



Report of the Commissioner of Community and Health Services **York Region's 2024 to 2027 Homelessness Service System Plan**

1. Recommendation

1. Council approve York Region's 2024 to 2027 Homelessness Service System Plan (Attachment 1).
2. Council approve the rapid deployment actions for Emergency and Transitional Housing set out in Appendix A, including approval of immediate actions with an estimated net operating cost of up to \$3.1 million in 2024, to be funded from within the existing Community and Health Services Budget, with funding for ongoing annual net operating costs of up to \$7 million beyond 2024, equivalent to 0.5% of the 2025 net tax levy, to be identified and considered through the 2025 Budget process.
3. Commissioner of Community and Health Services be directed to include a capital plan for consideration as part of the 2025 budget process for development of new emergency and transitional housing projects.
4. The Regional Clerk circulate York Region's 2024 to 2027 Homelessness Service System Plan to all local municipalities, the provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Associate Minister of Housing, as well as local area MPs and MPPs, Ontario Health Teams in York Region, Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the United Way Greater Toronto.

2. Purpose

This report seeks Council approval of York Region's 2024 to 2027 Homelessness Service System Plan (System Plan) to guide York Region's response to homelessness. The System Plan is one of three implementation plans to support the Region's next 10-year housing and homelessness plan, targeted for Council approval in 2025. Priority Areas, activities, milestones and performance measures will be reported annually through the 10-year housing and homelessness plan progress

reports. Actions identified in the System Plan include advocacy related to federal and provincial government responsibilities in the housing and homelessness sector.

This report also responds to a request by Council in [March 2024](#) that staff report in June 2024 with a rapid deployment plan, with funding options, for emergency and transitional housing to address the exponential growth in homelessness and for staff to explore establishing a housing and homelessness advocacy group consisting of elected officials.

Key Points:

- Homelessness is a serious and growing issue in York Region as noted in the [June 2023](#) memo to Council and the [November 2023](#) Special Council Meeting
- As the provincially designated homelessness services system manager, the proposed System Plan sets out goals and Priority Areas to guide the Region and community partners to improve, enhance and align delivery of homelessness services and supports between 2024 and 2027
- Progress on actions set out in the System Plan will be reported annually under a new 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, which is expected in 2025
- Proposed rapid deployment actions (Appendix A) align with the System Plan, focusing on increasing the availability of emergency and transitional beds and expanding support services for people who are unsheltered/in encampments
- Six rapid deployment actions can begin in 2024, with most starting this summer, funded within the existing Community and Health Services budget in 2024. If Council elects to proceed, additional operating funding would be required to support continuation of these actions in 2025 and onward
- The Region continues to manage the response to asylum seekers through the existing Homelessness Community Programs providing support to those in need

3. Background

As Service Manager, York Region is responsible for planning, development, implementation and delivery of housing and homelessness services

York Region is one of 47 Service Managers in Ontario responsible for funding, planning, implementing, and delivering housing and homelessness programs and services as required by the provincial *Housing Services Act, 2011*. York Region administers and delivers homelessness prevention and housing stability supports, including funding for community agencies to provide services. The Region is also responsible for managing emergency and transitional housing, delivered in partnership with community agencies.

In [June 2022](#), Council directed staff to develop a homelessness service system plan in consultation with key partners including local municipalities, community organizations and people with lived experience. A [June 2023](#) memorandum to Council provided data about homelessness and poverty in the Region, highlighting housing affordability and low income as key drivers of homelessness, and identified challenges and gaps in the current regional homelessness service system. York Region joined the Association of Municipalities Ontario on [March 23, 2023](#) in calling on the provincial government to do more to end homelessness and recognize the growing challenge of homelessness throughout the province.

A Special Council Meeting was held in [November 2023](#) to provide Council with additional data illustrating the growing number of people experiencing homelessness and increasing need for support services in York Region, share information about innovative approaches to addressing homelessness, and introduce proposed goals and priority areas for the System Plan.

On [March 7, 2024](#), Regional Council approved a motion directing staff to develop rapid deployment actions, with funding options, for emergency and transitional housing to address growth in homelessness, and for staff to approach other Regional municipalities and the City of Toronto to establish a Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Group consisting of elected officials, with a report to Council in June 2024.

There are many factors contributing to homelessness

Homelessness may be caused by a combination of factors, including high housing costs, low vacancy rates, individual life events like the loss of a job, a divorce or an eviction, and barriers such as low income, mental illness and addiction may make it more difficult to find and keep housing.

