

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Monday, November 23, 2020

York Regional Council – Thursday, November 19, 2020

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)

York Region advocates to remain in COVID-19 Red-Control zone

On November 16, 2020, York Region moved to the Red-Control zone of the Government of Ontario's [COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open](#).

In this zone, broader-scale restrictions across multiple sectors must take place to control transmission of COVID-19. These [restrictions](#) ensure public health measures are targeted, incremental and responsive, while keeping schools and businesses open, maintaining health system capacity and protecting vulnerable people.

York Region Public Health anticipates these measures will go a long way in preventing new cases of COVID-19 in the community and expects to see results from Red-Control zone restrictions between November 26 to 28 (10 to 12 days following November 16).

While daily cases and positivity rates in York Region remain high, previous experience from modified Stage 2 restrictions suggest existing control measures along with good case, contact and outbreak control management are the most effective means of reducing cases in the community.

York Regional Council supports this position and supported a recommendation from York Region Medical Officer of Health Dr. Karim Kurji to request [the province not place York Region in a lockdown zone](#) at this time.

Regional Council remains committed to protecting the health and safety of residents and balancing the economic interests of local businesses. To support the recommendation to remain in Red-Control zone, York Region has committed to increased enforcement activities with York Regional Police and municipal bylaw partners in areas where overcrowding and lack of physical distancing are a concern. This includes malls, big box outlets, grocery stores and banquet halls.

By following public health measures within the Red-Control zone, staying home when unwell, practicing physical distancing and good hand hygiene and wearing a face mask or covering when physical distancing is not possible, York Region residents can do their part to bring case numbers down.

York Region's on-going response to COVID-19

York Regional Council received an update on York Region's [continuing response](#) to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

During wave two of the pandemic COVID-19 cases have been increasing among all age groups. Given the approaching cold weather and influenza season, it's very important York Region continue to do everything possible to minimize new cases and prevent our health care system from becoming overwhelmed.

To support further planning of COVID-19 mass immunization clinics, Public Health collaborated with Paramedic and Senior Services, York Regional Police, the Regional Emergency Operation Centre and the Health Emergency Operation Centre to pilot a drive-through flu clinic on October 30, 2020. The purpose of the pilot was held to evaluate the feasibility of using a large-scale immunization drive-through clinics for COVID-19.

As York Region responds to the on-going pandemic, [York Region Social Services](#) continues to adapt services to ensure York Region's most vulnerable residents continue to get the support they need. This includes:

- Resumption of child care feed subsidy support for families living with low income
- Relocating the self-isolation shelter to allow clients back into Leeder Place Family Shelter
- Finalizing the York Region Cold Weather Response Plan for 2020 so residents experiencing homelessness will have access to [safe shelter spaces](#)
- Providing flu shots to vulnerable populations, first responders and health care providers

Included in COVID-19 updates to Regional Council was an [analysis of the financial information](#). The unexpected costs and reduced revenue associated with COVID-19 have a cumulative impact of \$113 million to date, or approximately \$3.4 million per week.

As York Region continues to respond to COVID-19, Regional Council remains committed to supporting strong, caring and safe communities. Throughout this crisis, York Region has maintained york.ca/covid19 as a trusted source of information related to public health and safety.

Regional staff will continue to monitor community needs and their impact on Regional programs and services and provide updates to Regional Council and the community on the on-going response.

York Region records fewer collisions in 2019

Regional Council received the [2020 Traveller Safety Report](#) which provides a breakdown of collision data occurring on Regional roads during the previous calendar year. In 2019, there was a 10-year low in the number of collisions on Regional Roads.

The 2020 Traveller Safety Report collects data from a variety of sources, using the information to better understand traveller behaviour and determine initiatives to increase safety for all road users.

