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Town of Aurora  
**Memorandum**  
Mayor's Office

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**Re:** York Regional Council Highlights of March 20, 2025  
**To:** Members of Council  
**From:** Mayor Mrakas  
**Date:** April 8, 2025

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### **Recommendation**

- 1. That the York Regional Council Highlights of March 20, 2025 be received for information.**

# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Monday, April 7, 2025

## York Regional Council – Thursday, March 20, 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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### Taking action in response to tariffs

York Region is taking decisive steps to support local businesses and residents in response to U.S. and Chinese tariffs on Canadian imports and Canadian counter-tariffs. The Region launched [york.ca/tariffs](https://york.ca/tariffs), a dedicated resource providing information on economic impacts, business support programs and federal and provincial relief options. The site also amplifies [York Region's Shop Local campaign](#), urging residents to buy 'made in York Region' products and strengthen the local economy.

With approximately 2,900 companies exporting goods and services – 81% to U.S. markets – York Region's economy depends on fair and open trade. In 2023, these exports totalled \$14.6 billion. Unjustified tariffs and retaliatory counter-tariffs threaten local businesses with rising costs, supply chain disruptions and economic uncertainty. The Region is closely monitoring these impacts and working with industry leaders and all levels of government to ensure businesses have the tools they need to adapt.

Through the Business Recovery Support Partnership, York Region is collaborating with key stakeholders and municipal partners to provide advisory services, economic data and policy recommendations. York Region remains firm in its commitment to defending local businesses, protecting jobs and advocating for policies that support economic stability.

At the same time, York Region's Procurement Office is taking proactive measures to manage financial risks and minimize disruptions to operations. Council approved an increase in the [Low Dollar Value Procurement \(LDVP\)](#) threshold from \$100,000 to \$133,800, aligning with provincial trade agreements while providing greater flexibility in sourcing goods and services. These changes will also encourage purchasing from Canadian suppliers where applicable.

Additionally, York Region is advocating for the removal of trade barriers within Canada to promote the free movement of goods, services and labour. The Region will continue to monitor the economic landscape and work with partners at all levels of government to assess potential impacts while supporting businesses through recovery initiatives, research and advisory services and local shopping promotions

[York.ca/tariffs](https://york.ca/tariffs), which includes reports on procurement activities, will be updated with new resources as the situation evolves.

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## 2026 budget development timelines approved by Regional Council

York Regional Council has approved the [development timelines for the 2026 budget](#), to be tabled in October 2025 and presented to Regional Council for approval in November 2025. The budget reaffirms the 2025 outlook, with a 3.22% tax levy increase and a 1% Rapid Transit/Infrastructure Levy to support key infrastructure projects like bus rapid transit and community housing.

Regional staff will also ensure that in the event of an unexpected downturn in the economy, plans will be in place to prepare a recession contingency budget for 2026, benchmarked against past tax levy increases, to address potential economic challenges. The budget will outline funding for essential services, including policing, public health, paramedics, social services, roads, transit and water and wastewater services.

Aligned with the Fiscal Strategy, the budget will focus on financial sustainability, maintaining York Region's AAA credit rating and addressing development charge funding shortfalls resulting from Bill 23. As the final year of the 2023-2026 multi-year budget, it will serve as a foundation for future budgets while adapting to emerging needs and priorities.

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### York Region's Health and Well-being review

Regional Council received the [2024 York Region Health and Well-being Review](#), which highlights growing service demands and complex needs affecting residents. The report identifies key trends including population growth, shifting demographics, increasing income insecurity and rising mental health challenges, all of which are driving demand for Regional and community services.

In response, York Region has made strategic investments including adding 139 new emergency and transitional housing beds, supporting over 21,600 Ontario Works recipients and raising awareness of income as a key factor in food access. Regional Council has also committed an additional [\\$12.8 million annually](#) for social infrastructure to enhance community partnerships and service integration.

Despite these efforts, demand for services continues to outpace available resources. With nearly 19.4% of York Region households experiencing food insecurity and an increasing need for community housing, sustained funding and collaboration with senior levels of government remains critical. York Region continues to advocate for a sustainable housing model, increased social assistance rates and policy adjustments to ensure long-term support for residents.

