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Town of Aurora

Memorandum

Mayor's Office

Re: York Regional Council Highlights of April 24, 2025

To: Members of Council

From: Mayor Mrakas

Date: May 13, 2025

Recommendation

1. That the York Regional Council Highlights of April 24, 2025 be received for information.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Tuesday, May 6, 2025

York Regional Council – Thursday, April 24, 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

York Region addressing and analyzing tariff implications

The Regional Municipality of York is working to keep the local economy strong, continue supporting businesses and ensuring long-term prosperity of communities amid the [ongoing response to tariffs](#).

York Region's response to tariff implications includes actions in the following areas:

- **Research and Analysis:** Ongoing research and data collection to understand impacts of tariffs on the economy and businesses and develop targeted actions
- **Business Advisory and Support:** Collaboration with economic development stakeholders, including local municipalities, [York Small Business Enterprise Centre](#), Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, academic and innovation partners to provide business advisory consultation, expert workshops, trade diversification activities and other business supports
- **Business Communications:** Provide up-to-date information and resources to impacted businesses, including outreach through [York Link digital channels](#)

The *Business Recovery Support Partnership* has been reestablished to provide dialogue among York Region's Economic Development Offices, Chambers of Commerce and other key stakeholders. This partnership, first established during the COVID-19 pandemic, shares information and supports collaborative tariff-focused initiatives while ensuring consistent communication with the business community.

As Ontario's third largest manufacturing hub, the tariff conflict has potential impacts for many of the 2,900 exporters and 9,000 importers across several manufacturing industries in York Region, with 12% of total jobs in companies identifying as exporters.

Other levels of government, [including York Region](#), have introduced procurement amendments to support the Canadian economy. The economic landscape will continue to be monitored as circumstances evolve.

Visit york.ca/Tariffs for more information.

York Region taking action to help address housing challenges

Regional Council [reviewed several actions](#) aimed at helping address York Region's housing challenges at a Special Council Meeting held on Thursday, April 3, 2025.

Along with strong advocacy for funding from the federal and provincial governments on housing initiatives, Regional Council approved immediate action to defer development charges on highrise buildings for up to four years, with no interest being charged for the first two years. Development charges for low rise buildings will also be deferred, interest free, until the building permit is issued. These incentives are now in effect at the Region.

An additional report on further development charge incentives and advocacy measures will be presented to Council in June 2025. This report will include options such as deferred charges for non-luxury rentals and a development charge-equivalent rebate for first-time homebuyers subject to funding from Provincial and Federal governments.

Visit york.ca/HousingAffordability for more details on how York Region is working to support housing affordability initiatives.

Committee of Council established to advance priorities addressing housing and homelessness

Regional Council approved establishing a [Housing and Homelessness Committee](#) to guide development of the next 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan, including increasing supply of emergency, transitional, affordable and community housing.

Members of the Housing and Homelessness Committee are comprised of Regional Council members and include:

- Eric Jolliffe, York Region Chairman and CEO
- Frank Scarpitti, City of Markham Mayor
- Steven Del Duca, City of Vaughan Mayor
- David West, City of Richmond Hill Mayor
- John Taylor, Town of Newmarket Mayor
- Tom Mrakas, Town of Aurora Mayor
- Iain Lovatt, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor
- Margaret Quirk, Town of Georgina Mayor
- Virginia Hackson, Town of East Gwillimbury Mayor
- Steve Pellegrini, Township of King Mayor

A Chair and Vice-Chair will be selected at the first Housing and Homelessness Committee meeting, scheduled for Thursday, May 15, 2025, immediately following the Housing York Inc. Board of Directors meeting.

This Committee will help prioritize and recommend solutions with a focus on the Region's Service Manager responsibilities in the housing and homelessness system to guide development for the next 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan. This includes accelerating new supply of emergency, transitional, community and affordable housing and support coordination and collaboration at the municipal level.

Committee recommendations to advance the Region's housing and homelessness priorities will be reported to Regional Council for approval.

For more information on housing supports and plans, visit york.ca/housing

York Region achieves perfect water quality scores for 2024, 100% in all Ministry inspections

Regional Council received the [2024 Drinking Water Systems Memo](#) sharing York Region scored 100% in Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks drinking water system inspections.