Although income supports are available through Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, benefit levels are far too low to reasonably expect households to retain housing. For example, a single individual on Ontario Works receives a total of \$733 per month, including \$390 for housing. This rate is set by the province and has not changed since 2018. In York Region, a room in shared housing costs between \$800 and \$1,000 per month, while the average rent for purpose built rental units was \$1,664 in 2023. The Region has a limited stock of rental housing and vacancy rates for purpose-built rentals averaged 1.9% in 2023.

More people in York Region are experiencing homelessness than ever before

The number of people identified on the By-Name List, a real-time list of people experiencing homelessness and accessing services in York Region, increased from 1,395 in 2019 to 1,784 in 2023. Between 2019 and 2023, the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness, meaning experiencing homelessness for longer than six months in the past year, increased from 124 to 473.

More people are living unsheltered. In 2023, the York Region Outreach Services encampment team visited a total of 204 encampment locations, up from 62 in 2021. The number of encampments fluctuates as people obtain shelter or move to another location. As of April 24, 2024, there were 54 known active encampments – people living outside on public land not intended for occupancy. An

insufficient supply of emergency and transitional housing in York Region relative to need is contributing to the increase.

As presented to Council at the November 2023 Special Council meeting on homelessness, based on current growth trajectories the number of people experiencing homelessness in York Region annually could increase to between 2,100 and 2,300 by 2030 (excludes asylum seekers which cannot be forecasted at this time).

York Region's emergency and transitional housing infrastructure is insufficient to address growing needs

York Region has fewer emergency beds than its peer municipalities as shown in Appendix B. The Region's 183 emergency beds and 66 transitional housing beds are regularly at or near capacity, because of increased demand, and because it takes longer for people to move out. The average length of stay in emergency housing grew from 26.5 days in 2019 to 49.3 days in 2023. As people stay longer in emergency housing, less capacity is available for others to get help.

When there is no capacity in the emergency and transitional housing system, alternate approaches are used to provide people experiencing homelessness with accommodations:

- Overflow beds are added in common areas at emergency housing facilities
- Seasonal shelters
- Hotels are used when other options are not reasonably available

The solution for homelessness is a permanent home, however York Region does not have enough affordable housing

High housing costs, low incomes and a limited supply of available units make ending homelessness a challenge. The Region funds community housing and other subsidy programs, however, demand exceeds supply. As of December 31, 2023, there were 15,716 households on the wait list for subsidized housing.

Programs such as the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) have proven to be an important tool to assist people experiencing or at risk of homelessness find and keep permanent housing, by providing a financial subsidy eligible households can use to help pay market rent. In 2023, York Region was allocated over \$4.8 million in provincial funding and enrolled 527 households in COHB, including 214 households who were experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Funding amounts have not been consistent, and York Region regularly allocates all available funding within a few months. Success of the program relies on sufficient affordable and available market rental supply. As outlined in the Housing Solutions Progress Report, the Region continues to advocate for predictable investment in COHB.

The Region's Asylum Seeker response has moved into Homelessness Community Programs however it is not integrated into the System Plan

The Region has been operating interim accommodations and providing supports to meet the unique settlement needs of asylum seekers arriving in York Region. The Region is continuing to work with local municipalities and partners to help ensure asylum seekers are supported through their settlement journey.

The asylum seeker response is now being delivered within Homelessness Community Programs, however, there is additional work to be done to assess the needs of asylum seekers and provide appropriate supports, such as forecasting, program review and the impact of potential new developments such as the reception center to be created in Peel Region.

