



100 John West Way  
Aurora, Ontario  
L4G 6J1  
(905) 727-3123  
aurora.ca

Town of Aurora

# Memorandum

Mayor's Office

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**Re:** York Regional Council Highlights of March 21, 2024

**To:** Members of Council

**From:** Mayor Mrakas

**Date:** April 2, 2024

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## Recommendation

1. That the York Regional Council Highlights of March 21, 2024, be received for information.

# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Thursday, March 28, 2024

York Regional Council – Thursday, March 21, 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 Vision Zero Traveller Safety Plan aims to reduce severe collisions**

York Regional Council approved the multi-year [York Region Vision Zero Traveller Safety Plan](#) to reduce severe collisions and create safer traveller experiences.

The Traveller Safety Plan is driven by the international initiative [Vision Zero](#) and developed using global road safety best practices to reduce severe collisions, defined as collisions resulting in serious injury or death. To support this vision, a short-term target to reduce severe collisions by 10% within five years (2024 to 2028) has been set.

The plan recommends more than 100 countermeasures, including engineering and technology solutions, public engagement, education and heightened enforcement to reduce risk of collision. Specific measures include automated speed enforcement, intersection improvements, pedestrian and cycling measures, red light cameras, roundabouts, school zone speed reductions and speed feedback boards.

Development of this plan and its subsequent success requires on-going collaboration, resources, monitoring, analysis and evaluation to improve safety and change behaviours.

Data is analyzed yearly to identify trends and help inform decisions on where improvements are needed. Data will be used to track progress and report back to Regional Council on the plan's work and success. Learn more at [york.ca/trafficsafety](https://york.ca/trafficsafety)

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## **Development of York Region's 2025 to 2035 Housing and Homelessness Plan underway**

Regional Council received an update on the development of York Region's next [10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan](#).

Expected to be brought forward to Council in 2025, the plan to help address needs across the Region's housing continuum will be informed by work underway on the [Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan](#), [Community Housing Development Master Plan](#) and [Homelessness Services System Plan](#).

More information can be found at [york.ca/housing](https://york.ca/housing) and [Council declaring housing affordability crisis](#).

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## **Memorandum of Agreement signed to advance wastewater energy transfer project**

York Region and [Markham District Energy Inc.](#), a company wholly owned by City of Markham, signed a [Memorandum of Agreement](#) to advance a wastewater energy transfer project in the City of Markham.

By connecting to York Region's York Durham Sewage System wastewater main at 8100 Warden Avenue in the City of Markham, Markham District Energy will transfer energy from wastewater instead of consuming natural gas and electricity, for use in buildings connected to its system.

This innovative partnership will enable a significant reduction in natural gas consumption and associated greenhouse gas emissions by extracting heat from wastewater in colder months and injecting heat into wastewater in warmer months. This project supports York Region's [Climate Change Action Plan](#) goals and works towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

As the largest wastewater energy transfer project in North America, annual community greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by up to 30,000 tonnes, equivalent to annual emissions from 5,500 cars or greenhouse gas absorption by a forest 15% the size of the City of Markham.

The agreement proposes a 30-year contract term. Markham District Energy is responsible for project costs. Anticipated ongoing Regional operating costs are proposed to be recovered through an energy transfer fee.

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### **Four-year plan outlines a place to thrive for newcomers**

Regional Council has approved [A Place to Thrive: York Region's 2024 to 2027 Plan for Newcomer Inclusion](#). The plan presents a vision for how York Region will continue to collectively support newcomer health and well-being, build welcoming communities and promote equitable and prosperous economic pathways for diverse groups of newcomers.

According to 2021 Census data, newcomers represented more than 84% of York Region's population growth between 2016 and 2021 (53,495 out of 63,455 new residents). York Region also welcomes temporary residents, such as international students, foreign workers, those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine and asylum seekers, many of whom transition to permanent residency.

Since 2009, York Region has hosted a Local Immigration Partnership, a federally funded, community-based collaborative, engaging local partners in developing welcoming and inclusive communities. Like other Local Immigration Partnerships, York Region does not provide direct newcomer services. The Region is funded to support research, lead strategic planning and improve coordination of services facilitating newcomer settlement and inclusion.

A Newcomer Inclusion Table and its working groups, [comprised of Council-appointed members and representation from diverse newcomer-serving sectors and newcomer residents](#), advise the Local Immigration Partnership on the development and implementation of a newcomer plan.

More information on the Local Immigration Partnership is available at [york.ca/newcomerservices](http://york.ca/newcomerservices)

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### **Navigating forward together, planning to support seniors**

Regional Council approved the [2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors: Navigating Forward Together](#). This plan builds on the success of the 2016 strategy and identifies new actions to further foster healthy aging and support seniors to age in the right place of their own preferences, circumstances and care needs.

