

# The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole  
Finance and Administration  
May 4, 2023

Report of the Chief Administrative Officer

## 2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan Final Year 4 (2022) 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 2022, the fourth and final full year of the [2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan](#).

Key Points:

- In 2022, 21 of 31 (68%) of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* performance measures were trending in the desired direction (see Attachment 1).
- While most performance measures were trending in the right direction, the Region's Strategic Plan progress reporting is exception-based and provides explanations for performance measure variances

### 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 approved 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 four (2022) 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 regional 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.

### **4. Analysis**

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

##### **In April 2022, York Region lifted its state of emergency**

York Region declared a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic on March 23, 2020. 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 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 while providing core service delivery. More than two years after declaration, York Region lifted the state of emergency in April 2022.

##### **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, performance measures and key 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 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 eventually rebounded. 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 a positive outlook on the future for 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.

## **2019 TO 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Performance measures help demonstrate York Region's specific contribution to the well-being of our communities. The baseline trend in the Year 4 (2022) Progress Report is based on comparing the 2022 data with 2018 data. As fluctuations can occur from year-to-year, it is more meaningful to report on the baseline trend as a five-year impact summary rather than annual variance.

### **68% of the Strategic Plan's performance measures were trending in the desired direction**

In 2022, 21 of 31 (68%) performance measures' current baselines were trending in the desired direction (see Attachment 1). Activities supporting performance measures progress are reporting through the annual [Community Report](#) to Council each June. York Region accomplished a great deal in 2022. To highlight a few achievements in 2022:

- Achieved top scores in the Ontario Chief Drinking Water Inspector's report to support safe communities
- Planted 110,391 trees and shrubs through the Regional Greening Strategy Program to enhance and preserve green space
- Continued to implement the Regional Fiscal Strategy that helped build reserves and reduce the debt level. The reserve-to-debt ratio grew from 99% to 190% between 2018 and 2022
- Worked to finalize the Municipal Comprehensive Review, updating the Transportation Master Plan and Water and Wastewater Master Plan for final Council approval of the Regional Official Plan in 2022

### **Six performance measures were not trending in the desired direction**

Six (6) out of 31 (19%) of the performance measures' current baseline trends were not trending in the desired direction (see Attachment 1). In 2022, four (4) performance measures had no data available for reporting.

Appendix A includes an exception report summarizing these performance measures. The summary outlines contributing factors for performance relating to each measure and activities planned to support future progress.

## **2023 TO 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **The Council approved *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* focuses on continuing to make progress on the Region's priorities**

On February 23, 2023, Council approved the [2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan](#). This plan builds on the success of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan*, which set out to maintain balance between the delivery of services for growth and community supports, while pursuing

operational and customer excellence and affirming a shared commitment to inclusion. York Region released an [introduction video](#) that provides an overview of the *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* available on [York.ca/StratPlan](http://York.ca/StratPlan). The Year 1 (2023) Progress Report is scheduled to be presented to Council in May 2024.

## 5. Financial

Costs associated with the delivery of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* are aligned with the multi-year budget. The [2022 Regional Budget](#), approved on December 16, 2021, supports fiscal responsibility within a complex environment and continues to focus on delivering the priorities of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan*, while responding to fiscal challenges, including COVID-19 impacts and investments in infrastructure.

Impacts to the Region's budget directly affects the Region's ability to achieve the four areas of focus of Economic Vitality, Healthy Communities, Sustainable Environment and Good Government. York Region's Strategic Plan and Multi-Year Budget are developed in alignment. As a result, any reductions to planned contributions and budgetary allocations would require revisiting commitments identified in the Strategic Plan.

## 6. Local Impact

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

## 7. Conclusion

The Year 4 (2022) Progress Report is the fourth and final annual progress report associated with the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan*. Despite COVID-19's impacts on much of the operating environment, York Region accomplished a great deal in 2022, and this report highlights the Region's achievements and significant progress made across the entire plan. In Year 4 (2022), 68% (21 of 31) of performance measures are trending in the desired direction. This demonstrates York Region's dedicated commitment made in Year 4 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.

