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Town of Aurora

## Memorandum

Mayor's Office

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**Re:** York Regional Council Highlights of June 27, 2024

**To:** Members of Council

**From:** Mayor Mrakas

**Date:** July 9, 2024

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### Recommendation

1. That the York Regional Council Highlights of June 27, 2024, be received for information.

# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Tuesday, July 2, 2024

York Regional Council – Thursday, June 27, 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)

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## **York Region continues to monitor annual housing supply and affordability status**

York Regional Council received a [Housing Supply and Affordability Update](#), including York Region's 2024 Housing Supply Update and the 2023 Measuring and Monitoring Report.

Annual monitoring on the ever-changing housing affordability landscape is crucial to understanding where York Region stands and where improvement is needed. Work is underway striving to provide a full range of housing options meeting the needs of residents of all ages, abilities, income levels and stages of life.

Key findings from the [2023 Measuring and Monitoring report and the 2024 Housing Supply Update](#) include:

- As of March 2024, York Region has an approved housing supply of approximately 46,000 units, with 16,000 more under construction
- Only 15% of total new housing units were considered affordable and all were purpose-built rental units
- There were no new affordable ownership units for moderate-income households in 2023; a decrease from the 1% ownership units deemed affordable in 2022 and well below Regional targets
- There was a significant increase in new rental supply in 2023, with a total of 1,271 new rental units, of which 265 were community housing units delivered by [Housing York Inc.](#)

Affordability pressures in York Region continue despite supply. Actively monitoring housing supply data is one of many steps York Region is taking to continuously prioritize housing affordability. The [Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan](#) is one of many strategies underway to help address the housing crisis in York Region. Other information around homelessness and housing solutions can be found at [york.ca/Housing](https://york.ca/Housing)

Visit [york.ca/HousingAffordability](https://york.ca/HousingAffordability) for more details on monitoring housing supply and other housing affordability initiatives.

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## **2024 to 2027 Homelessness Service System Plan**

Regional Council approved the [2024 to 2027 Homelessness Service System Plan](#), which seeks to help address immediate and long-term needs for residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The plan outlines goals and priority areas to improve, enhance and align homelessness services and supports, including homelessness prevention, intervention, housing stability and strengthening a coordinated system response with community partners.

Rapid deployment actions beginning in 2024 will support individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness, including:

- Adding 139 new beds in existing emergency and transitional housing, hotel and seasonal shelters
  - Adding staff to the Community Paramedicine and Outreach Response Team
  - Adding outreach workers to support clients living unsheltered or in encampments
  - Helping people experiencing chronic homelessness
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### **Expanding York Region's active transportation network through introducing two new Trans Canada Trails**

Two York Region trails on the Trans Canada Trail have been [approved for expansion](#) into York Region's extensive trail network. Trans Canada Trail is Canada's national trail with the longest network of multi-use recreational trails in the world.

The [Lake to Lake Route](#) will span north-south across York Region, connecting Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario in the City of Toronto. The route travels through the Towns of Georgina, East Gwillimbury, Newmarket, Aurora and Cities of Richmond Hill and Markham.

The [South York Greenway](#) will leverage underused lands parallel to Highway 407 and hydro corridor lands in the Cities of Markham and Vaughan.

Trail expansions are identified as key initiatives in York Region's [Transportation Master Plan](#) to reduce car travel, promote sustainable transportation and connect municipal boundaries.

The \$100,000 funding commitment from Trans Canada Trail will be an addition to the Region's capital budget to design and build these two additional trails.

Stay up to date with York Region's extensive network of trails and forest at [york.ca/trails](https://york.ca/trails)

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### **Court and Tribunal Services annual progress report highlights enhancements and innovation**

Regional Council received the [Court and Tribunal Services' 2023 progress report](#), which outlines significant advancements over the past year and lays out actions for the remaining three years of the 2023-2026 Action Plan. Notable achievements in 2023 include setting legal precedents under the York Region Forest Conservation Bylaw, establishing a cost-effective Regional Administrative Penalty Tribunal program and collecting \$23.6 million in fines to ensure financial self-sufficiency of court operations.

Several actions for 2024 are already in progress or completed, such as consolidating two Provincial Offences Courthouses into a single location in Newmarket. Planned initiatives for 2024 include launching the Administrative Penalty Tribunal Program for camera-based offences, implementing a Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility strategy for Legal and Court Services and improving customer services through enhanced address verification processes.

The Provincial Offences Court in York Region provides administrative services to over 30 law enforcement and regulatory agencies. Most court matters, including paying tickets, requesting disclosures and court appearances, can be handled online, with information available in both official languages at [York.ca/courts](https://york.ca/courts)

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### **Traffic and pedestrian enhancements in the Township of King**

Regional Council approved road [improvements](#) at the intersection of Keele Street and King Road in the Township of King. Improvements to enhance safety and reduce delays in this core area include:

- Adding exclusive north/south left turn lanes
- Implementing a pedestrian signal and crosswalk south of King Road
- Prohibiting on-street parking and stopping on Keele Street and adding parking capacity will be available in designated parking areas nearby

Earlier this year, Regional Council [approved assumption of Keele Street](#) from Lloydtown/Aurora Road to Davis Drive, and 17th Sideroad from Jane Street to Dufferin Street at the Township of King's request.

