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Town of Aurora

## Memorandum

Mayor's Office

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**Re:** York Regional Council Highlights of February 27, 2025

**To:** Members of Council

**From:** Mayor Mrakas

**Date:** March 4, 2025

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### Recommendation

1. That the York Regional Council Highlights of February 27, 2025 be received for information.

# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Friday, February 28, 2025

## York Regional Council – Thursday, February 27, 2025

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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### Appreciation for winter storm response

York Regional Council extended gratitude to the dedicated roads crews, snowplow operators and municipal staff throughout York Region who worked around the clock to [clear roads and keep our communities safe](#) during recent snowstorms.

Winter weather presents significant challenges and York Region's roads teams play a critical role in ensuring residents, businesses and emergency services can travel safely throughout our communities. Their efforts in plowing, salting and maintaining roadways, often in difficult and hazardous conditions, are essential to keep York Region moving.

Regional Council recognized the long hours and hard work that goes into [every storm response](#) and extended thanks to all involved for their unwavering dedication and service.

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### York Region strengthens commitment to local media

Regional Council reaffirmed its [commitment to supporting local media](#), enhancing the Region's efforts to engage residents through trusted, community-based news sources. This approach helps ensure critical information about programs and services reaches diverse audiences across all nine cities and towns.

The local media landscape has evolved significantly in recent years, with shifts in digital consumption, changes to print media availability and the loss of some traditional community-based broadcast options. In response, York Region has been actively working with local media outlets to explore new advertising opportunities. The collaborations will help ensure the Region continues to leverage local news platforms effectively to inform and engage residents.

York Region remains committed to a balanced, data-driven advertising strategy that incorporates local media, national platforms and direct engagement to maximize reach and impact. By increasing investments in local media, Regional Council continues to strengthen partnership with trusted community news sources, reinforcing Council's dedication to keeping residents informed and connected.

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### Continued investments in social infrastructure support growing community needs

Regional Council [received an update](#) on key social infrastructure investments over the past two years, aimed at addressing growing community challenges. With targeted funding, the Region has expanded support systems and increased housing options to build stronger, safer communities.

Key achievements include:

- **Homelessness Support:** Additional seasonal shelter beds and year-round services for individuals experiencing homelessness
- **Housing Development:** Investments in Regional housing priorities, supporting two non-profit providers to expand affordable rental options
- **Community Services:** Funding to 31 community agencies delivering 47 essential services, including mental health support and assistance for victims of crime and human trafficking

In 2023, Regional Council [committed an additional \\$12.8 million annually](#) for the remainder of this term to support these initiatives. While most investments will continue, ongoing advocacy is needed to secure sustainable funding beyond 2026. These efforts align with the [York Region Strategic Plan](#) and key service plans, reinforcing the Region's commitment to long-term solutions.

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### **York Region enhances active transportation and accessibility**

York Region has consolidated its [Pedestrian and Cycling](#) and [Municipal Streetscape](#) Partnership Programs into the [Sustainable Transportation and Urban Design Partnership Program Policy](#) to expand flexibility for active transportation, streetscaping and accessibility projects.

Since 2006, the Region has invested over \$23 million in 96 cost-shared projects with local municipalities and partners, supporting sustainability and community improvements. In 2024, funding was provided for projects in the Towns of East Gwillimbury, Georgina and Newmarket, the Cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan and the York Region District School Board.

As part of the 2026 capital budget process, the program's budget is proposed to increase from \$1.5 million to \$2 million, marking its first expansion since inception.

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### **Amendments made to Water and Wastewater Master Plan support growth**

Regional Council has [endorsed amendments](#) to the [2022 Water and Wastewater Master Plan](#) to align with the *Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022* and ensure future servicing for the Towns of Aurora, East Gwillimbury and Newmarket.

The updates include 22 new wastewater projects within the York Durham Sewage System and support for Minister's Zoning Orders in the City of Markham and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, requiring additional Regional infrastructure.

The Master Plan, which guides growth to 2051, is primarily funded through development charges. York Region is updating its Development Charges Bylaw to address funding challenges due to accelerated housing targets. Learn more at [york.ca/waterplan](http://york.ca/waterplan)

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### **Developer-funded interim water infrastructure to support growth**

Regional Council [approved](#) Regional ownership of a developer-funded interim water pumping station to support land development between McCowan Road and Highway 48 in the City of Markham and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

This area, subject to Minister's Zoning Orders, is set to accommodate 16,000 residents and employment growth ahead of existing infrastructure plans. To bridge the gap, developers will fully fund and operate a temporary water pumping station until Regional infrastructure is in place.