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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: **Bruce Macgregor**  
Chief Administrative Officer

April 26, 2023

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Appendix A - Exception Report Summary  
Attachment 1 – Year 4 (2022) Progress Report Placemat

## **Exception Report Summary**

### **2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan Year 4 (2022) Progress Report – Performance Measures**

#### **Performance Measures Not Trending in the Desired Direction**

Six (6) of 31 (19%) of the Strategic Plan's 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)
- Percentage of regional roads with sidewalks and/or dedicated bike lanes in urban areas
- Paramedic response time for emergency response services to meet Council approved targets (due to COVID-19)
- Percentage of individuals and families remaining stably housed after six months who were homeless or at risk of homelessness (due to COVID-19)
- Number of megalitres of treated water consumed per 100,000 population (impacted by COVID-19)
- Maintain / Improve comparative dollars of operating cost per unit of service

Contributing factors for the performance of each of these measures are detailed below.

#### **Performance Measures With No Data Available for Reporting**

In 2022, four (4) performance measures had no data available for reporting:

- Percentage of 17-year-old students in compliance with *Immunization of Schools Pupils Act* (due to COVID-19)
- Percentage of food service premises with a certified food handler at all times (due to COVID-19)
- Percentage of York Region clients receiving help to improve their housing stability
- Percentage of development applications meeting timeline commitments

Explanations for each of these measures with no data available for reporting are detailed below.

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## Performance Measures Not Trending in the Desired Direction



### ECONOMIC VITALITY

#### Maintain number of transit ridership per capita (due to COVID-19)

The regional road network continues to be under pressure due to significant growth across York Region. To manage this demand on regional roads, highways and transit system, the Region is continuing to focus on providing mobility for all modes of travel (walking, cycling, transit users and motorists) through improved transit services, development of complete and walkable communities, improved network infrastructure and connections as well as promoting active transportation through the implementation of cycling facilities.

Prior to the pandemic, transit ridership was impacted by reduced service hours and construction across the region. Revenue service hour decreases have been a result of budgetary restraints to pay for capital expenditures. A clear trend was identified between construction areas and corresponding ridership. In areas where construction was occurring, ridership in those corridors and routes connecting to them decreased due to increased travel times and delays.

At the beginning of 2020, YRT was experiencing a 3% year over year increase in ridership; however, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, ridership drastically fell. In 2022, transit ridership increased to 70% of pre-pandemic levels, with riders returning most notably on weekends and on Viva and base routes. These routes provide connections to the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) subway, industrial areas, and key destinations along major travel corridors. Weekday ridership is recovering at a slower pace with fewer commuter travellers due to continuation of hybrid work practices. Ridership associated with GO train connections, office employment and post-secondary travel may take some time to return to pre-pandemic levels due to virtual work and study opportunities.

Transit ridership per capita decreased significantly in 2020 and 2021, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated public health restrictions impacting the need to travel for work, school and leisure. York Region Service Area Population decreased slightly during the pandemic, as select low performing routes were discontinued due to ridership decline. However, Mobility On-Request service areas were expanded to assist with service coverage and address changes in travel patterns. Ridership per capita increased in 2022 due to riders returning on transit and expanding service coverage through Mobility On-Request. Ridership per capita is expected to continue growing as ridership returns to pre-pandemic levels in the coming years. In 2023, staff will continue to evaluate the reinstatement of suspended services considering overall demand. Ridership is anticipated to continue increasing and is projected to return to pre-pandemic level by 2026.



### **Increase percentage of regional roads with sidewalks and/or dedicated bike lanes in urban areas**

In 2022, 86% of regional roads have an adjacent sidewalk and/or dedicated bike lane in urban areas.

2018 was the first year the percentage of regional roads with sidewalks and/or dedicated bike lanes in urban areas was measured. This performance measure illustrates the number of regional roads that have a sidewalk or bike lane adjacent to it. In 2019, the data collection methodology was refined to provide more accurate data.

From 2019 to 2021, the Region saw an increase of regional road segments into the database along with a corresponding increase in regional road segments with sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes through capital projects with active transportation elements. In 2022, the trend has remained stable while work continues to expand the Region's active transportation network through projects in partnership with local municipalities and other Regional stakeholders.

York Region continues to include pedestrian and cycling facilities as part of road improvement projects in partnership with local partners. Given the size of the network, the trend is expected to be maintained or see marginal increases as urbanization of the Region continues.

### **Maintain paramedic response time for emergency response services to meet Council approved targets (due to COVID-19)**

In 2022, York Region Paramedic Services responded to calls within the 8-minute target for CTAS 1 calls 74% of the time, which is just short of the Council approved target of 75%.