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### York Region remains prepared for emergencies

Regional Council received the [Emergency Management Program Annual Compliance Review](#), confirming York Region met all *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* requirements in 2024. The report includes revisions to York Region's Emergency Management Plan, an expanded Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and continued support for the northern six municipalities.

In partnership with local municipalities and York Regional Police, York Region reviewed its Critical Infrastructure Database and identified the risks most likely to impact the Region, including:

- Infectious Diseases
- Winter Weather/Ice Storms
- Cyber Attacks
- Tornadoes
- Electrical Energy Outages

York Region conducted a full-scale emergency exercise in collaboration with Peel Region, launched new public education initiatives reaching over 20,000 residents and provided emergency preparedness training to more than 575 Regional staff and partners.

Residents can learn more about their role in emergency preparedness, including how to create a 72-hour emergency kit and personal emergency plan, at [york.ca/BePrepared](http://york.ca/BePrepared)

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### **York Region explores opportunities for 2030 Commonwealth Games**

Regional Council has expressed interest in exploring opportunities to host sporting events as part of the 2030 Commonwealth Games. Through a [motion passed](#) on February 27, 2025, and a [memo received](#) on March 20, 2025, York Region has affirmed its willingness to participate in a potential Province-led Expression of Interest, recognizing the economic, social and cultural benefits such an event could bring to the community.

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### **Change to Regional Fire Coordinator and Alternates**

Effective January 14, 2025, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Fire Chief Bill Snowball has assumed the role of [Primary Regional Fire Coordinator](#) following the retirement of Chief Jim Wall from King City Fire and Emergency Services.

City of Vaughan Fire and Rescue Services Deputy Chief James Arnold has transitioned to First Alternate Regional Fire Coordinator, while Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Deputy Fire Chief Mike Doyle has been appointed as the Second Alternate Regional Fire Coordinator.

The positions of Regional Fire Coordinator and Alternate Regional Fire Coordinator have been in place since 1971 to coordinate fire aid within York Region. The roles are appointment by the Provincial Office of the Fire Marshall and Emergency Management.

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### **Federal leadership transition**

Regional Council extended congratulations to the [Right Honourable Mark Carney](#) on becoming Canada's 24<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister and welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with his government to support York Region's growing communities and economy.

Council also expressed gratitude to former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for his years of public service and his government's partnership on critical priorities, including infrastructure, housing and economic development.

York Region remains committed to working with all levels of government to advance key priorities that benefit residents and businesses, particularly during times of economic uncertainty.

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### **Ontario's renewed provincial leadership**

Regional Council extended congratulations to [Premier Doug Ford and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party](#) on forming their third straight majority government.

With strong York Region representation in the Premier's Executive Council, Council recognized and congratulated:

- The Hon. Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
- The Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
- The Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Energy and Mines

- The Hon. Caroline Mulroney, President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Francophone Affairs
- The Hon. Michael Tibollo, Associate Attorney General

Regional Council also congratulated all 10 of York Region's re-elected MPPs and expressed its commitment to working with all provincial partners to advance priorities that support growth, infrastructure and essential services for residents.

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### **March Observances**

Regional Council recognized the following observances in March 2025:

- [National Social Worker Month](#)
  - [Red Cross Month](#)
  - [Employee Appreciation Day](#) – March 7, 2025
  - [International Women's Day](#) – March 8, 2025
  - [Nowruz \(Persian New Year\)](#) – March 20, 2025
  - [International Day of Forests](#) – March 21, 2025
  - [World Down Syndrome Day](#) – March 21, 2025
  - [Earth Hour](#) – March 22, 2025
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### **Next meeting of York Regional Council**

A Special Meeting of York Regional Council to discuss the Development Charges Bylaw has been scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2025, at 9 a.m. The next regular meeting of York Regional Council will be held on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 9 a.m. in the York Region Administrative Centre Council Chambers, located at 17250 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket. Both meetings 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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