



Report of the Commissioner of Community and Health Services
Update on Implementation of the Community Safety and Well-being Plan for York Region

1. Recommendation

It is recommended the Regional Clerk circulate this report to Clerks of local municipalities, York Regional Police Services Board, Human Services Planning Board of York Region and the Newcomer Inclusion Table of York Region.

2. Purpose

To provide an update on the progress and outcomes of the first year of the [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan for York Region 2022 to 2026](#) (Plan).

Key Points:

- Under the *Police Services Act*, York Region is required to develop a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan and report on progress
- Council approved the Plan in [May 2022](#)
- Community Action Tables were established in Fall 2021 and are having a positive impact
- The Plan identifies 122 Community Action Table actions through 2022 to 2026 and 83% or 101 of those actions are projected to be completed or underway by the end of 2023
- The six objectives outlined in the Plan are being achieved. Partnerships and funding have been aligned to support local implementation and drive policy change, including a Council-approved priority under the Community Investment Fund, in [May 2023](#).

- The Region secured over \$7.3 million in Federal funding to support implementation of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

3. Background

Council approved the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan in May 2022

Using a place-based approach, the Plan is a long-term tool to enhance safety by focusing on well-being. Through data and community consultation, four communities were identified and approved by Council as focus areas for the Plan: northern Georgina, central Newmarket, south-central Richmond Hill and south-central Markham.

The Plan identifies and assesses priority risks and includes social development and prevention strategies to mitigate the risks. Community consultations identified mental well-being, housing stability and economic stability as top priorities for action to improve safety and well-being.

In [June 2018](#), Council designated the [Human Services Planning Board of York Region](#) as the Advisory Committee for the Plan. The Human Services Planning Board continues to serve an advisory role in the Plan's implementation throughout its 2023 to 2026 term and will continue to receive regular updates on implementation.

Community Action Tables were established in Fall 2021 and are implementing local action plans

In [May 2021](#) Council approved establishment of a Community Action Table for each of the four focus areas under the Plan. Launched in Fall 2021, and informed by data and community consultations, the Community Action Tables take a proactive approach to identify and respond locally to the kinds of challenges that impact safety and well-being. Comprised of representatives from local municipalities, York Regional Police, school boards, service providers including grass-roots agencies, and resident leaders, Community Action Tables develop and implement annual local actions plans. Successes of the first year of the Community Action Tables are outlined in the [Year One Achievements Community Action Tables 2022-2026](#).

4. Analysis

The six objectives outlined in the Plan are being achieved

Through proactive, locally driven, and targeted actions, the six strategic objectives outlined in the Plan are being achieved. The following examples outline key actions underway that support the Plan's objectives.

1. **Bringing partners together and strengthening community capacity:** Local action plans are underway. Membership on Community Action Tables and Children, Youth and Family

Situation Tables continues to grow. Multiple partnerships are being leveraged to achieve collective community impact.

2. **Leveraging strengths, and bridging gaps where they exist:** Community engagement continues to build on existing strengths. Partnership data is used to target identified risks and gaps to improve service navigation and connections.
3. **Targeting efforts to communities that can benefit most:** Beginning to pilot the expansion of some initiatives to cover additional areas where evidence and data-informed needs have been identified.
4. **Focusing on top opportunities for action and prioritizing preventative initiatives:** Actions focus on priority risks of Mental Well-Being, Housing Stability and Economic Stability and have expanded to include the roll out of preventative and innovative initiatives such as youth focused programs.
5. **Setting up for success by mobilizing resources and collaborating to drive change:** Securing and coordinating resources remain a priority, including funding to support local implementation and drive policy change. In [May 2023](#), Council approved the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan as a priority area under the Community Investment Fund. Research to establish a funders table is underway.
6. **Delivering the Plan and building on success:** The Region continues to steward the Plan engaging approximately 6,000 residents through Community Action Tables in the first year of the Plan. As work continues, an evaluation framework is in development to inform future direction.

Community Action Tables are making a positive impact across all focus areas

Under the guidance of a [lead agency](#), each Community Action Table brings a broad range of community partners and residents together. Knowledge and lived experience to co-create approaches help to mitigate risks and foster and strengthen inclusion and belonging in our communities. At the end of 2022, 43% (52 of 122) of the actions from the four local action plans were completed or underway (see Appendix A – Community Action Tables Accomplishments Overview). By the end of 2023, Community Action Tables are projected to have 83% (101 of 122) of the actions completed or underway.

