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

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

**To:** Members of Council

**From:** Mayor Mrakas

**Date:** April 4, 2023

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## Recommendation

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

# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Tuesday, March 28, 2023

York Regional Council – Thursday, March 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](https://york.ca/councilandcommittee)

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## **York Region communities grow through strong development activity in 2022**

The Regional Municipality of York continues to see confidence in the appeal of our communities with over \$550 million in development charges last year. The [2022 Annual Development Activity Summary](#) confirms development charges revenue collected was the highest in any of the previous five years.

Development activity highlights from 2022 include:

- \$568,088,449 development charges; a 24% increase from \$457,348,103 collected in 2021
- 2,092 development applications; a 2% increase over 2021
- 3,168 subdivision applications received, a significant increase of 87%
- 18,547 new residential applications received, a 50% increase from 2021

Development charges are collected through development approvals to pay for growth-related infrastructure. [Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022](#) proposes several exemptions and discounts for attainable, affordable, non-profit and rental housing. These exemptions limit revenue through development charges and may need to be funded in other ways. York Region shares the provincial goal of improving housing affordability and continues to advance the work in building more homes faster with support and engagement from all parties.

A [status update on available housing supply](#) in York Region was also completed as of December 2022, indicating a strong supply of residential inventory. This update showed an estimated 65,900 approved and registered units across all nine municipalities. These unbuilt units represent a supply of over five years of growth that for many reasons have not been followed through on, including rising construction costs and shortages of skilled labour. In addition, there are 20,300 housing units under construction that will be occupied by residents upon completion.

The 2022 Annual Development Activity report summarizes new development applications received by the Region in 2022 using data collected from YorkTrax, York Region's digital development application and tracking [system](#). YorkTrax provides application status data across the Region to help plan Regional and local municipal services and inform builders, developers and the public.

Developers and businesses can find more information about fees and approvals at [york.ca/landdevelopment](https://york.ca/landdevelopment) and to stay up to date on York Region's housing affordability initiatives, visit [york.ca/housingaffordability](https://york.ca/housingaffordability)

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## **York Region home to more than 55,600 businesses**

Regional Council received the [2022 Employment and Industry Report](#) showing strong recovery and job growth in York Region over the past two years.

Over 33,000 York Region businesses were [surveyed](#) in 2022, totalling an estimated 615,760 jobs. Highlights of the [2022 Employment and Industry report](#) also include:

- 27,620 new jobs created since 2019: 6,950 jobs in the health care sector alone
- 82% of York Region business have less than 20 employees
- York Region's economy and businesses continue to shift toward more knowledge-based and service-oriented jobs; aligned with national and provincial trends
- Manufacturing, health care and social assistance, real estate, professional, scientific and technical services industries showing the largest growth over time, providing a variety of employment options
- 11.7% increase in real estate; fastest annual growth sector since 2012

The recently approved [Strategic Plan](#) shows the important guiding pillar of economic vitality, of which business and job growth are fundamental to building local communities.

To support further economic growth, York Region assesses several factors, including employment land inventory. The [2022 Vacant Employment Land Inventory](#) report shows almost 2,400 hectares of employment land is available across all nine cities and towns, with 85% of this vacant land ready to support new development and approximately 40% of applications underway. Most of the Region's vacant employment land is located within minutes of a major highway and almost half is within 500 metres of a transit stop. These vacant employment lands are key drivers of future economic development and can be designated as major office buildings, retail, services, educational facilities or institutions.

For more information on economic development and available resources to grow a business, visit [YorkLink.ca](#) or the [York Small Business Enterprise Centre](#).

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## **Interim Transfer of Part III Provincial Offences Act Charges**

Regional Council received an [update](#) on the successful transfer of responsibility for prosecuting *Provincial Offences Act* (POA) Part III charges from the Province to York Region.

York Region Court Services now prosecutes and responds to appeals relating to [Part III Provincial Offences Act \(POA\) charges](#). Previously prosecuted by the Ministry of the Attorney General, these charges were transferred to York Region courts, effective January 1, 2023

Part III POA charges include driving while under suspension, driving without insurance, stunt driving and failure to remain. In 2022, approximately 11,000 Part III charges were filed in York Region.

This administrative transfer does not change how people are charged with an offence or the judicial process to resolve or dispute it.

More information on York Region's Court Services, including information on how to pay a traffic ticket and how to book a court appointment, is [available online](#).

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## **York Region's response to the Ukrainian humanitarian crisis**

Regional Council [approved](#) the continued operation of temporary accommodation and wrap-around services for those arriving in York Region under the [Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel](#) who need assistance until June 30, 2023.