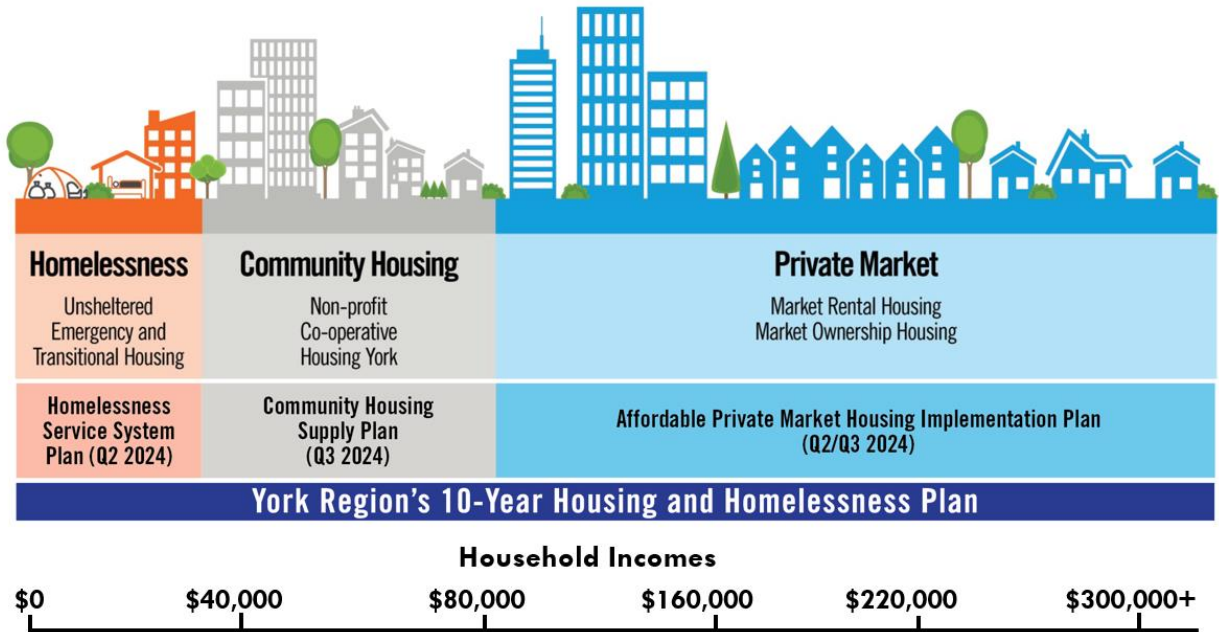
Proposed System Plan supports legislated responsibility to develop a 10-year housing and homelessness plan

As Service Manager, York Region is mandated to develop a 10-year housing and homelessness plan that includes a community needs assessment and sets out objectives and targets to address identified issues. Council approved York Region's first 10-year housing and homelessness plan, *Housing Solutions*, in [June 2014](#), and a significant update to the plan in [October 2019](#) following a five-year review. [Housing Solutions: A place for everyone – Phase 2](#), ended in 2023.

Housing Solutions 2023 Progress Report is provided on the same agenda as this report for Committee of the Whole's consideration on June 13, 2024. It reports on progress made in 2023 and achievements over the last five years on the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. As communicated in March 2024, the next 10-year housing and homelessness plan is under development, targeted for Council's consideration in Q2 2025.

If approved, the System Plan would be the first of three implementation plans supporting the next 10-year housing and homelessness plan, as shown in Figure 1. The proposed System Plan will build on work undertaken over the past five years to increase service capacity, strengthen partnerships and coordination, and enhance the use of data to support ongoing system planning and address system gaps, while maintaining a focus on helping people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness to find and keep stable housing. Priority Areas, activities and milestones identified in the System Plan will be reflected in the next 10-year plan.

Figure 1
York Region Housing Continuum, Related Implementation Plans and Households Served



4. Analysis

Proposed System Plan is informed by community consultation and research

The System Plan was informed by research, analysis of approaches used by other jurisdictions, and engagement, including key informant interviews with members of Council, sector organizations, service providers and people with lived experience. Demand forecasting was done to identify infrastructure and service requirements needed by 2033.

The community engagement process focused on two aspirational goals and three priority areas, discussed below, to explore community needs and gaps and challenges in the service system and identify key actions to strengthen the homelessness service system between 2024 and 2027. Through consultations, the goals and priority areas were validated and a fourth priority area, Advocacy and Engagement, was identified to address areas where the federal and provincial governments have responsibility.

Demand forecasting identified the need for additional service system capacity

Demand forecasting completed for York Region identified recommended increases to service system capacity to meet the current level of need and support the Region and its partners to respond to continued growth. Capacity increases needed by 2033 include:

- 300 additional emergency housing beds
- 350 additional transitional housing units
- Additional rent subsidy and case management supports to respond to chronic homelessness need to increase from 100 people supported to over 600 people supported
- Capacity of the Outreach Services Program (front-line support for people who may be living unsheltered in the community) needs to increase to address increases in visible homelessness in communities
- Capacity of the Homelessness Prevention Program and Housing Stability Program (homelessness prevention programs that help to keep people housed) needs to increase. These are key homelessness prevention programs that help to keep people housed

Service demand forecasting for asylum seeker needs is challenging due to the high degree of uncertainty with asylum seeker arrival data and changing immigration policies. Additional analysis and engagement with community agencies is planned to further refine and validate the projected capacity increase requirements and estimated costs.