Four priorities identified include:

- Keep seniors healthier longer
- Support seniors to live in age-friendly, complete communities
- Connect seniors and caregivers to the right services at the right times
- Improve coordination, organization and planning of services for seniors

While many seniors remain healthy, active and connected to their communities, some require additional levels of care and support. The plan aims to support seniors through improved access to health and program information, service integration, enhanced system navigation and collaborative system planning and shared service innovation.

The plan identifies areas requiring urgent attention and investment from federal and provincial governments to advance seniors' health and well-being.

Bi-annual progress reports are planned in 2026 and 2028, with a review and plan update presented to Council for consideration in 2028.

For more information, visit [york.ca/PlanForSeniors](https://york.ca/PlanForSeniors)

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### **Update on provincial highway projects in York Region**

Regional Council received an [update](#) on provincial highway projects in York Region, including the Bradford Bypass (Highway 400-404 Link) and Highway 413.

[Bradford Bypass](#) is a future 16-kilometre highway connecting Highway 400 in Simcoe County to Highway 400 in York Region. The recommended plan includes three proposed interchanges in York Region at Bathurst Street, 2nd Concession and Leslie Street. Construction is anticipated to start in 2024.

[Highway 413](#) is a proposed 52-kilometre highway from Highway 400 between Kirby Road and King-Vaughan Road in the City of Vaughan to the Highway 401/407 ETR interchange connecting York Region, Peel Region and Halton Region. Proposed interchanges in York Region are at Highway 427, Highway 27 and Weston Road and possibly at Pine Valley Drive.

Supporting robust highway networks move people, goods and services, helping to achieve Ontario's [Growth Plan](#) population and employment objectives. Learn more about York Region's transportation network at [york.ca/transportation](https://york.ca/transportation)

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### **York Region calls for re-assessment of Housing Accelerator Fund applications**

Regional Council passed a [resolution](#) calling on the federal government to re-assess Housing Accelerator Fund applications for the Region's northern municipalities who were denied funding.

Introduced by the federal government in 2023, the Housing Accelerator Fund is a \$4 billion application-based program which provides financing for local municipal governments to support construction of new housing.

Through this application process, the City of Markham, City of Richmond Hill and City of Vaughan have been allocated a combined \$148 million in funding. However, the five northern towns who applied for funding were declined.

As one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada, York Region's population is anticipated to grow to more than two million people by 2051. Approximately 30% of this growth is planned for the Region's northern six municipalities. In calling on the federal government to reconsider these applications, Regional Council acknowledges the need for long-term predictable federal funding to build the housing-enabling infrastructure needed to meet both federal and provincial housing targets.

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### **Mayor Hackson welcomed back to Regional Council**

On Thursday, March 7, 2024, York Region Chairman and CEO Wayne Emmerson welcomed [Town of East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson back to Regional Council](#) following a brief leave of absence.

At the same meeting, Chairman Emmerson extended appreciation and thanks to Town of East Gwillimbury Councillors' Brian Johns and Scott Crone for their participation at Regional Council in Mayor Hackson's absence.

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### **York Region mourns the passing of The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney**

Regional Council [extended deepest condolences](#) to the family, friends and colleagues of The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, Canada's 18<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister, who passed away on Thursday, February 29, 2024.

As Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney was renowned for his ability to forge relationships with those from all walks of life, including world leaders and those living in small communities. He introduced major economic reforms, undertook constitutional changes and established Canada's first free trade agreement with the United States.

In tribute, Regional Council held a moment of silence at the March 7, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting. Flags at York Region facilities have been lowered in his honour.

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### **Condolences on passing of Benny Del Duca**

Regional Council shared condolences to City of Vaughan Mayor Steven Del Duca on the passing of his father, Benny Del Duca, on Monday, March 4, 2024. Regional Council offered sympathies to the entire Del Duca family.

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### **Extending condolences to victims of Tennessee plane crash**

Regional Council [extended condolences](#) to the friends and loved ones of King Township's Dotsenko family, who were the victims of a deadly plane crash in Nashville Tennessee on March 5, 2024.

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### **Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers**

Regional Council extended congratulations to five exceptional York Region residents from the City of Markham, City of Vaughan and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville who were recognized with the [Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers](#).

The accomplishments of these individuals range from supporting homelessness initiatives and fundraising for pediatric cataract surgeries to fighting gender inequality and tutoring newcomers and refugees.

The Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers represents the highest honour bestowed by the province for young people between the ages of 15 and 24. The medal represents recognition of outstanding contributions through volunteering in their communities and throughout the province.

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### **Celebrating the diverse heritage of our residents**

Regional Council recognized the month of March as Irish Heritage, Persian Heritage and Bangladeshi Heritage month in York Region.

In recognizing these heritage months, Regional Council acknowledges the [diversity of our communities](#) and the unique contributions each of these cultures make to the economic, social and cultural fabric of York Region.