Information contained in the report includes:

- More than 50% of fatal collisions are related to motorists speeding
- 94% of pedestrians and 82% of cyclists involved in collisions result in injury or death
- 89% of collisions are a result of improper driving
- 30% of collisions are a result of following too closely
- 80% of collisions had some form of driver inattention or distracted driving as contributing factors

York Region continues to implement enhanced safety measures including piloting automated speed enforcement in community safety zones, no right turn on red, fully protected left turns, safety education campaigns and using data driven approach for engineering safer roads.

York Region Transit awards West-North Division Operations and Maintenance contract

York Regional Council approved the contract for the York Region Transit (YRT) [Operations and Maintenance of West-North Transit Division](#) to TOK Transit Limited starting May 1, 2021.

The West-North Division is newly consolidated from the current North and Southwest Transit Divisions and will operate approximately 66 conventional routes in all nine cities and towns across York Region.

YRT delivers its family of services using private contractors under long-term performance-based contracts, except for five core routes operated by the TTC under contract with York Region.

Growing York Region's street tree investment

York Region's street tree population, valued at \$421 million, continues to grow, increasing the environmental, social and economic benefits to residents and communities.

The [2020 Street Tree Health and Performance Update](#) demonstrates a strong and steady upward trend in health, measured by the percentage of trees in satisfactory or good condition – up from 29% of trees in healthy condition in 2003 to 87% in 2020. York Region reports on the success of its planting and maintenance programs every five years.

Significant program improvements have been implemented including regular street tree health assessments. Urbanization and limited boulevard space will require continued implementation of technologies and practices to ensure survival and long-term tree performance. Learn more about street trees at york.ca/streettrees

2023 to 2031 Paramedic Services Resources and Facilities Master Plan

Regional Council received an update on the [10-Year Paramedic Services Resources and Facilities Master Plan](#).

By 2031, demand for paramedic services in York Region is anticipated to grow by 119%, with paramedics forecasted to respond to more than 163,000 calls for service. With most of this service growth expected to be driven by York Region's growing senior population, the plan also looks at innovation to respond to future 911 requests, including:

- Expanding Community Paramedicine programs
- Continuing the Emergency and Transitional Housing clinic hours
- Training all paramedics to assist palliative care patients in their homes
- Improving medical dispatch technologies to achieve efficiencies and reduce ambulance hours
- Continuing and enhancing collaboration and coordination with other health care partners

Progress reports will be brought forward to Council throughout development of the Master Plan. The final 10-Year Paramedic Services Resources and Facilities Master Plan will be presented to Council for approval in 2022.

York Region advocates for more long-term care beds

Regional Council is seeking commitment from senior levels of government for funding to provide more long-term care (LTC) beds in York Region, reflecting the [forecasted and unmet need for long-term care beds](#).

The forecast of seniors' housing needs and long-term care capacity in York Region is an action item identified in [York Region's 2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan](#) and [York Region's Seniors Strategy](#).

The supply of long-term care beds in York Region must increase to keep up with an aging population. To achieve a greater outlook for York Region seniors who need long-term care, the Region will continue to use its influence to advocate where impact can be made and encourage others to do so where they are able.

York Region operates two [LTC homes](#): Maple Health Centre in the City of Vaughan and Newmarket Health Centre in the Town of Newmarket.

Building Better Together: Housing York Inc's 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan

Regional Council approved the 2021 to 2024 Housing York Inc. Strategic Plan (HYI).

The plan focuses on expanding the housing portfolio, promoting inclusive communities and successful tenancies and ensuring financial sustainability. The plan also includes new, innovative and ambitious ideas to help accelerate the goals and objectives of the Board of Directors.

The plan aligns with the [Region's 2019 to 2023 Corporate Strategic Plan](#) to deliver and promote affordable housing and the Region's 10-year housing and homelessness plan. The strategic priorities, goals and actions will advance HYI towards achieving its vision of building communities everyone would be proud to call home.

York Region responds to provincial consultations on supportive housing

Regional Council responded to [provincial consultations](#) to improve the supportive housing system.