Municipalities in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area (GTHA) started a collective effort last spring to provide temporary accommodations across six municipalities and onsite assistance, including housing counsellors. There are approximately 200 rooms operating by municipalities across the GTHA, accommodating up to 400 people, with sites frequently at or near capacity. From August 2022 to January 2023, the cost to York Region is approximately \$1.2 million to operate the temporary accommodation and wrap-around services. An additional \$410,000 for [transit assistance](#) was incurred between May 2022 and January 2023.

Ukrainians needing assistance continue to arrive to the GTHA and the value of these municipal supports have been acknowledged by both the provincial and federal governments.

Without federal or provincial funding, operation of these municipal supports and services will continue to rely on municipal tax levy funding and as this is not sustainable, scaling down and eventually closing municipal sites may be necessary.

York Region and other municipalities have been pursuing federal and provincial funding to offset costs, but to date no financial commitment has been made. Regional staff will report back to Council by June 30, 2023, or when federal or provincial funding offset is confirmed to assess next steps for York Region's response to the Ukrainian humanitarian crisis.

For more information, visit [York.ca/supportukraine](https://york.ca/supportukraine)

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### **Emergency Management Program Annual Compliance Review**

Regional Council received the [Emergency Management Program Annual Compliance Review](#), which outlines activities undertaken to ensure compliance and enhanced organizational resiliency.

Under the [Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act](#) (the Act) and [Ontario Regulation 380/04](#), York Region is required to create and maintain an emergency management program and [emergency response plan](#), identify critical infrastructure and promote public awareness.

In 2022, York Region completed all annual regulatory requirements of the Act and Regulation, including ongoing business continuity planning, internal education and training and the annual Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment in partnership with York Regional Police, local municipal partners and other stakeholders.

For 2022, the top five hazards identified in York Region are:

- Infectious Diseases
- Tornado
- Electrical Outage (winter)
- Cyber Attack
- Winter Weather/Ice Storm

To support emergency response efforts, residents are encouraged to be ready for anything by preparing a [personal emergency plan](#) and [72-hour emergency kit](#). More information on emergency preparedness and top hazards can be found at [york.ca/BePrepared](https://york.ca/BePrepared)

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### **York Region designates new bicycle lanes**

Regional Council approved the [designation of bicycle lanes](#) on Ninth Line in the City of Markham and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, and Prospect Street in the Town of Newmarket. The bicycle lanes will help to create safer environments for cyclists and provide better connections to existing bicycle lanes.

The two sections of Regional roads with new bicycle lanes are:

- Ninth Line, southbound from 34 metres south of Hoover Park Drive to 126 metres north of Donald Cousens Parkway in the City of Markham and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Prospect Street, northbound and southbound from Lydia Street to Timothy Street

The bicycle lanes will be operational Monday, May 1, 2023. On-street signage and pavement markings will be installed in spring 2023.

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### **Responding to Avian Flu**

In collaboration with its nine local municipal partners and several federal and provincial agencies, York Region is taking a collaborative approach to its Avian Flu response, which includes a dedicated web page at [york.ca/AvianFlu](https://york.ca/AvianFlu) to address public concern, share information and coordinate efforts.

York Region Public Health continues to monitor the situation among the bird populations and confirmed the risk to humans remains low. Residents who come across ill or dead animals are reminded not to touch them, to keep their pets leashed and to contact local Animal Control or the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative to report concern.

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### **Working towards sustainable inclusive development**

On Wednesday, March 22, 2023, York Region, in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Development (UNITAR), York Regional Police and York University, [renewed its partnership in agreement](#) to foster sustainable development in Canada.

This agreement aims to deliver joint training and professional development activities in the areas of road safety, mental health, gender equality, entrepreneurship, economic growth and climate change.

York Region also participated in the launch of the UNITAR and York University [Water Academy](#), which is focused on delivering innovative training and building human capacities on pressing water-related issue.

Through these initiatives, York Region will continue to work with a variety of partners to advance work on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and drive positive change to end poverty, promote health and well-being, support economic and social inclusion and build peaceful and [inclusive communities](#).

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### **Developmental Disabilities Month**

Regional Council recognized March as [Developmental Disabilities Month](#), which celebrates the ways in which people of all abilities come together to form strong, diverse communities.

This special awareness month seeks to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life, as well as awareness of the barriers that people with disabilities still face in connecting to the communities in which they live.

Through the [York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee](#) and [Early Intervention Services](#), York Region continues to work to help all residents reach their full potential by removing barriers to programs and services and providing cost-free supports to children with disabilities and their families.

