

The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole
Finance and Administration
May 13, 2021

Report of the Chief Administrative Officer

2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan Year 2 (2020) Progress Report

1. Recommendations

The Regional Clerk circulate this report to local municipalities.

2. Summary

This report provides a summary on the progress made in 2020, year two of the [2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan](#).

Key Points:

- In 2020, 23 of 31 (74%) of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* performance measures were trending in the desired direction (see Attachment 1). While most performance measures are trending in the right direction, the Region's Strategic Plan progress reporting is exception-based and provides explanations for performance measure variances. This method of reporting is rooted in the Region's value of accountability towards achieving Council's Vision of Strong, Caring, Safe Communities
- The Strategic Plan was developed to withstand changing operating environments by anchoring into core services to ensure the Region continues to meet its legislative obligations while remaining flexible and responsive to residents' needs. York Region accomplished a great deal in 2020 despite COVID-19's impacts. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, core services the Region provides did not change, although how the Region provides them in our changing operating environment may have changed, resulting in impacts to some performance measures

3. Background

The Strategic Plan sets out critical steps needed for the Region to move towards meeting Council's Vision

To achieve Council's Vision of Strong, Caring, Safe Communities, the Region sets priorities over each four-year term of Council through the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan alignment with Vision ensures that decisions made today set a course for the desired future.

On February 28, 2019, Council endorsed the [2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan](#) tabled with the *2019 to 2022 Regional Budget*. Strategic Plan progress reports are presented to Council annually. This report provides a summary on the progress made on performance measures in year two (2020) of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan*.

Performance accountability considers York Region's specific contributions to the well-being of our communities

Performance accountability is measured through performance measures that capture how well a core service is working to contribute to our communities' well-being. Performance measures in the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* are tracked to ensure that objectives are met, with variances reported to Council annually.

In March 2020, York Region declared a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

On March 23, 2020, York Region declared a state of emergency in response to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, the province has put public health measures in place to limit the transmission of COVID-19. This resulted in the cancellation of organized events, closures of facilities and businesses and shutdown of non-essential services. York Region administrative facilities were closed to the public until further notice and included temporary disruption to some York Region programs and services. During these times of uncertainty and rapid change, the number one priority is protecting the health and safety of residents and all our communities.

4. Analysis

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON YORK REGION'S *2019 TO 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN*

The *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* was developed to withstand changing operating environments

The *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* was developed to withstand changing operating environments by anchoring the plan in core services to ensure the Region continues to meet its legislative obligations while remaining flexible and responsive to residents' needs. This approach was critical in maintaining progress during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan's* priorities, objectives, key performance measures and activities set for the four-year Council term are still relevant. Programs and services the Region provides have not changed even though how the Region provides them in our changing operating environment may have been impacted.

The annual progress report summarizes progress on the baseline trends over the four most recent data points available to create the baseline reference. As fluctuations can occur from year-to-year, it is more meaningful to report on the baseline trend as a four-year impact summary, rather than annual variance. While most performance measures are trending in the desired direction, the Region's Strategic Plan progress reporting is exception-based and provides explanations for performance measure variances. This method of reporting is rooted in the Region's value of accountability towards achieving Council's Vision of Strong, Caring, Safe Communities.

Highlighting York Region achievements during COVID-19

York Region accomplished a great deal in 2020 despite COVID-19's impacts. Here is a snapshot of what has been accomplished:

- Reached 5.26 million visits to york.ca and deployed new business solutions, dashboards and online projects to support pandemic response
- Achieved top scores in the Ontario Chief Drinking Water Inspector's report, with 99.98% of samples meeting provincial standards
- Completed 133 lane kilometres of road rehabilitation and 86 lane kilometres of road preservation projects
- Launched six electric buses to support our goal of zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2051
- Continued planning and development activity amid a global pandemic
- Received more than 30 awards and accreditations across various departments

Some performance measures were impacted by COVID-19

As a result of staff redeployments to the COVID-19 operational response and the temporary disruption to some Regional programs and services, some performance measures were impacted by the pandemic.

Two (2) performance measures have no data available:

- Percentage of 17-year-old students in compliance with *Immunization of Schools Pupils Act*
- Percentage of food service premises with a certified food handler at all times

Three (3) performance measures were not trending in the desired direction:

- Number of transit ridership per capita
- Percentage of individuals and families remaining stably housed after six months who were homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Number of trees and shrubs planted annually through the Regional Greening Strategy Program

Attachment 2 provides a more detailed explanation of each performance measure and how they were impacted by the pandemic.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about major changes in the way people live, work and play. For example, all modes of travel were affected, even after restrictions were eased. Private vehicle travel fell sharply at the start of the lockdown but rebounded by year-end. There was a noticeable shift in traffic patterns as volumes became more uniform through the day. Some of these shifts may last well beyond the pandemic with better bearings on the future of York Region residents. For example, key partnerships were developed between York Region and partner agencies to coordinate and leverage services and funding opportunities for those impacted by COVID-19. These partnerships and lessons learned will help inform York Region service and response even after the pandemic ends.

2019 TO 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures help demonstrate York Region’s specific contribution to the well-being of our communities. The Year 2 (2020) Progress Report summarizes progress on the baseline trends over four data points using 2016 as the baseline reference year where possible. As fluctuations can occur from year-to-year, it is more meaningful to report on the baseline trend as a four-year impact summary rather than annual variance.

74% of the Strategic Plan’s performance measures were trending in the desired direction

In 2020, 23 of 31 (74%) performance measures’ current baselines were trending in the desired direction (see Attachment 1).