The following factors impacted response times:

- **Call Volumes and Offload Delay:** increased call volumes coupled with increasing offload days and increased time on calls.
- **Cross-border calls:** increased volume of responses into surrounding regions contributed to decreased emergency coverage capacity for the Service and longer response times within York Region.
- **Staffing and Well-being:** increased staff isolations, illness, and heightened precautions and anxieties during the pandemic, caused reduced staffing in some ambulances which has impacted response times and paramedic workload.

- **Post-COVID-19 Pandemic Measures:** additional procedural measures implemented to adequately respond to changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (such as enhanced cleaning measures, new procedures for personal protective equipment, changing out of gear more often) and implementation of new on-scene precautions when treating patients has also impacted response times

Currently, there are several non-urgent calls that get classified as CTAS 1 under the current CTAS system. Implementation of a new Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) is expected to help improve classification of calls and will help YRPS meet Council Approved targets.

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

In 2022, 81% of individuals and families remained stably housed after six months who were previously homeless or at risk of homelessness. While this is a slight decrease from the baseline of 83% in 2019, overall housing retention is returning to pre-pandemic levels including an increase of 7% compared to 2021.

During the pandemic, affordable housing options across York Region has continued to be limited and financial instability has increased, affecting the ability of residents to maintain their housing and is a trend observed throughout 2022.

Throughout 2021, York Region met with emergency housing partners to provide guidance, information and capacity building supports to strengthen the tracking and reporting of performance and outcome measures.

In 2022, as the COVID-19 pandemic receded and the volume and frequency of outbreaks diminished, client follow-up at the six-month check-in improved in many program areas. Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) training for emergency housing and other service providers resumed in Q4 2022.

This measure excludes clients for whom 'housing status' was unknown or unavailable at six months, and may not reflect unique customers, as it is possible to access multiple programs in a calendar year.



## SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

### **Decrease number of megalitres of treated water consumed per 100,000 population (impacted by COVID-19)**

The number of megalitres of treated water consumed per 100,000 population is used to track water consumption at York Region. In 2022, 10,596 megalitres of treated water was consumed per 100,000 population. Annual values are determined using treated water consumed (annual billed volume) and serviced population data.

Weather plays a significant factor in seasonal water use, particularly in the summer months. Seasonal residential demand increases are primarily related to lawn and garden watering and other outdoor uses. Typically, the hotter and drier the weather and the longer the duration of hot and/or dry events there is a greater amount of water consumed. The slight increase in 2022 with respect to 2021, may be attributed to drier summer months when compared to 2021.

In addition to weather patterns, in December 2018, one of the main bulk water supply meters was replaced with new technology which increased the accuracy and confidence in total water demand volumes.

COVID-19 has likely caused an increase in residential consumption due to an increase number of people working from home.



## GOOD GOVERNMENT

### **Maintain / Improve comparative dollars of operating cost per unit of service**

The [Municipal Benchmarking Network Canada](#) (MBNCanada) is the data source for 9 of the 10 operating costs reported on for this performance measure of the 15 core services identified in the Strategic Plan.

The MBNCanada measures contributing into this performance measure are:

- Children's Services: CHD220
- Paramedic Services: EMDS306
- Community Housing (formerly referred to as Social Housing): SCHG315
- Development Services (formerly referred to as Planning): PLNG250
- Court Services (POA): PCRT305
- Police Services: PLCE227

- Regional Roads: Internal Performance Measure calculation
- Transit: TRNT220
- Waste Management (Solid Waste): SWST325 + SWST330
- Water (Water/Wastewater): WATR310 + WWTR310

The 5 core service areas excluded in the consolidated measure currently are:

- Economic Development
- Public Health
- Social Assistance
- Long-Term Care
- Forestry

These supporting performance measures are currently not being calculated for MBNCanada purposes and historically have not been calculated internally. This performance measure is captured in the [2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan](#) where York Region will further explore internally calculating the operating costs per unit of service to be able to report on all 15 core service areas as part of future progress reporting.

The operating costs for the key services increased by \$0.13 year-over-year and \$0.17 relative to the \$1.00 baseline established for 2018.

\$0.07 of the year-over-year change was due to increased operating costs for Children Services. The main driver for the increase was the new Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care (CWELCC) program, which was introduced effective April 1, 2022. The program provides a 25% fee reduction payment to child care operators who opted into the program by November 1, 2022. This applies for children aged 0-5 and the reduction is passed on to families in the form of reduced child care fees.

