

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



York Regional Council – Thursday, April 25, 2024

Livestreaming 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 available at [York.ca/councilandcommittee](https://york.ca/councilandcommittee)

Government of Canada providing York Region \$2.3 million through Interim Housing Assistance Program

The Government of Canada has [provided The Regional Municipality of York \\$2.3 million in total reimbursement for 2023 expenses](#) incurred for interim housing to asylum claimants.

This funding is part of the Government of Canada's Interim Housing Assistance Program, [announced on Tuesday, July 18, 2023](#). York Region is currently working on a Q1 2024 application for expenses.

York Region continues to help ensure asylum seekers are supported through their settlement journey, while continuing to advocate for Federal and Provincial governments to provide stable funding to support ongoing needs of asylum seekers.

York Region Transit ridership increased by 36% to 21.1 million in 2023

Well-planned transit services help shape and connect communities. The [York Region Transit \(YRT\) 2023 System Performance Report](#) highlights exemplary service reliability and accomplishments.

Driven by more travel for work, school and leisure, 2023 ridership reached 21.1 million, a 36% increase over 2022 ridership. [On-Request and Mobility On-Request](#) services also saw significant increases of 40% to 106,419 and 47% to 333,978, respectively.

YRT remains highly reliable amidst changing travel demands with adjusted schedules, meeting on-time performance targets with 93% for conventional service, 97% for Viva and 94% for Mobility On-Request.

2023 fare revenue totalled \$72 million due to ridership growth, compared to \$53 million in 2022. Cost recovery was impacted by resuming services, inflation, fuel prices and a fare increase freeze. The approved 2024 operating budget includes a 3% annual transit fare increase in July 2024.

Key initiatives in traveller experience and sustainability included 123 service improvements, two new electric buses, opening Major Mackenzie West Terminal in the City of Vaughan, launching PRESTO contactless payment and PRESTO in Google Wallet and completing several fleet and facilities asset management programs.

York Region Sewage Works Project Report satisfies Ministry requirements

Regional Council received an update on the [Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' satisfaction](#) with the [York Region Sewage Works Project](#) and consultation reports.

As required by the Ontario government's [More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 \(Bill 23\)](#) and the associated [Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022](#), York Region and Durham Region will work together to develop, construct and operate the York Region Sewage Works Project, a long-term wastewater infrastructure project across the Towns of East Gwillimbury, Newmarket and Aurora and the Cities of Richmond Hill, Markham and Pickering. The project supports accelerated growth and housing in the Regions.

In October 2023, York Region and Durham Region submitted the draft York Region Sewage Works Project report to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks outlining infrastructure components and costs, impacts to the environment and how those impacts will be mitigated. Staff consulted with the public, interested persons and Indigenous communities throughout the Project Report's development.

The York Region Sewage Works Project consists of three project areas: North YDSS Expansion, South YDSS Expansion and YDSS Primary System Expansion. York Region plans to initiate detailed design of the first phase of the North YDSS Expansion following this announcement as this project is included in York Region's 2024 10-Year Capital Plan, with a preliminary cost estimate of \$515 million and planned completion in 2028.

Learn more about the York Region Sewage Works Project at york.ca/sewageproject

York Region continues collaboration with local cities and towns to process development applications

Regional Council received the [2023 Annual Development Activity Summary](#), providing an overview of York Region's planning and development applications in 2023.

Findings include:

- Collecting \$240,400,000 in development charges in 2023
- Increasing fee collection for reviewing development applications by 3% to \$5,267,462 in 2023, signalling intent for increased development across York Region
- Receiving 1,740 development applications and pre-consultations in 2023, a 17% decrease from 2,092 in 2022
- Increasing proposed new residential single/semi/townhouse units by 48% in 2023, with a total of 4,688 units
- An overall decrease of 6% for all new proposed residential units compared to 2022, totalling 20,388 new proposed residential units in 2023

While development activity remains strong and York Region continues to show promise of growth, the current economic conditions in the housing market and other various factors, including labour shortages, interest rates and modifications from the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, have all contributed to changes in development charges income.

Learn more about York Region's Growth Management at york.ca/Planning and stay up to date on Housing Affordability initiatives at york.ca/HousingAffordability

Developers and businesses can find more information about fees and approvals at york.ca/LandDevelopment

Regional Council endorses 2025 budget timeline

Regional Council endorsed the [proposed timeline](#) for development of the 2025 budget, which will be the third year of 2023-2026 multi-year budget process.

Since 2015, York Region has developed a multi-year budget comprised of an annual budget and a three-year outlook aligned with the four-year term of Council. This process allows for better coordination of budgeting and supports long-term financial sustainability through the implementation of the Region's fiscal strategy.

The second year of the multi-year budget was approved in December 2023 and included an outlook for the following two years.

The 2025 budget will continue to focus on long-term financial stability, while also reviewing opportunities for cost savings, service reductions and efficiencies.

