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Town of Aurora

Memorandum

Mayor's Office

Re: York Regional Council Highlights of December 5, 2024

To: Members of Council

From: Mayor Mrakas

Date: January 14, 2025

Recommendation

1. That the York Regional Council Highlights of December 5, 2024, be received for information.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Tuesday, December 17, 2024

York Regional Council – Thursday, December 5, 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)

Seat of Regional Chair declared vacant

At its meeting on December 5, 2024, York Regional Council officially [declared the seat of Regional Chair vacant](#). This declaration follows the retirement of former Chairman and CEO Wayne Emmerson on November 29, 2024.

In accordance with York Region's [procedural bylaw](#), Town of Newmarket Mayor John Taylor presided over the meeting as Acting Regional Chair.

Council also [received a communication](#) from the Province of Ontario regarding the intent to appoint Eric Jolliffe as the new Chair and CEO of York Regional Council.

Regional Council approves \$5 million grant for Mental Health Community Care Hub

Regional Council [approved](#) a one-time \$5 million capital contribution funding grant to the [Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region-South Simcoe](#) for development of a Mental Health Community Care Hub. When complete, the Hub will provide residents with more access to dedicated mental health and addiction supports and help address a critical gap in the mental health system.

Located at 17255 Yonge Street in The Town of Newmarket, the Hub will be situated near Southlake Health and along a major Regional traffic corridor for access to transit and emergency services.

The Regional financial contribution will be funded through reserves and as part of the Region's annual budget process. The Hub will be operated by Canadian Mental Health Association York Region-South Simcoe and is expected to begin service delivery in 2026.

More information will be shared as the project progresses.

Community Investment Fund supported more than 70,000 residents in 2023

Regional Council [received an update](#) on the York Region Community Investment Fund activities for 2023.

In 2023, approximately \$8.5 million was allocated across 194 projects delivered by 98 community agencies. Areas of support and focus included:

- **Pandemic Response and Recovery:** \$3.1 million for pandemic related supports and services and \$1.2 million for projects to help residents with mental health concerns made worse by the pandemic experience
- **Housing Stability:** \$526,895 for projects to help residents find and keep stable housing
- **Mental Well-Being:** \$764,360 for mental health projects
- **Food Security:** \$418,776 for improving access to food and strengthening the local food security system
- **Organizational Development:** \$1.1 million for capacity building in community agencies

An additional \$1.3 million was allocated to support other critical community needs, including support for crime victims and human trafficking survivors.

The [Community Investment Fund](#) is an important part of York Region's human services system, addressing gaps in community needs. More information on the Community Investment Fund, including additional details on 2023 activity results and 2024 funded projects and initiatives, are available on york.ca/CommunityInvestment

Significant progress made in the implementation of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

Regional Council [received an update](#) on progress and outcomes of the [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan for York Region 2022 to 2026](#).

Strategic objectives outlined in the plan are being achieved through proactive, locally driven actions. Year two highlights include:

- **Community Action Tables:** Established in 2021, these tables focus on four geographic areas across York Region (northern Georgina, central Newmarket, south-central Richmond Hill and south-central Markham). Of the 122 identified local actions across the four focus areas, 95% are projected for completion by the end of 2024
- **Targeted Projects:** There are six social development and prevention initiatives to enhance Community Action Table work. This includes work with children, youth and families and resolving situations with risk of crime, harm and victimization. York Region is also piloting a Traumatic Incident Response Protocol, which collaborates with local municipalities and other partners to quickly provide support to communities impacted by violent events (shootings, stabbings and hate-motivated crimes)
- **Community Engagement:** More than 47,000 residents have been engaged through various initiatives, fostering a strong sense of community involvement

First approved by Regional Council in 2022, the plan focuses on social development, prevention and targeted community-driven actions to achieve York Region's [Vision](#). The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is developed in consultation with residents, community organizations, local municipalities, York Regional Police and other stakeholders.

Sustained financial support from other levels of government is needed to continue this important and provincially mandated work beyond 2026.

More information on the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan for York Region 2022 to 2026 is available on York.ca/CommunityAction

Canada-Wide Early Learning Child Care Program Update

Regional Council received an [update on the Canada-Wide Early Learning Child Care Program \(CWELCC\)](#) and impacts on the child care sector and family.

The CWELCC system is a federal program, administered by the province and delivered by Service System Managers, such as York Region. York Region does not directly operate any child care centres. The number of CWELCC-funded child care spaces across the province is determined by the Ministry of Education.

Updates to the CWELCC program, effective January 1, 2025, include:

- A new cost-based funding model to better reflect the cost of delivering child care, including a 34% increase to York Region's funding allocation
- Capping child care fees at \$22 per day for children under six, reducing user costs to an average of \$10/day by 2026
- Child care operators not participating in CWELCC will no longer have access to provincial child care funding for children under six. They will still have access to York Region's professional learning and development sessions and Early Intervention Services to support inclusion of children with special needs

The Province requires each Service System Manager develop a Directed Growth Plan to allocate new CWELCC funded spaces to underserved priority neighbourhoods with the following target groups: children living in low-income families, children from diverse communities, children with special needs, Francophone children and Indigenous children.

Using a data driven and equity-focused approach, the Region determined five priority neighbourhoods aligning with the province's requirements. These are East Markham, Central Vaughan, Central East Gwillimbury, West Georgina and North Georgina. Priority neighbourhoods are reviewed annually to ensure they continue to reflect community need.

More information about the CWELCC program in York Region is available at york.ca/CanadaWideChildcare

Development Charges Deferrals for Affordable Rental Buildings Policy continues in York Region

Regional Council continues support for the [Development Charges Deferral Policy for Affordable Rental Buildings](#). Expiry dates and unit caps have been removed to encourage building of affordable rental units across York Region.

The original Development Charges Deferral for Affordable Rental Buildings Policy was approved in [October 2019](#) with an update in [June 2021](#). This policy intends to facilitate development of rental buildings for affordable to moderate income levels, which a [recent Housing Needs Analysis](#) identified as a severe need in York Region.

Actions to increase community and affordable housing will be considered through the development of the upcoming [10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan](#).

For more information on development charges in York Region, visit york.ca/LandDevelopment

York Region supports Gravenhurst following unprecedented snowfall

Regional Council expressed gratitude to Public Works staff, particularly the Roads and Operations team, for their [outstanding support to the Town of Gravenhurst](#) during its recent state of emergency.

In response to an unprecedented snowfall, York Region swiftly deployed three tractors and snowblowers, along with skilled operators, to assist with clearing roads and vital pathways. Staff worked tirelessly to ensure safe passage for residents and even helped some who were stranded.

This effort highlighted the power of inter-municipal collaboration, with York Region joining other municipalities, including the City of Vaughan, to provide critical support. Council commended the team's professionalism and compassion, noting their actions as a proud example of York Region's commitment to helping communities in need.

December Observances

Regional Council recognized the following observances in December 2024:

- [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) – Tuesday, December 2, 2024
 - [International Volunteer Day](#) – Thursday, December 5, 2024
 - [International Human Rights Day](#) – Tuesday, December 10, 2024
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Next meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, January 30, 2025, 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 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

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