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### **Nutrition Month**

Regional Council recognized March as [Nutrition Month](#) in York Region, acknowledging the important role Public Health plays in promoting healthy eating, good nutrition and access to healthy food.

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## **Red Cross Month**

Regional Council recognized March as [Red Cross Month](#), acknowledging York Region's long-standing partnership with the Canadian Red Cross.

Through the Region's [Emergency Social Services program](#), several agreements are in place for the Red Cross to provide immediate and short-term services to residents impacted by an emergency or disaster.

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## **Employee Appreciation Day**

Regional Council recognized Friday, March 3, 2023, as Employee Appreciation Day, thanking Regional and municipal staff for their hard work and dedication to the health, safety and well-being of all York Region residents.

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## **York Region celebrates Holi**

Regional Council marked the celebration of Holi on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, extending best wishes to all in the community celebrating the Hindu festival of colours and spring.

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## **International Women's Day**

Regional Council recognized Wednesday, March 8, 2023, as [International Women's Day](#) and acknowledged the many women who make York Region a great place to live, work and visit.

Observed annually, International Women's Day is a global initiative to celebrate the outstanding social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women around the world.

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## **International Day to Combat Islamophobia**

Regional Council recognized Wednesday, March 15, 2023, as [International Day to Combat Islamophobia](#).

Declared by the United Nations as an international observance in 2021, International Day to Combat Islamophobia acknowledges the widespread rise of intolerance, prejudice and violence against members of numerous religious communities, including those of the Muslim faith.

In recognition of International Day to Combat Islamophobia, Regional Council acknowledged their role in building a welcoming and safe York Region for all and encouraged residents to do more to end hate-based crime in our communities.

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## **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

Regional Council recognized Tuesday, March 21, 2023, as [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#).

This United Nations observance calls on governments and citizens around the world to mobilize for equality and dignity and to find ways to fight racism and racial discrimination.

York Region and Regional Council are committed to building welcoming and inclusive communities for all residents and remain dedicated to addressing issues of racism and discrimination in our communities and workplaces.

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## International Day of Forests

Regional Council recognized Tuesday, March 21, 2023, as [International Day of Forests](#), which raises awareness of sustainable forest management and stewardship.

International Day of Forests is also an opportunity to celebrate the [York Regional Forest](#), comprised of 2,500 hectares of protected land across 24 properties and more than 150 kilometres of trails open to the public 365 days a year.

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## World Water Day

Regional Council recognized Wednesday, March 22, 2023, as [World Water Day](#) and acknowledged groundwater as an essential part of York Region's water system.

Approximately 7% of the Region's drinking water comes from groundwater. As of 2021, York Region operates and maintains 24 groundwater treatment facilities, including 40 production wells in the Township of King, the Towns of Aurora, Newmarket, East Gwillimbury, Whitchurch-Stouffville and the City of Vaughan. Residents in these areas are supplied by either groundwater, or a combination of groundwater and water from Lake Ontario.

Clean, safe drinking water starts by protecting our water sources. Residents can help protect our groundwater supply by keeping harmful products from entering our lakes, rivers and streams. For example, chemicals, such as paints and stains, and medicines should be properly disposed of at a Household Hazardous Waste Depot. Learn more at [york.ca/protectingwater](http://york.ca/protectingwater)

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## Ramadan

Regional Council recognized Thursday, March 23, 2023, as the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan, wishing members of York Region's Muslim community a peaceful month of reflection, generosity, gratitude and prayer.

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## York Region participates in Earth Hour

On Saturday, March 25, 2023, from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., York Region joined residents and businesses around the world and turned off all non-essential lights for [Earth Hour](#).

All non-essential lights were turned off at five Regional facilities, including:

- York Region Administrative Centre, 17250 Yonge Street, Town of Newmarket
- 17150 Yonge Street, Town of Newmarket
- York Region South Services Centre, 50 High Tech Road, City of Richmond Hill
- York Region Transportation Operations Centre, 90 Bales Drive, Town of East Gwillimbury
- York Region Community and Health Services, 9060 Jane Street, City of Vaughan

This global event is an opportunity to make small adjustments throughout the year to benefit the health of the planet. Try making your home energy efficient, look for ways to conserve energy, reduce your single-use items and consider active modes of transportation, such as walking, riding or using public transportation.

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## Next meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, April 27, 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 more 1.2 million residents and 55,600 businesses with more than 615,000 employees. More information about the Region's key service areas is available at [york.ca/regionalservices](http://york.ca/regionalservices)

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