Under the [Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002](#), York Region reports annually on quality and quantity of drinking water produced. York Region executes a rigorous approach to protect drinking water which includes 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. Spending \$1 on bottled water can buy the equivalent of over 600 bottles worth of tap water. Details of York Region water systems and drinking water quality can be viewed through the online reporting tool at york.ca/drinkingwater

York Region Transit reports record high ridership

Regional Council received the [2024 York Region Transit \(YRT\) System Performance Report](#), highlighting outstanding ridership levels, reliable services and innovative achievements throughout 2024.

2024 YRT System Performance highlights include:

- Ridership reached 23.7 million, a 12% increase from 2023, driven by more weekday school travel and weekend leisure trips
- Ridership on [YRT On-Request](#) and [Mobility On-Request](#) Paratransit services increased by 25% to 133,244 and 416,996 riders, respectively
- Despite changing travel patterns and increasing travel demand, YRT maintained top reliability; schedules were adjusted and on-time performance targets were met, reaching 93% for conventional YRT service, 96% for [Viva](#) and 93% for On-Request
- Key initiatives were delivered, including 108 service improvements and implementing technology and asset management programs to provide customers with safe, reliable transit services
- The provincial [One Fare Program](#) eliminated double fares between YRT and TTC, resulting in 7.64 million cross-boundary trips (32.3% of YRT ridership)
- YRT received \$15.87 million in reimbursements from the Province to offset the free transfers
- Cross-boundary trips increased by 27.6% as One Fare makes travel simpler and more affordable

Regional Council continues to advocate for continuation of the One Fare Program and funding beyond the initial 2-year term, which ends in March 2026.

For major YRT service alerts, news, travel tips and other relevant transit information, call 1-866-MOVE-YRT (668-3978), visit yrt.ca or follow YRT on social media. You can also check out yrt.ca/livechat to chat live with a YRT Customer Service Representative.

York Region ensures safety and reliability of infrastructure assets, enhancing quality of life

Regional Council received the [2025 Corporate Asset Management Progress Report](#), providing an update on the condition of York Region's infrastructure assets, including buildings, facilities, roads, fleet vehicles, information technology and living assets like street trees.

Key highlights in the report include:

- Regional assets have an estimated replacement value of \$28.8 billion, an increase of \$3.5 billion from 2022; a 14% increase due to how asset costs are calculated and inflation
- More than 87% of the Region's capital plan was successfully delivered
- Over 90% of the Region's assets are in fair or better condition, ensuring continued high-quality service delivery

- Projected budget to meet asset needs over the next 10 years (2023 to 2032) is \$17.8 billion; this includes capital costs for existing assets (\$3.8 billion), growth-related assets (\$4.6 billion) and operating costs for both (\$9.4 billion)
- Water and wastewater assets contribute to 46.5% of asset replacement costs, Transportation Services assets contribute 34.5% and other service assets are 19%

The full report and 2024 Corporate Asset Management Plan is available on the Region's [Corporate Asset Management web page](#).

Integrated Management System drives improvement and mitigates risk

York Region's [2024 Integrated Management System Memo for Water, Wastewater and Waste Management](#) outlines the system's effectiveness and summarizes strategies taken to mitigate risk when delivering services. With the Integrated Management System, York Region reduces impacts on the environment, supports quality drinking water and prepares for emergencies.

Highlights from the 2024 Integrated Management System include:

- Conducting emergency preparedness testing, with simulations and tabletop exercises for water, wastewater and waste management staff to improve response protocols
- Completing Drinking Water Quality Management Standard risk re-assessment, evaluating and identifying control measures related to source water, quality monitoring and cybersecurity
- Facilitating workshops following minor operational incidents, identifying actions for improvement
- Reviewing and confirmed the system's adequacy, suitability, roles/responsibilities and effectiveness

York Region is committed to using a systematic method for risk mitigation and continuous improvement. External auditors have praised the system for being mature and having well-established processes. For more information, please see [the memo](#).

2024 Public Works research and innovation update

York Region Public Works' [research and innovation program](#) uses research results and innovative pilot projects to best address business needs and drive efficiencies.

In 2024, Public Works advanced more than 30 initiatives, achieving cost-savings, safer public spaces, process improvements and enhanced customer experience approaches to optimize community health and resident well-being.

Research focus areas based on York Region's [Corporate Strategic Priorities](#) include:

- **Economic Vitality:** Taking a circular economy approach to assess opportunities for reducing, reusing and recovering resources from waste generated by the Public Works department
- **Good Governance:** Optimizing charging and battery life of electric fleet vehicles to reduce costs
- **Sustainable Environment:** Assessing best options for reducing or eliminating carbon emissions from wastewater systems
- **Healthy Communities:** Using smart sensor technology to assess local forest trail use and inform maintenance needs for residents

Through strong partnerships with academics, industry experts and associations, conservation authorities and other utilities, York Region leverages funding and expertise to develop innovative solutions to improve service delivery.