The performance measure outlining the percentage of York Region clients receiving help to improve housing stability shows data not available due to data collection constraints. Working with community partners, York Region delivers several housing stability programs providing a range of shorter- and longer- term supports, including rent-gear-to-income subsidies, portable housing benefits, outreach, case management and counselling and emergency and transitional housing. In 2020, 9,244 households received help to improve housing stability – a slight increase from 9,236 households that received assistance in 2019. For the next progress report, staff will develop a method to report on the percentage of York Region clients receiving help to improve their housing stability.

Five performance measures were not trending in the desired direction

Five (5) out of 31 (16%) of the performance measures' current baseline trends were not trending in the desired direction (see Attachment 1):

- Number of transit ridership per capita (due to COVID-19)

The number of transit ridership per capita decreased significantly compared to previous years in 2020, reaching 9.5 million riders. Ridership was primarily impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic with work-from-home initiatives, school closures and limitations on travel for leisure. In addition, the service area population of York Region decreased slightly in 2020 as select low performing routes were discontinued due to the ridership decline.

- Percentage of regional roads with sidewalks and/or dedicated bike lanes in urban areas

In 2020, 85% of regional roads have an adjacent sidewalk and/or dedicated bike lane in urban areas. This is a 1% increase compared to 2019. However, when comparing 2020 data (85%) with 2018 data (88%) as the baseline reference year, baseline trends for this performance measure are not trending in the desired direction. 2018 was the first year the percentage of regional roads with sidewalks and/or dedicated bike lanes in urban areas was measured. In 2019, the data collection methodology was refined to provide more accurate data by using multiple data sets, which has slightly lowered the percentage as reported in 2018. York Region continues to include pedestrian and cycling facilities as part of road improvement projects in partnership with local partners, and this trend is expected to be maintained or increase as the urbanization of the Region continues.

- Percentage of individuals and families remaining stably housed after six months who were homeless or at risk of homelessness (due to COVID-19)

In 2020, 81% of individuals and families remain stably housed after six months who were previously homeless or at risk of homelessness. Overall housing retention in 2020 was comparable to 2019 despite the COVID-19 pandemic. However, due to the pandemic, York Region was unable to work with emergency housing providers that employ housing support works to provide support and capacity building to finalize an approach that ensures accurate and consistent data collection. Homelessness Community Programs plan to resume these conversations in 2021.

Recognizing that seniors and those experiencing homelessness, low income and other challenges faced higher risk to their health and safety, York Region moved quickly when the pandemic was declared to develop a coordinated response with key partners. An important early step was creating the COVID-19 Community Coordination Initiative with United Way Greater Toronto and other organizations. Using Access York, FindHelp 211 data, and information from surveys and consultation with agencies, partners identified major concerns across the Region and

looked for opportunities to work together to coordinate and leverage services and funding opportunities.

Finding new ways to provide shelter safely while seeking more stable housing was identified early in the pandemic and continues to be a priority. Working with the United Way Greater Toronto, local municipalities, private companies, community organizations and other partners, the Region was able to quickly open two new temporary shelters. These shelters have helped to stop the spread of COVID-19 into other emergency housing facilities in the Region.

- Number of trees and shrubs planted annually through the Regional Greening Strategy Program (due to COVID-19)

The number of trees and shrubs planted annually through the Regional Greening Strategy Program decreased in 2020 compared to previous years' achievements. In 2020 the target of 70,000 was nearly met with 60,539 trees and shrubs planted. Decreases were largely due to COVID-19-related safety concerns with accessing private property sites. Plantings missed in 2020 are anticipated to be made up in the coming years.

- Percentage of regional assets with a condition assessment rating of fair or better condition

The overall percentage of core assets with a condition assessment rating of fair or better decreased slightly in 2020 to 86%. This is due to aging road assets which did not have a sustainable funding source. In 2019, Regional Council approved drawing from the Asset Replacement Reserve to fund road assets.

Attachment 2 is an exception report summarizing these five performance measures. The summary outlines additional contributing factors for performance relating to each measure and activities planned to support future progress.

5. Financial

Costs associated with the delivery of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* are aligned with the multi-year budget. The 2021 to 2022 Regional Budget, approved on March 25, 2021, supports fiscal responsibility within a complex environment and continues to focus on delivering the key priorities of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan*, while responding to fiscal challenges, including COVID-19 impacts and investments in capital infrastructure.

The financial impacts of COVID-19 on the Region in 2020 totaled approximately \$186.5 million. Senior government funding of approximately \$90 million helped offset the overall impacts, resulting in a net impact to the Region of \$96.5 million.

Impacts to the Region's budget directly affects the Region's ability to achieve the four key result areas of Economic Vitality, Healthy Communities, Sustainable Environment and Good Government. Reductions to planned contributions and budgetary allocations would have to be made up in future years, resulting in impacts on generations to come.

6. Local Impact

The Region's *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* shares similar strategic priorities as local municipalities. The progress made in year two of the Region's four-year Strategic Plan continues to support the strong alignment of strategic priorities profiled in many of the local municipalities' plans.

7. Conclusion

The Year 2 (2020) Progress Report provides Council with an update on how the Region is progressing towards meeting its strategic priorities. York Region accomplished a great deal in 2020 despite COVID-19's impacts on much of the operating environment. In Year 2 (2020), 74% (23 of 31) of performance measures are trending in the desired direction. This demonstrates York Region's dedicated commitment made in Year 2 in taking specific, implementable strategies and actions, while responding to COVID-19, to address turning and maintaining the curves of performance measures toward achieving the priorities captured in the Strategic Plan. It is recommended this report be circulated to local municipalities for their information.

For more information on this report, please contact Krista South, Executive Manager, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71208. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Approved for Submission:

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Chief Administrative Officer

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Attachments (2)
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