The 2025 budget will be tabled with Regional Council in October 2024 with consideration of approval in November 2024.

York Region to undertake facilities review

Regional Council [adopted a motion](#) from Town of Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas, directing staff to undertake a review of all Regionally owned buildings and properties to identify if there are under and/or unused properties that can be repurposed for other regional priorities, including housing options.

York Region staff are expected to bring a report forward later in 2024 for Council consideration.

116,000 trees and shrubs planted in York Region in 2023, protecting and enhancing the natural environment

York Region's [2023 Greening Strategy achievements](#) demonstrate on-the-ground action the Region, our partners and local cities and towns are taking to protect and enhance the natural environment.

The 2023 Greening Strategy achievements exceeded targets in several areas, contributing to a greener York Region, including:

- **116,175 trees and shrubs** planted in schoolyards, backyards, municipal parks, private forests, conservation areas, along streets and in the York Regional Forest
- **Two millionth tree planted** in September 2023 during National Forest Week at the Maple Health Centre in the City of Vaughan
- **Two properties totalling 145 hectares** (358 acres) of land in negotiations and approvals to protect and enhance natural areas
- **133 outreach events** with **10,701 participants** to inspire stewardship and action

In 2023, \$3 million was spent on Greening Strategy programs, including \$2.4 million to support large-scale reforestation, backyard tree planting, outdoor education and contribution to land securement reserve.

Residents and visitors can celebrate the York Regional Forest's [100-year anniversary](#) with a family-friendly day of [tree planting on Saturday, May 11, 2024](#) from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the newly acquired Centennial Tract at 5028 Queensville Sideroad in the Town of East Gwillimbury. Gloves and shovels provided. [Registration is now open.](#)

Learn more about York Region's Greening Strategy at york.ca/Greening

York Region annual drinking water inspections receive top marks for fifth consecutive year

York Region scored 100% in Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks drinking water system inspections, confirming York Region's high-quality water and excellent compliance with regulatory requirements.

York Region's annual [2023 Drinking Water Systems Report](#) includes Ministry inspection results from both the 2023 calendar year and the 2022 to 2023 fiscal year for the Ontario Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Report.

In 2023, 17,309 water quality tests were performed on York Region's drinking water systems as part of Ministry inspections and 100% were within regulated limits and standards.

The 2022 to 2023 Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Report's also showed an overall compliance rating of 99.98% in the samples. One adverse sample in 2022 led to not receiving a perfect score; however, resample results confirmed effective disinfection and no risk to public health or safety.

Under the [Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002](#), York Region reports annually on quality and quantity of drinking water produced. York Region executes a robust and rigorous approach to protect drinking water, including source water protection, operator training, water treatment, extensive monitoring and testing, as well as emergency preparedness and regular communication with local cities and towns.

York Region water is safe, clean and affordable. Details of York Region water systems and drinking water quality can be viewed through the online reporting tool at york.ca/drinkingwater

Ensuring accessible and equitable services for York Region's youngest residents

Regional Council approved the [2024 to 2027 Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan](#), which sets priorities and guides the work of the Region and other organizations supporting children and their families from birth to age 12.

The 2024 to 2027 Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan will:

- Help provide consistent direction to the delivery of children's services
- Enhance York Region's collaboration with service providers to maintain and expand the child care and early years sector so all children feel a sense of belonging and can fully participate in programming
- Support the Region and service providers in adapting to changes required to ensure services are accessible, high-quality and welcoming to all children and families

The updated plan was informed through research and engagement, including consultation with school boards, child care operators, community leadership tables, local cities and towns, Regional staff and community agencies serving children.

In 2023, approximately 73,000 children and their families benefited from programs and services provided by or contracted through York Region. Services are delivered through a network of not-for-profit, private agencies and other partners. In addition to the Region's role in managing funding, program eligibility and service planning, the Region directly delivers programs for children with special needs, improving their ability to participate in daily routines at home and in child care.

For more information, visit york.ca/Children

York Region provides \$1 million funding for ventureLAB

Regional Council has reaffirmed its commitment to focus on economic development, innovation and talent across York Region [through a four-year, \\$1 million funding agreement](#) with [ventureLAB](#), in alignment with the [2024 to 2027 Economic Development Action Plan](#).

Through this funding agreement, York Region provides ventureLAB with an annual contribution of \$250,000, of which \$150,000 support existing programs and services, including fostering support and connections for founders to gain investment, attract and retain talent and bring technology to market. The remaining \$100,000 is dedicated to the York Region Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund, administered by ventureLAB to foster entrepreneurship and drive innovation.