The supportive housing system in Ontario represents an opportunity to clarify and strengthen existing roles of the province, supportive housing providers and Service Managers to improve services for people and be more cost efficient, directing available funding to those in need.

York Region will continue to partner with supportive housing providers where appropriate and within its mandate as a housing service provider; however, Service Managers do not have capacity to fund and administer supportive housing. Dedicated provincial leadership and funding are required to ensure the supportive housing system is well-coordinated and has enough supply to meet needs.

York Region reviews partnership with Toronto Global

Regional Council [confirmed funding](#) of \$336,000 for the final year of the Foreign Direct Investment Fund attraction services through its partnership with Toronto Global on the condition that all existing government partners commit to funding the remaining term.

With the release of Toronto Global's [2019/2020 annual report](#), the agency continues to make a positive impact on business attraction in the Greater Toronto Area.

Last renewed in 2019, the current funding agreement with [Toronto Global](#) ends on March 31, 2022 and York Region will review this partnership and provide recommendations on either renewing the program or alternative options.

York Region improving connectivity

Regional Council approved YorkNet's application to the [Improving Connectivity for Ontario Program](#) to further expand York Region's broadband network.

YorkNet's work with local Internet Service Providers is currently underway to expand dark fibre network to have approximately 350 kilometres of fibre in operation by the end of 2020.

If successful, this provincial funding will help YorkNet further expand the broadband network to rural and underserved areas of York Region.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put an even greater spotlight on the importance of high-speed internet access and the essential service it provides, specifically with many residents working from home, utilizing online learning options and living in a digital economy.

Regional Council kicks-off Salvation Army Christmas Kettle campaign

Regional Council joined local community partners and representatives from the Salvation Army to officially kick-off the [2020 Christmas Kettle campaign](#).

In a year unlike any other, the Salvation Army has seen a 19% increase in the number of people needing assistance. As COVID-19 continues to impact lives, the need for support is expected to grow further.

Regional Council encourages those who are able to donate to one of 2,000 kettle locations across Canada or through FilltheKettle.com. Every donation to a Salvation Army Christmas Kettle remains in the community to support local needs.

York Region recognizes “Week of Thanks”

Regional Council recognized November 16 to 22, 2020 as the [Week of Thanks](#) for York Region’s public health, paramedic and long-term care workers.

The Week of Thanks initiative is an opportunity to acknowledge the dedication of front-line health care workers and thank them for their ongoing support in keeping communities healthy and safe amid the COVID-19 global pandemic.

York Regional Council supports Conservation Authorities resolutions to amend Bill 229

York Regional Council voted in support of [Lake Simcoe](#) and [Toronto and Region](#) Conservation Authorities resolutions to address changes introduced by the province to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the *Planning Act* in [Bill 229, Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act \(Budget Measures\), 2020](#).

Included in changes put forward by the province is the elimination of Conservation Authorities’ science-based watershed approach which protects our local environment. As well, changes to appeal processes for permits could add as many as 200 days to the application process. Being able to participate in appeal processes ensures a thorough review is being applied to planning and land use decisions, ensuring people and their property are protected from natural hazards such as flooding.

The changes also include cessation of the ability to issue Stop (work) Orders, an important enforcement tool used to control illegal activities.

Paramedic Memorial Bell arrives in York Region

On Tuesday, November 17, 2020, the Canadian Paramedic Memorial Bell arrived at York Region Paramedic Services Headquarters in the Town of East Gwillimbury.

The Paramedic Memorial Bell honours paramedics who have lost their lives in the line of duty, and recognizes paramedics, dispatchers and others who have lost their battles with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Passed to York Region by Durham Paramedic Services, the Paramedic Memorial Bell is travelling across the province, visiting various Paramedic Services' who have traditionally been involved with the annual Paramedic Ride which travels from Toronto to Ottawa each year.