As actions are completed, it is expected the outcomes will contribute to an increased sense of belonging and a reduction in risks affecting safety and well-being. Below are some examples from residents of the impact of our Community Action Tables in community.

- “As a newcomer in Canada, the support we got from the South Markham Community Action Table Ambassador Siva (Lead Community Ambassador) was resourceful. She helped guide me by providing me with mental health resources during our difficult transition into our new life in Canada. I want to thank South Markham Community Action Table from the bottom of our hearts.”

- “Working with the Richmond Hill Community Action Table Coordinator on the Communi-Tea event was a pleasure. Family Services York Region is a responsive and welcoming team and well organized.”
- “These community luncheons mean so much to my son and I for our mental well-being, as our family has been going through a lot lately. It means a lot that my son can volunteer here as well.”
- “The work of the Community Action Tables is tremendous; great to see support being provided to the Newmarket Heights neighbourhood.”

Successful Partnership with York Regional Police is recognized as a leading practice

Working in partnership, York Region and York Regional Police continue to identify opportunities to align projects and initiatives, share data and collaborate on funding opportunities, participate on Community Action Tables and other initiatives to foster stronger relations with community. York Regional Police co-chair the Children, Youth and Families Situation Tables with the Region, partner on the Mobile Youth Services Hub and are situated to partner on the Traumatic Incident Response Protocol (see Appendix B – Building Safer Communities Fund Initiatives Overview).

In September 2023 York Regional Police and York Region were recognized for the collaboration between the two organizations through their participation on a panel about alternative delivery models featuring the approach taken in York Region to implement the Plan. [The Safety of our Cities Conference](#) was attended by community safety and well-being experts from across North America.

Region signs \$7.3M agreement with Public Safety Canada under the Building Safer Communities Fund

Through the Building Safer Communities Fund (2022 to 2026), York Region will receive \$7.3 million, over four years, to prevent and reduce underlying risk factors that lead to gun and gang prevalence in York Region. Six initiatives have been developed that will help support implementation of the Plan and will roll out over the term of the agreement (see Appendix B).

Using learnings, observations and York Regional Police crime data, York Region has identified other parts of the Region that could benefit from targeted support, such as City of Vaughan and Town of Aurora and has begun to pilot the Building Safer Communities Fund initiatives in these areas.

The Plan supports the Healthy Communities Priority of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and supports York Region’s Vision of strong, caring and safe communities.

The Plan aligns with the Support Community Wellbeing Priority and subsequent objectives of the [2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan](#) which focuses on the livability, health, safety and social wellbeing of our communities, and supports Council’s [Vision](#) of strong, caring, safe, communities by developing strategies to improve the overall well-being of communities. The Plan also supports the [Inclusion Charter for York Region](#) vision for a welcoming and inclusive community where everyone can develop to their full potential.

5. Financial Considerations

Although mandated by the Province, there is no dedicated provincial funding to support the Plan. Regional Council has allocated approximately \$435,000 through the 2023 budget approval.

In addition, to support implementation of the Plan, proactive steps and partnerships have been established. To date, \$7.3 million has been allocated from the Federal Building Safer Communities Fund for the first iteration of the Plan (2022 to 2026). In addition, United Way Greater Toronto has contributed \$192,000 (2022 to 2023) by way of funding partners to support a mental health research project and thorough Quick Action Grants where Community Action Tables empowered resident leaders and community agencies to accomplish many actions from their action plans. A Community Safety and Policing Grant for \$750,000 (2022 to 2025) was secured to support staffing in collaboration with York Regional Police. The Region will continue to pursue opportunities through senior levels of government and other sources to advocate for sustained support to implement Plan initiatives. Any additional resources that may be needed will be identified as part of future budget processes.

6. Local Impact

Local municipalities and community members have provided valuable support and insight as they continue to be key partners in implementation of the Plan. From its inception, the Plan's impact is summarized by the following examples:

- Approximately 6,000 residents have been engaged as of mid-September 2023.
- 214 situations of Acutely Elevated Risk have been brought to the Children, Youth and Families Situation Tables, with 142 situations being closed with Acutely Elevated Risk reduced and connection to services made as of end of September 2023. Acutely Elevated Risk refers to situations where imminent harm is present. Without immediate intervention, these situations will escalate and a negative outcome such as criminalization, victimization and/or harm is likely to occur.
- 434 youth served as of end of September 2023 through services of the Mobile Youth Hub and connected to community resources, youth specific programming, and basic needs supports.
- Two community-led pilot projects, the Mental Health Research Project in partnership with York University and Neighbourhood Tenant Support Services Project were launched.
- This progress demonstrates momentum and continued impact of this work through visible stronger community connections and collaborations. A steady increase in participation across all four focus areas can be attributed to streamlining services and partnerships among diverse service providers and supporting impactful resident-led initiatives.