A list of research and innovation highlights and projects is available through the [2024 Public Works Research and Innovation Update](#).

Strengthening healthy communities: York Region Public Health 2024 Update

Regional Council received an update on York Region's dedication to [maintaining the health of residents](#) by preventing disease, promoting healthy living and addressing factors that influence healthy communities.

York Region Public Health offers 36 programs and services aimed at enhancing community health and addressing health inequities. Our collaboration with community and health sector partners helps ensure we meet the diverse needs of our residents.

Operational highlights in 2024 include:

- Distributing 486,000 vaccine doses through community health care providers and public health clinics
- Delivering dental screenings to 39,599 students during the 2023-2024 school year
- Conducting 21,568 food premise inspections
- Providing 11,287 sexual health clinic appointments
- Treating 107,770 street and environmentally sensitive catch basins with larvicide to prevent the spread of mosquitoes carrying West Nile disease

Changing health trends in 2024, including rising mental health challenges and infectious diseases, have increased demand for public health services. In 2025, York Region Public Health remains focused on immunization, disease preparedness and promoting health equity.

Legislated by the [Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990](#), Public Health is governed by Regional Council in its role as Board of Health and operates mandated programs with a cost-share requirement of 75% provincial funding and 25% Regional funding. Regional Council has supported supplemental funding, contributing closer to 46% in 2024, and continues to advocate for more consistent and sustained funding to meet growing resident needs.

For more information on the programs and services provided by Public Health, visit york.ca/WeArePublicHealth

Provincial funding shortfall of human and health-related programs reaches \$77 million in 2025

Regional Council received an update on [Provincial Funding Shortfall of Human and Health-related Programs and Services](#). The report outlines costs to York Region to deliver four provincially mandated programs: Homelessness Community Programs, Long-Term Care, Paramedic emergency services and Public Health. It is estimated the shortfall in funding from the province in 2025 will be \$77 million.

Although there have been funding increases from senior levels of government in some programs, increases have not kept pace with growing costs such as inflation and increased complexity of client needs. Increasing costs are adding an extra burden on the Regional tax levy to supplement funding. Between 2022 and 2025, more than \$219 million of tax levy is estimated to be used to address provincial funding shortfalls.

York Region's four provincially mandated human and health programs experiencing a shortfall:

- [Homelessness Community Programs](#): Helps people who are either at-risk of or experiencing homelessness to find or keep housing, with a \$24.5 million shortfall in 2025

- [Long-Term Care](#): Operates two homes where residents receive 24-hour nursing and personal care, with a \$27.1 million funding shortfall in 2025
- [Paramedics](#): Responds to emergency medical calls, delivers lifesaving treatment and stabilizes monitors and transports patients to hospital, with a \$4.6 million shortfall in 2025
- [Public Health](#): Delivers 36 programs and services to monitor and assess the health of communities, promote healthy behaviours, policies and environments and prevent diseases and keep our communities safe, with a \$20.7 million shortfall in 2025

Provincial funding formulas vary across programs and ministries. Each of the four programs listed have different funding formulas. However, in all cases, provincial funding received by York Region is not keeping pace.

Continued funding for Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital

Regional Council [approved continued funding](#) for Mackenzie Health - Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital in the City of Vaughan.

The amount of the financial commitment for capital projects at local hospitals is tied to achieving Paramedic Services off-load targets of 30 minutes or less per patient. In 2024, the hospital met the required target with an average transfer of care time of 22 minutes per transport and will receive approximately \$7.3 million of funding in 2025.

While commitments have been fully funded at other local hospitals, funding will continue for Mackenzie Health - Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital.

To date, York Region has paid \$109.2 million to the Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital project. Funding support will continue through to 2023, with an estimated remaining contribution of \$45 million. Actual contributions may vary based on assessment growth and may be reduced if off-load delay targets are not achieved.

York Region approved Municipal Diversity Plan for Police Service Board

Regional Council has approved the [Municipal Diversity Plan for Appointments to the York Regional Police Service Board \(YRPSB\)](#), aligning with the [Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019](#). Effective April 1, 2025, the plan ensures that Council-appointed members to the YRPSB reflect the diverse population of York Region.