Planned improvements in this area support York Region's [Vision Zero Traveller Safety Plan](#) which focuses on prioritizing the safety of our most vulnerable road users and influencing behaviours at key locations.

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### **York Region reduces corporate greenhouse gas emissions, achieves 11% below target in 2023**

Regional Council received the [2023 Corporate Energy Update](#), which shows York Region's total corporate greenhouse gas emissions 11% below target, advancing its goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Key achievements in the [2023 Corporate Energy Update](#) demonstrate:

- Transit bus emissions increased to meet a 36% increase in ridership demand in 2023
- Non-transit fleet vehicle emissions were lower as the Region implements its [Corporate Fleet Electrification Plan](#)
- Natural gas emissions from corporate buildings and facilities decreased in 2023 due to a warmer winter than previous years

Most corporate emissions are from fossil fuel consumption, such as gasoline, diesel fuel and natural gas. Innovations to electrify vehicles and buildings are one of the fastest growing areas of climate change mitigation technology and are proving to be a dominant path toward net-zero emissions.

York Region's framework of conservation, higher efficiency, renewable alternatives and low emission energy sources will help York Region achieve the target of net-zero emissions by 2050.

Emissions targets are set in the [Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan](#) and supports climate change mitigation priorities in the [2022 Climate Change Action Plan](#). Learn more at [york.ca/energy](http://york.ca/energy)

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### **York Region achieves highest 2023 diversion rate in Ontario**

York Region achieved 94% diversion from landfill in 2023, exceeding Regional Council's goal of 90% waste diversion from landfill for the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. The Region's diversion rate includes all waste collection through local municipal curbside programs, waste depot diversion programs and energy-from-waste.

The [2023 Annual Waste Management Report](#) summarizes York Region's diversion and waste reduction initiatives and highlights progress made on implementing the [Integrated Waste Management Master Plan \(SM4RT Living Plan\)](#). This includes:

- Successfully navigating legislative changes, including preparing for the Blue Box Program transition to full producer responsibility and finding alternatives to single-use items
- Using resources and infrastructure more strategically to achieve SM4RT Living, including contracting the construction and operation of a state-of-the-art biofuel facility to manage organics and produce renewable natural gas
- Inspiring people across York Region to embrace SM4RT Living and advance the circular economy through the [Circular Economy Initiatives Fund](#) and helping businesses reduce reliance on single-use items

York Region monitors progress towards waste reduction targets set in the SM4RT Living Plan by tracking amounts of waste households put out at the curb. Learn more about York Region's programs to help reduce waste at [york.ca/waste](https://york.ca/waste)

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### **Ensuring financial sustainability in York Region's drinking water systems**

Regional Council approved the [Water Financial Plan](#) for York Region's drinking water systems as required by the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*. The plan details long-term financial sustainability commitments and funding sources over the next four years and projections to 2030.

The plan confirms York Region's drinking water systems' financial sustainability. The rate study and associated [Water and Wastewater Financial Sustainability Plan](#) found full cost recovery could be achieved and maintained from 2022 to 2027 with annual rate increases of 3.3%.

York Region's supporting [Long-Term Water Conservation Strategy](#) emphasizes balancing conservation with infrastructure rehabilitation, resulting in financial and environmental benefits like reduced energy consumption and costs.

York Region and local cities and towns work together to ensure we all continue to enjoy clean, safe drinking water at a fair price now and into the future. Spending \$1 on water can buy you one plastic bottle of water or 590 bottles of tap water. Learn more at [york.ca/DrinkingWater](https://york.ca/DrinkingWater)

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### **Housing Solutions: A Place for Everyone 2023 Progress Report**

York Region has continued to make significant progress towards goals and objectives set in the [2023 Housing Solutions: A place for everyone](#), including:

- Transitioned 1,294 people successfully from emergency housing to long-term housing and 671 people diverted from entering emergency housing to alternative housing options between 2019 to 2023
- Opened a new transitional housing site in both the Town of Georgina and Town of East Gwillimbury, adding 28 new units to the emergency and transitional housing system
- Built almost 460 new community housing units since 2019, including Unionville Commons which opened in 2023, providing 265 market and subsidized rental homes for seniors in the City of Markham; 497 more units are in planning and development stages
- Housed 2,800 households from the subsidized housing wait list since 2019 through community housing, rent supplement and portable housing benefits

Regional Council is requesting the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Members of Provincial Parliament who represent York Region for an increase of \$7 million to York Region's annual Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program allocation, starting in 2025, to fund operating costs of the rapid deployment actions.

Further details about housing and services available are at [york.ca/Housing](https://york.ca/Housing)

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### **Paramedic programs and fast response times saving lives**

Regional Council received results for [Paramedic response time performance for 2023](#), outlining Paramedic Services surpassed response time targets for all areas. Improvements include surpassing the Ministry target time for sudden cardiac arrests, due in part to integrated community strategies involving local municipal fire services and the Automated External Defibrillator Program.