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Annual Ride was cancelled. The Bell tour serves as an opportunity for paramedic services to pay tribute and remember those who have fallen serving their communities.

York Region Paramedic Services will pass the Memorial Bell to North Bay Paramedic Services on Saturday, November 21, 2020.

Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital prepares to open

Regional Council received an update on the construction and opening plans for [Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital](#).

The state-of-the-art smart hospital will open its doors to patients in early 2021. As part of Mackenzie Health, the new facility will expand health care capacity in York Region with an additional 342 new hospital beds.

Once open, Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital will support more than 1,500 new physician and front-line health care jobs in York Region.

Through support from private donors, York Region and the local cities and towns, the new facility will be a full-service hospital meeting the health care needs of residents in the City of Vaughan, City of Richmond Hill and Township of King.

Character Community counts!

Regional Council received an [update](#) from the Character Community Foundation of York Region and an overview of the organizations 2019 annual report.

[Character Community York Region](#) aims to build a safe, inclusive and connected York Region by empowering young people to overcome barriers and become community leaders, and inspiring seniors to connect with their community.

As a key funder of the non-profit organization, Regional Council approved a \$100,000 investment in Character Community be included in the Region's 2021 Budget and committed to reaching out to other organizations, including school boards, to encourage further support.

York Region receives Government Finance Officers Association Budget Award

York Region received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its [2020 budget document](#). This marks the 16th consecutive year York Region has been recognized with this award.

To receive the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, a government agency must publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide and as a means of communication. The award recognizes the commitment of Regional Council and staff in meeting the highest standards of governmental budgeting.

This professional association serves more than 20,000 government finance professionals throughout North America and the award is the highest recognition in governmental budgeting.

York Region recognized with seven public works awards

York Region Environmental Services and Transportation Services have been recognized with seven [Ontario Public Works Association Awards](#).

Honouring outstanding achievement in public works, these awards include:

- 2019 Public Works Project of the Year Technical Innovation Award for Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant's Phosphorus Reduction Action Plan Study
- 2020 Municipal Engineers Association Award to David Atkins, Manager of Engineering and Mark Nykoluk, Senior Project Manager for the Bayview Corridors Project
- Three awards for the Major Mackenzie Drive Culvert Replacement Project:
 - The 2019 Ontario Good Roads Association for Innovative Service Delivery, Maintenance and Construction Activity
 - The 2019 Ontario Public Works Association Project of the Year Award
 - The American Public Works Association 2020 Project of the Year Award
- 2019 Project of the Year Award for the Emergency Retaining Wall Replacement on King Road
- Commissioner Paul Jankowski is the recipient of the 2019 Public Works Leader of the Year Award for Transportation Services

The Ontario Public Works Association Awards celebrate excellence in public works and highlights the essential role public works plays in community health and well-being.

York Region Social Services recognized with Institute for Public Administration Award

York Region Social Services was recognized with the Institute of Public Administration Canada (IPAC) 2020 Silver Award for Innovative Management.

This award recognizes York Region's work to transform the service delivery model for Ontario Works to provide a more client-centred approach focused on wrap-around services to help clients succeed.

2020 marks the first time York Region has been recognized with the IPAC award for Innovation Management and the first time an Ontario Works Service System Manager has been recognized with this award.

York Region Remembers

Regional Council celebrated Veteran's Week by thanking those who have served and continue to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces to protect the Canadian ideals of democracy, freedom and peace.

In the days leading up to Remembrance Day, Veterans' Week is an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the vital contributions' veterans have made to our communities and country.

On November 11, 2020, York Region honoured those who have served and sacrificed for Canada in a virtual Remembrance Day Ceremony. In taking time to recognize those who volunteered, fought and died for freedom, York Region extended gratitude to veterans, Canadians in uniform and their families.

Next meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, November 26, 2020 at 9 a.m. To maintain physical distancing and protect the health and well-being of residents, this is currently planned to be a virtual meeting and streamed on york.ca/live

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

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