The [YRPSB comprises seven members](#), including provincial and municipal appointees. Under the new plan, the selection for community member appointees will involve broad advertising of vacancies, particularly targeting agencies and organizations serving diverse communities. A selection committee of Council members and/or staff will review applications to recommend candidates to Council. For Council appointees, a streamlined process will be implemented where members are notified of vacancies and invited to express interest.

This initiative builds upon York Region's ongoing commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, ensuring that governance of policing services is representative and responsive to the community it serves.

Ice Storm cleanup and support

Regional Council recognized the tremendous efforts of staff and the community in responding to the recent ice storms across York Region and Ontario. The storms highlighted the strength and resilience of the Region, with neighbours helping neighbours and local and regional crews working around the clock to restore services and support affected areas.

Council extended its gratitude to Public Works front-line workers for ensuring services remained operational and to the teams supporting the Town of Georgina in power restoration efforts. Gratitude was also given to local municipal staff and York Region Paramedics, who provided vital emergency care to neighboring communities. Special recognition was given to the coordination between the Region and the Town of Georgina, with Emergency Social Services activated to support vulnerable residents through 24-hour reception, wellness checks and additional resources.

Council expressed deep appreciation for the swift, collaborative response that ensured the community's needs were met during this challenging time.

Regional Council celebrates Canadian Public Health Week.

Regional Council recognized April 7 to 11, 2025, as [Canadian Public Health Week](#), aligning with this year's national theme, *Celebrating Prevention, Protection and Health Promotion*.

In recognizing the week, Council extended appreciation to York Region's dedicated public health professionals for their tireless efforts to safeguard and enhance the health of the Region's residents and communities.

The work of [public health](#) encompasses a broad range of initiatives, including immunization programs, infectious disease prevention, health education, child and family health and promoting healthy lifestyles. These efforts are vital in building a healthier population and ensuring the well-being of residents across York Region.

Celebrating Public Works 'People, Purpose, Presence'

Regional Council recognized May 18 to 24, 2025, as [National Public Works Week](#). This year's theme, "*People, Purpose, Presence*," celebrates dedicated and committed professionals who work with the purpose of providing high-quality public works services to residents and businesses across York Region.

As part of the National Public Works Week celebrations, York Region will host several in-person opportunities 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 24, 2025, at the [York Region Public Works Operations Centre at 80 and 90 Bales Drive East in the Town of East Gwillimbury](#).

Public Works services include water and wastewater, forestry, roads, transit and waste management. A complete list of 2024 Public Works highlights is available [online](#).

For more information and event details, visit york.ca/PublicWorks.

Passing of Pope Francis

Regional Council acknowledged the [passing of His Holiness Pope Francis](#), extending condolences to Catholics in York Region and around the world. In recognizing Pope Francis, Council reflected on his legacy as a transformative leader whose humility, compassion and unwavering commitment to social justice and unity left a lasting impact on the global community.

Flags lowered to half-mast on National Day of Mourning

Regional Council recognized Monday, April 28, 2025, as [National Day of Mourning](#) and honoured the workers who have died, been injured or become ill as a result of workplace incidents.

Flags at all Regional facilities were lowered on Monday, April 28, 2028, and residents and staff were encouraged to observe a moment of silence at 11 a.m. This act of remembrance reinforces Council's commitment to protecting worker health and safety across the region.

By recognizing National Day of Mourning, York Region continues to promote a strong culture of workplace safety and collective responsibility.

York Region recognizes Taylor Pendrith's Masters Tournament debut

Regional Council proudly recognized the City of Richmond Hill's Taylor Pendrith who made his debut at the 2025 Masters Tournament in April 2025. This exciting milestone was a proud moment for Taylor, his family and the entire York Region community, and Regional Council extended its heartfelt congratulations as he competed on the world stage.

March Observances

Regional Council recognized the following observances in April 2025:

- [National Volunteer Week](#) – April 27 to May 3, 2025
 - [World Autism Day](#) – April 2, 2025
 - [World Health Day](#) – April 7, 2025
 - [Passover](#) – April 12 to 20, 2025
 - [Easter](#) – April 18 to 20, 2025
 - [Theravāda](#) – April 13
 - [Vaisakhi](#) – April 14, 2025
 - [Festival of Ridván](#) – April 20
 - [Earth Day](#) – April 22, 2025
 - [Administrative Professionals Day](#) – April 23, 2025
 - [Holocaust Memorial Day](#) – April 24
 - [International Guide Dog Day](#) – April 30
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Next meeting of York Regional Council

The next Meeting of York Regional Council will be held on Thursday, May 22, 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

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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