2023 highlights include:

- Integrating community-based strategies involving local municipal fire services and the Automated External Defibrillator program allows for better response time for sudden cardiac arrest

- Maintaining hospital transfer times below 30-minute targets, enabling paramedics to better respond to call volumes and meet response time goals
- Building and operating one new response station in the City of Markham (180 Cachet Woods)

The ability to meet and exceed these targets is largely driven by the activities and initiatives outlined in the Council-approved [Paramedic Services Master Plan, 2021 to 2031](#). The long-term plan provides data and insight on what is required for continued excellent paramedicine care across York Region's nine cities and towns.

Initiatives planned for 2024 and beyond include:

- A modernized dispatch system is expected to be implemented at the Georgian Central Ambulance Communications Centre in November 2024 and will assist Paramedic Services to continue meeting higher priority response time targets
  - Building and operating a new station in the City of Vaughan's Maple community (53 Jacob Keffer Parkway); currently, there are 27 operating stations with additional stations being built for a total of 30 by 2031
  - Continuing to deliver innovative community paramedicine programs such as community paramedics and palliative care
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### **The future of policing in Ontario**

At a Special Meeting of Regional Council on May 30, 2024, Regional Council [received a presentation](#) from York Regional Police Chief Jim MacSween outlining the complex pressures and changing role of policing in Ontario.

As the population of York Region continues to grow, the volume and severity of crime experienced across our communities also grows, with hate crime, car theft, human trafficking, drug trafficking, digital fraud and arms dealing adding to the complexities faced by York Regional Police.

To respond to these challenges, York Regional Police continue to explore and implement sophisticated new approaches to policing, including the use of facial recognition technology, artificial intelligence and data-driven policing to ensure York Region remains among the safest communities in Canada.

With a focus on strategic policing and recruiting service members with both traditional and future policing skills, York Regional Police projects a need for over 300 new civilian and uniformed staff between 2025 and 2026. This request will be formally tabled and considered as part of the 2025 budget process in October 2024.

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### **2023 Community Report provides insight into Region's financial health**

Regional Council received the [2023 Community Report](#), which profiles key 2023 accomplishments, progress in the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan priority areas and detailed financial statements related to the Region's budget.

The 2023 Community Report delivers a comprehensive look at how financial management helps the Region achieve long-term financial stability, while progress on the objectives and action plans detailed in the Strategic Plan demonstrate how York Region continues to meet the needs of residents, businesses and employees.

A copy of the 2023 Community Report, along with past reports, can be found at [york.ca/annualreports](https://york.ca/annualreports)

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### **Commissioner Chislett retires after 37 years of public service**

York Regional Council congratulated Community and Health Services Commissioner Katherine Chislett at her final meeting of Council and extended best wishes for a long and healthy retirement.

Following 37 years of outstanding public service, including seven years serving the residents of York Region, Commissioner Chislett's last day with the Region was Friday, June 28, 2024.

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### **Township of King Mayor Appointed to Federation of Canada Municipalities**

Regional Council has [appointed](#) Township of King Mayor Steve Pellegrini to the Board of Directors for the [Federation of Canadian Municipalities \(FCM\)](#) until the end of the current term of Council.

The FCM Board of Directors comprises elected municipal officials from all regions and various sized communities across Canada, who work together to set policy priorities that reflect the concerns of municipal governments and affiliate members. The Board of Directors meets quarterly to develop policy positions on key national municipal issues.

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### **Ontario Champion of Diversity Awards**

Regional Council extended congratulations to Loretta Lam from the City of Richmond Hill and Nazila Isgandarova from the City of Vaughan who were recognized with the [Ontario Champion of Diversity Award](#).

This award honors individuals, groups and organizations who promote immigrant success, economic growth, cultural diversity and inclusion.

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### **Stanley Cup Champions**

Regional Council offered congratulations to the Town of East Gwillimbury's Sam Bennett, the City and Richmond Hill's Ryan Lomberg and the entire Florida Panthers' organization on winning the Stanley Cup.

Regional Council also offered its congratulations to the Town of Newmarket's Connor McDavid for being named the top player in the NHL playoffs this season.

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### **June and July Observances**

Regional Council recognized the following observances in June and July 2024:

- [National Indigenous History Month](#)
  - [PRIDE Month](#)
  - [Seniors Month](#)
  - [Plastics-Free July](#)
  - [Italian Heritage Month](#)
  - [Filipino Heritage Month](#)
  - [Portuguese Heritage Month](#)
  - [National Deaf Blind Awareness Month](#)
  - [National Brain Injury Month](#)
  - [National Indigenous Peoples Day](#) – June 21, 2024
  - [Canadian Multiculturalism Day](#) – June 27, 2024
  - [Canada Day](#) – July 1, 2024
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### **Next meeting of York Regional Council**

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, September 19, 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](https://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 over 1.25 million residents and 57,000 businesses with more than 629,000 employees. More information about York Region's key service areas is available at [york.ca/RegionalServices](http://york.ca/RegionalServices)

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