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### **Nutrition Month**

Regional Council recognized March as [Nutrition Month](#) in York Region, acknowledging the important role Public Health plays in promoting healthy eating, good nutrition and access to healthy food.

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## **Developmental Disabilities Month**

Regional Council recognized March as Developmental Disabilities month, which celebrates the ways in which people of all abilities come together to form strong, diverse communities.

This special awareness month seeks to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life, as well as awareness of the barriers that people with disabilities still face in connecting to the communities in which they live.

Through the [York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee](#) and [Early Intervention Services](#), York Region continues to work to help all residents reach their full potential by removing barriers to programs and services and providing cost-free supports to children with disabilities and their families.

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## **Red Cross Month**

Regional Council recognized March as [Red Cross Month](#), acknowledging York Region's long-standing partnership with the Canadian Red Cross.

Through [Emergency Social Services](#), several agreements are in place for the Red Cross to provide immediate and short-term services to residents impacted by an emergency or disaster.

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## **Social Work Week**

Regional Council recognized March 4 to 18, 2024, as [Social Work Week](#) in York Region, acknowledging the critical role of social workers in supporting the well-being, health, safety and stability of people across our communities.

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## **Neurodiversity Celebration Week**

Regional Council recognized [Neurodiversity Celebration Week](#) from March 18 to 24, 2024, a worldwide initiative that aims to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological difference.

Neurodiversity Celebration Week is an opportunity to transform how neurodivergent individuals are perceived and supported by recognizing the many talents and advantages of being neurodivergent, while creating more inclusive and equitable communities that celebrate everyone.

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## **Employee Appreciation Day**

Regional Council recognized Friday, March 1, 2024, as Employee Appreciation Day, thanking Regional and municipal staff for their hard work and dedication to the health, safety and well-being of all York Region residents.

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## **International Women's Day**

Regional Council recognized Friday, March 8, 2024, as [International Women's Day](#) and acknowledged the many women, girls and gender diverse individuals who make York Region a great place to live, work and visit.

Observed annually, International Women's Day is a global initiative to celebrate the outstanding social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women around the world.

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## **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

Regional Council recognized Thursday, March 21, 2024, [as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#).

This United Nations observance calls on governments and citizens around the world to mobilize for equality and dignity and to find ways to fight racism and racial discrimination.

York Region and Regional Council are committed to building welcoming and inclusive communities for all residents and remain dedicated to addressing issues of racism and discrimination in our communities and workplaces.

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### **World Down Syndrome Day**

Regional Council recognized Thursday, March 21, 2024, as [World Down Syndrome Day](#) in York Region.

For more than 27 years, the [Down Syndrome Association of York Region](#) has promoted a positive image of people with Down Syndrome as being valuable community members. On World Down Syndrome Day, and all year long, York Region supports communities that are welcoming and inclusive and where people of all abilities can reach their full potential.

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### **World Water Day**

Regional Council recognized Friday, March 22, 2024, as [World Water Day](#), an annual celebration of water and a reminder that safe and reliable water sources are key to healthy and thriving communities.

York Region has long been a leader in protecting water sources, meeting regulated treatment processes and delivering 325 million litres of clean, safe drinking water to more than 1.2 million residents every day.

This World Water Day, residents are encouraged to take a moment to [learn where your water comes from](#).

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### **York Region participates in Earth Hour**

On Saturday, March 23, 2024, York Region joined residents and businesses around the world and turned off all non-essential lights at the following Regional facilities for [Earth Hour](#):

- York Region Administrative Centre, 17250 Yonge Street, Town of Newmarket
- 17150 Yonge Street, Town of Newmarket
- York Region South Services Centre, 50 High Tech Road, City of Richmond Hill
- York Region Transportation Operations Centre, 90 Bales Drive, Town of East Gwillimbury
- York Region Community and Health Services, 9060 Jane Street, City of Vaughan

By going an hour without power, this global event inspired residents across our communities make small adjustments throughout the year to reduce energy consumption for the benefit of our planet.

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### **York Region celebrates the Hindu festival of colour and spring**

Regional Council recognized Monday, March 25, 2024, as the celebration of Holi and extended best wishes to all in the community celebrating the Hindu festival of colours and spring.

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### **York Region celebrates the Easter holidays**

Regional Council extended warmest wishes to residents across our communities celebrating Easter from Friday, March 29 to Sunday, March 31, 2024.

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### **Next meeting of York Regional Council**

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, April 25, 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](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 more than 1.2 million residents and 55,600 businesses with more than

615,000 employees. More information about the Region's key service areas is available at [york.ca/regionalservices](http://york.ca/regionalservices)

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**Media Contact:** Kylie-Anne Doerner, Corporate Communications, The Regional Municipality of York  
Phone: 1-877-464-9675, ext. 71232 Cell: 289-716-6035 [kylie-anne.doerner@york.ca](mailto:kylie-anne.doerner@york.ca)