Recent ventureLAB accomplishments include:

- Generating over 2,500 new jobs in Canada from ventureLAB-supported companies, including 800 jobs in York Region
- York Region-based companies supported by ventureLAB in 2023 generated over \$79 million in revenue
- Supporting 52 innovative organizations through the [Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund](#) by supporting early-stage start-ups, accelerators, incubators and community partners
- Securing an additional \$4.5 million in 2023 from the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario to expand the [Hardware Catalyst Initiative](#)

Learn more about ventureLAB, York Region's Innovation Centre, at venturelab.ca

Continued funding for Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital

Regional Council [approved continued funding](#) for Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital in the City of Vaughan. The amount of the financial commitment for capital projects at local hospitals is tied to reduced Paramedic Services off-load targets of 30-minutes or less per patient. In 2023, the hospital met the required target and will receive funding in 2024, as agreed.

While commitments have been fully funded at other local hospitals, funding will continue for the Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital until 2031.

To date, the Region has paid \$101.8 million to the Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital for the approved project. The remaining commitment to the project, estimated at \$52.3 million, will be issued between 2024 to 2031. Actual contributions are subject to assessment growth and burden of further off-load delay reductions if targets are not met.

Paul Jankowski appointed President of York Region Rapid Transit Corporation

Regional Council extended congratulations to Paul Jankowski, [appointed](#) President of the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation (YRRTC), effective May 13, 2024.

Mr. Jankowski, who previously served as York Region's Commissioner of Transportation Services, brings more than 25 years of senior leadership experience in transit and transportation to his new role, having also served in the City of Vaughan and most recently in the Edmonton region.

In welcoming Mr. Jankowski back to the Region, Council also extended appreciation to Brian Shifman, who fulfilled the role of Acting President at YRRTC for the past 16 months and will resume the position of Executive Vice President on May 13, 2024.

Change to Regional Fire Coordinator and Alternate

Effective February 14, 2024, City of Vaughan Deputy Fire Chief James Arnold [assumed the duties](#) of Primary Regional Fire Coordinator.

Township of King Fire Chief Jim Wall has been appointed as one of two alternates supporting the Regional Fire Coordinator, while Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Fire Chief William Snowball continues to serve as second alternate.

The position of Regional Fire Coordinator has been in place since 1971 to coordinate fire aid within York Region. The roles are appointed by the Provincial Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management.

Celebrating the life of Bryan Tuckey

Regional Council honoured [Bryan Tuckey](#), the Region's former Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, who died on Saturday, April 14, 2024.

Serving York Region from 2000 to 2011, Mr. Tuckey oversaw a significant period of growth across all nine cities and towns and greatly influenced growth in York Region, including the upcoming expansion of the Yonge North Subway into the City of Richmond Hill.

In honouring Mr. Tuckey's lifetime of public service, Regional Council also extended condolences to the late planner's family, friends, colleagues and loved ones.

Celebrating Public Works

Regional Council will recognize May 18 to 25, 2024, as [National Public Works Week](#) and celebrate dedicated and committed professionals who work to provide high-quality public services to residents and businesses across York Region.

As part of the National Public Works Week celebrations, York Region will host several in-person and virtual engagements, including a Paint-a-Plow contest for Grade 5 students, school tours at Regional facilities and forests and the annual [Family Fun Day](#) event. Family Fun Day will take place on Saturday, May 25, 2024, at the York Region Public Works Operations Centre at 80 and 90 Bales Drive East in the Town of East Gwillimbury.

This year's National Public Works theme, *Advancing Quality of Life for All*, encourages staff and residents to continue to work together to create great places to live, work and play for all. A complete list of 2024 Public Works highlights is available [online](#). Follow [@YorkRegionGovt](#) on [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [Instagram](#) for further activity and event information or visit york.ca/publicworks

National Day of Mourning

Regional Council recognized Sunday, April 28, 2024, as [National Day of Mourning](#). By lowering flags at Regional facilities and holding a moment of silence, York Region paid respect to the thousands of workers who have been killed, injured or suffered illness because of work-related incidents.

YWCA Toronto Women of Distinction Awards

Regional Council extended congratulations to York Region Centre for Community Safety Executive Director Jaspreet Gill for being recognized with the [YWCA Toronto Women of Distinction Award](#) for Advocacy and Social Justice.

The YWCA Toronto Women of Distinction Awards honour and celebrate the achievements of remarkable women throughout the Greater Toronto Area. As the first every York Region recipient of this award, Jaspreet was recognized for tireless work to address gender-based violence in our communities.

April Observances

Regional Council recognized the following observances in April 2024:

- [World Autism Month](#)
 - [Sikh Heritage Month](#)
 - [World Health Day](#) – Sunday, April 7, 2024
 - [International Day of Pink](#) – Wednesday, April 10, 2024
 - [National Volunteer Week](#) – April 14 to 20, 2024
 - [Earth Day](#) – Monday, April 22, 2024
 - [Administrative Professionals Day](#) – Wednesday, April 24, 2024
 - [International Guide Dog Day](#) – Wednesday, April 24, 2024
 - [World Immunization Week](#) – April 24 to 30, 2024
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Next meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, May 23, 2024, 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

The Regional Municipality of York consists of nine local cities and towns and provides a variety of programs and services to more than 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

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