\$0.02 of the year-over-year change was due to increased operating costs for Police Services to respond to expanded service needs for a growing population. The remaining \$0.04 change was spread across other service areas, and is in line with the increase of inflation of 4.5%.

Relative to the 2018 baseline, Children Services increased \$0.07 and Police Services \$0.05. There were additional increases and decreases in other service areas.

The increase of operating costs is not considered trending in the desired direction compared to inflation, due to the increase of child care services.

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## Performance Measures With No Data Available for Reporting



### HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

#### **Increase percentage of 17-years-old students in compliance with the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) (due to COVID-19)**

In 2022, due to the ongoing staffing requirements for the COVID-19 operational response, including mass immunization efforts, this program was suspended in York Region, similar to most other health units across the province. This temporary suspension of the program resulted in 2022 data for this performance measure not being available. This measure is captured in the *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* and will be reported to Council through the annual progress reports beginning in May 2024.

#### **Increase percentage of food service premises with a certified food handler at all times (due to COVID-19)**

Due to the COVID-19 response, including redeployment of staff and requirements of the *Reopening Ontario Act* for the closure of premises, 2022 data for this performance measure is not available.

#### **Increase percentage of York Region clients receiving help to improve their housing stability**

The performance measure outlining the percentage of York Region clients receiving help to improve housing stability has been reported as data not available due to data collection constraints. Staff have been working to develop a methodology to report on this measure but have concluded there is no broad denominator representing York Region clients that can be used to support its calculation. As a result, staff have reported instead on the overall number of clients receiving assistance under various housing programs.

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 2022, 10,096 households received housing assistance through short- and long-term programs delivered directly by the Region and through partners, an increase of approximately 3% from 2021 with 9,802 households and an increase of approximately 9% from 2020 with 9,244 households.

Community housing continues to remain an important issue and top priority. As part of the [2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan](#) to report on community housing services, more meaningful,

reliable, and reportable measures have been identified. Performance measures in the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan on community housing include:

- Number of community housing units administered by York Region
- Number of rent benefits administered by York Region to support housing affordability based on household income
- Percentage of Housing York Inc. survey respondents satisfied with Housing York Inc.'s services
- Number of units in planning and development at a stage ready for implementation based on funding, including Housing York Inc. and non-profit housing providers partnering with the Region

Table 1 provides an overview on historical data available for community housing performance measures in the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan. Staff will be reporting on the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan performance measure progress to Council beginning in May 2024 through annual progress reports.

**Table 1**  
**2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan – Community Housing Performance Measure**  
**Historical Data**

**Priority: Support Community Well-Being**

Objectives	Performance Measures	Annual Historical Data				
		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
3. Sustain and increase affordable housing choices	3.1 ↑ # of community housing units administered by York Region	6,778	6,940	6,841	6,717	6,717
	3.2 ↑ # of rent benefits administered by York Region to support housing affordability based on household income	5,333	5,282	5,527	5,610	5,940
	3.3 % of Housing York Inc. survey respondents satisfied with Housing York Inc.'s services	<b>No Data Available</b> New measure developed for annual progress reporting starting in 2022				80%
	3.4 ↑ # of units in planning and development at a stage ready for implementation based on funding, including Housing York Inc. and non-profit housing providers partnering with the Region	556	556	420	443	825



## SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

### **Increase percentage of development applications meeting timeline commitments**

In 2022, the Region has developed [dashboards](#) that leverage YorkTrax data to track application processing metrics for all development applications. YorkTrax replaced a series of systems and worksheets. The Region is now able to track the number of submissions, time the Region waits for a submission, internal time (Region) versus external time (applicant and local municipality). This new tool provides insight into the process and helps identify opportunities for further efficiencies in the development approval process for all application types.

Development applications are becoming increasingly complex (e.g., natural heritage, intensification, transportation issues, etc.) and often require resubmissions. On average it took a total of 259 days to approve a routine local official plan amendment application (includes applicant, local municipality, and Region time) – and the Region's time accounted for 97 days of the total 259 days. In 2022, three routine Local Official Plan Amendments and 15 exemptions were completed. There were several changes to the *Planning Act* in 2022 (Bill 109 and Bill 23) that will require adjustments to the current planning approval process.