credit rating
- Maintaining the fiscal flexibility to respond to the evolving needs and economic changes
- Treating current and future tax and rate payers fairly by striving for intergenerational equity

For more information, please visit [york.ca/budget](http://york.ca/budget)

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### **Regional Council approves 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan**

Regional Council approved the [2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan: From Vision to Results](#) in alignment with the [2023 to 2026 Regional Budget](#). The plan outlines the Region's priorities to meet evolving community needs while working towards Council's [Vision](#) of a strong, caring, safe York Region.

The plan represents the Region's commitment to making progress in four priorities:

- Foster Economic Prosperity
- Support Community Well-being
- Drive Environmental Stewardship
- Efficiently Deliver Trusted Services

Highlights of the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan include:

- Attracting and retaining businesses, growing employment opportunities and attracting a skilled workforce through the expansion of YorkNet fibre network
- Sustaining and increasing affordable housing choices so more York Region residents are receiving help to remain stably housed
- Delivering and promoting environmentally sustainable services and continuing to collaborate with local municipalities to maintain the percentage of residential waste diverted from landfills
- Improving customer experience by leveraging digital transformation with increasing customer transactions through digital channels and self-serve options

Visit [york.ca/stratplan](https://york.ca/stratplan) for more information about the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan and future annual progress reports.

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### **Regional Council approves appointments to Accessibility Advisory Committee**

Regional Council appointed members for the 2023 to 2026 term of the [York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee](#).

The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee advises Regional Council and York Regional Police on accessibility standards and removing barriers to Regional programs, services and facilities.

Committee members come from diverse backgrounds and membership is mostly comprised of people living with disabilities or those who work closely with individuals with disabilities. These members bring lived experience and advice to help advance critical issues around accessibility and inclusion.

More information on York Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee and membership is available at [york.ca/accessibility](https://york.ca/accessibility)

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### **Celebrating the life and legacy of Hazel McCallion**

Regional Council expressed [condolences](#) to family and friends of former City of Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion, who passed away peacefully at the age of 101 on Sunday, January 29, 2023.

First elected as Mayor of Mississauga in 1978, Hazel McCallion fiercely led her community for more than 36 years. During that time, she grew Mississauga from a small collection of towns and villages into Canada's seventh largest city. Following her political retirement, Hazel continued a life of purpose, serving in an advisory capacity for numerous boards, associations and governments.

Hazel's legacy is that of a compassionate and formidable leader whose dedication to public service will never be forgotten.

York Region flags were lowered to half-mast in tribute to Hazel McCallion and Regional Council held a moment of silence in her honour.

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### **Celebrating Black History**

Regional Council recognized February as [Black History Month](#) and acknowledged the many achievements and contributions of all Black Canadians that have helped make Canada a culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous nation.

As one of Canada's most diverse communities and home to a fast-growing number of people who self-identify as Black or of African Heritage, York Region values its diverse and ethnically rich population as a source of strength, vitality and economic opportunity.

Black History Month is an opportunity to learn about the [diversity](#) of Black communities in York Region and to celebrate the important contributions of Black Canadians to the settlement, growth and prosperity of the country.

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### **White Cane Week**

Regional Council recognized February 4 to 11, 2023, as National White Cane Week, which offers an opportunity to demonstrate the talents and capabilities of people living with vision loss and to explore ways our communities can be more accessible to all.

Through the work of the [York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee](#), significant progress has been made throughout York Region to remove barriers for those with vision loss and to make it easier for people of all abilities to access Regional programs and services.

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### **National Flag Day**

Regional Council recognized Wednesday February 15, 2023, as [National Flag of Canada Day](#) in honour of the first raising of the red and white Maple Leaf flag on Parliament Hill in 1965.

Celebrated across the country, National Flag Day is an opportunity to Celebrate Canadian heritage, reflect on the common values of our communities, celebrate the outstanding achievements of many great Canadians and show nation pride by celebrating the Canadian flag.

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### **Family Day**

Regional Council recognized Monday, February 20, 2023, as [Family Day](#) in York Region and celebrated the vital role family plays in the health and well-being of residents across the community.

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### **Canada's Agriculture Day**

Regional Council recognized Wednesday, February 15, 2023, as Canada's Agricultural Day, celebrating York Region's diverse [agriculture and agri-food](#) industry who help feed our communities.

Home to more than 600 farm-based businesses and 270 food and beverage manufactures, York Region's agriculture and agri-food sector contributes more than \$2.7 billion to the local economy every year, ensuring we all have access to high-quality, fresh and local food.

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### **Pink Shirt Day**

Regional Council recognized Thursday, February 23, 2023, as [Pink Shirt Day](#), acknowledging the importance of addressing bullying in schools, workplaces, homes and online.

First recognized in 2007 and celebrated around the world, Pink Shirt Day aims to raise awareness and support anti-bully programs that foster healthy self-esteem. In celebration of Pink Shirt Day, residents were encouraged to practice kindness, lift each other up and have greater acceptance, respect and inclusion for everyone in our communities.

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### **World Down Syndrome Day**

Regional Council will recognize Tuesday, March 21, 2023, as [World Down Syndrome Day](#) in York Region.

For more than 26 years, the Down Syndrome Association of York Region has promoted a positive image of people with Down Syndrome as being valuable community members. On World Down Syndrome Day, and all year long, York Region supports communities that are welcoming and inclusive and where people of all abilities can reach their full potential.

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## Next meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, March 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)

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