7. Conclusion

The Plan will continue its strategic and collaborative efforts to foster thriving, safe and caring communities. Working alongside local municipalities, resident leaders, community and York Regional Police, the Plan brings together diverse partners to co-create opportunities to act on local priorities. The Community Action Tables continue to be a strong pillar of the Plan that have been instrumental in bringing community together and increasing engagement. The Plan will build on the successes and lessons learned that will help with planning for the future.

For more information on this report, please contact Mary Boushel, Director, Strategies and Partnerships at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 78389. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

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Commissioner of Community and Health Services



Approved for Submission:

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Chief Administrative Officer

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Appendix A – Community Action Tables Accomplishments Overview

Appendix B – Building Safer Communities Fund Initiatives Overview

COMMUNITY ACTION TABLES ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVERVIEW

Metric	Results
Number of actions completed/underway	61 of 122 planned actions were completed in 2022-2023 and 40 are underway. Priority actions going forward include women's wellness groups, housing support workshops aimed at educating both tenants and landlords, pay-what-you-can Fresh food markets, and updating resident and partner informed community asset maps.
Number of residents engaged	<p>Central Newmarket - 2300 York Region residents engaged (distribution of flyers, community dinners, online posting)</p> <p>Northern Georgina - 7060 York Region residents engaged (weekly community lunches, social media outreach, outreach at cultural events and at tax clinics)</p> <p>South-central Richmond Hill - 723 York Region residents engaged (distribution of flyers, community dinners)</p> <p>South-central Markham - 2228 York Region residents engaged (distribution of flyers, community dinners)</p>
Number of participants at the Community Action Tables	<p>Northern Georgina - Approximately 30 members sit on the Table which includes York Region residents, service providers, York Region staff representatives, local municipalities, York Regional Police, United Way Greater Toronto, school boards, and worship groups</p> <p>Central Newmarket - Approximately 58 members sit on the Table which includes York Region residents, service providers, York Region staff representatives, local municipalities, York Regional Police, United Way Greater Toronto, school boards, and worship groups</p> <p>South-central Richmond Hill: Approximately 80 members sit on the Table which includes York Region residents, service providers, York Region staff representatives, local municipalities, York Regional Police, United Way Greater Toronto, school boards, and worship groups</p> <p>South-central Markham: Approximately 72 members sit on the Table which includes York Region residents, service providers, York Region staff representatives, local municipalities, York</p>

Regional Police, United Way Greater Toronto, school boards,
and worship groups

BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES FUND INITIATIVES OVERVIEW

Initiative	Status	Goals
<u>Children, Youth and Family Situation Tables</u>	Launched Jan 2023	Brings together diverse, multi-sector service providers to resolve situations of acutely elevated risk and prevent negative outcomes from (re)occurring.
<u>Mobile Youth Services Hub</u>	Launched Jan 2023	Provides mobile services to vulnerable youth in identified high traffic areas. Aims to increase resource access, social inclusion and community safety through crisis intervention and prevention supports.
<u>Service Navigator Pilot Program</u>	Launched Aug 2023	Provides youth and other residents with improved service access and navigation tools to increase awareness and access to available supports. Service Navigators have cultural connections, community connections and/or lived experience with priority risks. Service navigators can be embedded in locations such as schools and hospitals.
<u>Youth Supporting Youth Pilot Program</u>	Launched Aug 2023	Uses a peer mentorship approach to support youth with strategies and coping mechanisms to increase protective factors and reduce underlying risk factors. Program offers peer support certification and workshops at local schools and in the community on topics.
<u>Community Violence Prevention Funding</u>	Launched Aug 2023	Students, grassroots organizations, and agencies can apply for funding to undertake community driven proactive actions to reduce underlying risk factors that can lead to youth crime, harm and victimization.
<u>Traumatic Incident Response Protocol</u>	Q4 2023	Following a traumatic incident in the community, the program will identify and mobilize local municipalities and community partners.