York Region remains committed to safe drinking water and expanding housing supply. Learn more at [york.ca/waterplan](http://york.ca/waterplan)

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## **York Region and Town of Georgina finalize road transfers**

At the Town of Georgina's request, Regional Council has [approved the transfer of select road segments](#) between the Town and the Region, effective fall 2025, to improve maintenance and operational efficiency.

York Region will assume 24 lane kilometres of McCowan Road and Weir's Sideroad, while 12.3 lane kilometres of Woodbine Avenue, Park Road, Old Homestead Road and High Street will be transferred to the Town of Georgina.

The transfers align with the [Regional Road Assumption Policy](#), with an annual operating cost of \$70,000 to be addressed in the 2026 budget. Learn more at [york.ca/roads](http://york.ca/roads)

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## **Celebrating 25 Years of Paramedic Services**

Regional Council extended congratulations to [York Region Paramedic Services on its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary](#).

Originally established in 2000 as York Region Emergency Medical Services through the amalgamation of six ambulance services, York Region Paramedic Services has become a vital part of the community's health care system.

For more than 25 years, paramedics and support staff have provided life-saving care with compassion and dedication, making a profound impact on residents across the Region's nine cities and towns.

In celebrating this milestone, Regional Council extends its heartfelt gratitude to the paramedics and support staff for their unwavering service and commitment to our communities.

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## **York Region recognized as a Top Employer**

Regional Council proudly shared that The Regional Municipality of York has once again been recognized by Forbes as one of [Canada's Top Employers](#). This honour reflects the Region's commitment to fostering a workplace that values innovation, inclusion and excellence.

Regional Council also extended congratulations to the City of Markham on being named a Top Employer and extended best wishes to Mayor Scarpitti and City of Markham staff on this achievement.

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## **King City Public Library and Seniors Centre recognized with national honour**

Regional Council extended congratulations to Township of King Mayor Steve Pellegrini, King Council and staff on the King City Public Library and Seniors Centre receiving the prestigious [Governor General's Medal in Architecture](#).

This beautifully designed space serves as a true community hub, blending innovation and accessibility to support King residents of all ages.

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## **York Region explores potential involvement in 2030 Commonwealth Games bid**

Regional Council has [agreed](#) to take part in preliminary discussions regarding Ontario's possible Expression of Interest in hosting the 2030 Commonwealth Games.

York Region's participation is subject to involvement from other regional partners, including the City of Toronto, Durham Region, Halton Region, Peel Region and Simcoe County. York Region will engage in the initial Dialogue and Feasibility Phase with Commonwealth Sport Canada to discuss potential impacts and opportunities.

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## Passing of His Highness the Aga Khan

Regional Council [acknowledged the passing](#) of His Highness the Aga Khan on February 4, 2025. As a global humanitarian and spiritual leader, the Aga Khan dedicated his life to advancing education, health care and social development worldwide, including in Canada. Regional Council also extended condolences to all those in York Region and beyond, mourning this profound loss.

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## Passing of Madeleine Bodenstein

Regional Council extended condolences to the family and loved ones of former [York Regional Police Service Board member Madeleine Bodenstein](#), who passed away peacefully on January 29, 2025.

Madeleine was an enthusiastic advocate for community service, known for her warmth, humour and unwavering commitment. From her work with York Regional Police to her contributions to the Reena Foundation, she made a lasting impact on many lives.

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## Team Canada's Victory at the Four Nations Face-Off

Regional Council extended congratulations to Team Canada on their victory at the Four Nations Face-Off, marking another proud moment in Canadian hockey history.

A special congratulations was also shared with five players from York Region who contributed to this remarkable achievement: Connor McDavid (Town of Newmarket), Sam Bennett (Town of East Gwillimbury), Mitch Marner and Anthony Cirelli (City of Vaughan) and Jordan Binnington (City of Richmond Hill).

York Region is proud to have these talented athletes representing Canada on the world stage. Their hard work, dedication and passion continue to inspire our communities.

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## February Observances

Regional Council recognized the following observances in February 2025:

- [Black History Month](#)
  - [Chinese Heritage Month](#)
  - [White Cane Week](#) – February 2 to 8, 2025
  - [Family Day](#) – February 17, 2025
  - [Pink Shirt Day](#) – February 26, 2025
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## Next meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, March 20, 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](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 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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