System Plan has two aspirational goals and four Priority Areas

Priority Areas, objectives, activities and milestones set out in the System Plan are framed by two aspirational goals that will guide the Region's overall approach to service delivery and system management:

- Goal 1: End chronic homelessness in York Region by prioritizing prevention to keep people from losing their housing in the first place; supporting people who experience homelessness to obtain stable housing as quickly as possible; and investing in housing retention and wraparound support services to ensure people remain housed, including programs that use a Housing First approach.
- Goal 2: Strengthen York Region's human rights-based approach to addressing homelessness by working with partners to deliver supports and services that reflect the personal rights and dignity of the people who need them; ensuring support services are equitably provided; focusing the response to encampments and unsheltered homelessness on helping people connect to appropriate housing and support services, and meaningfully engaging people with lived experience.

Activities in the System Plan are organized under four Priority Areas. The Priority Areas and examples of proposed activities and milestones are summarized in Table 1. All proposed activities, milestones and performance measures are set out in the detailed implementation plan, with timelines for each milestone (see Appendix C of the Attachment). Activities and milestones set out in the System Plan will address the growth in homelessness in York Region and support continued development of a homelessness service system focused on ensuring that if or when a person experiences homelessness, it is a rare, brief and one-time event. Milestones in the System Plan recommended as rapid deployment actions to begin in 2024 are marked with an *.

**Table 1:
Priority Areas for 2024 to 2027 Homelessness Service System Plan**

Priority Area	Activities	Milestones
1. Prevention and Diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve eviction prevention • Enhance emergency housing diversion programs to help people connect with alternatives to emergency housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities to support and enhance eviction prevention programs • Develop a “prevention toolkit” to provide an information resource for community service providers and residents • Identify options to enhance the Diversion Program
2. Intervention and Housing Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more wraparound supports including system navigation, housing-focused case management, and service referrals to help people find and keep housing • Provide housing programs for people with high needs and complex barriers, including people experiencing chronic homelessness • Increase emergency housing capacity to reflect need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Outreach Program supports for people who are living unsheltered/in encampments by expanding hours and adding services* • Develop an encampment protocol in partnership with local municipalities including bylaw, police, fire, and other community agencies to coordinate the response to people who are unsheltered/in encampments* • Strengthen and expand Housing First approaches to programs to support people with complex needs, including funding for programs that help people who are chronically homeless* • Partner with local municipalities to identify locations and options to build new Emergency and Transitional Housing • Increase emergency and transitional beds capacity until such time as the Emergency and Transitional Housing

Priority Area	Activities	Milestones
		capacity is sufficient to address need*
3. Systems Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with partners to effectively manage the service system Improve coordination and planning across the service system to connect people to appropriate and available services Enhance use of tools and data to support system planning and set service targets Strengthen the capacity, capability and competency of the service system and service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a homelessness system leadership table Evaluate the Emergency Housing Central Intake Line to identify opportunities for continuous improvement Expand use of data forecasting for long-term system planning Enhance training for frontline staff and service providers to support integration of best practices and new innovations into the service system
4. Advocacy and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an agenda to guide advocacy to the Provincial and Federal governments to address structural and system issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased operating and capital funding from the Provincial and Federal governments

York Region proposes to implement rapid deployment actions starting in summer 2024

Staff have identified six actions that can be initiated quickly in response to Council direction to develop a rapid deployment plan for emergency and transitional housing. The proposed rapid deployment actions are listed in Appendix A. Rapid deployment actions focus on services that help people experiencing homelessness meet their immediate needs, to become stably housed, and to support progress toward activities and milestones identified under Priority Area 2 – Intervention and Housing Stability in the System Plan.

Principles used to identify rapid deployment actions are:

- Actions would begin in 2024; preferably beginning this summer
- Reduce the number of people living unsheltered and expand emergency housing capacity
- Contract with existing service providers where possible to support rapid implementation
- Fiscally prudent, practical, and targeting immediate results

Proposed actions are aligned with the System Plan priorities. Table 2 provides an overview of the actions and Appendix A provides fulsome details. All ongoing costs are net new operating costs.

Table 2
Proposed Rapid Deployment Actions

Actions	Description	2024 Estimated Operating Costs	Annual Ongoing Operating Costs
Add beds in existing emergency and transitional housing facilities starting Summer 2024	One-time funding to Housing York Inc. to increase existing emergency and transitional housing capacity by 30 beds	\$200,000 (one-time funding)	-
	Annual operating costs to support new beds (e.g. meals, supports, community agency staffing)	\$640,000	\$1,530,000
Add beds in hotels starting Summer 2024	Fund existing emergency and transitional housing providers to provide 34 additional hotel room beds and support services	\$830,000	\$2,000,000
Add seasonal shelter beds starting October 2024	Fund existing emergency and transitional housing providers to provide 75 additional seasonal shelter beds (Heat Relief Plan, and Cold Weather Response)	\$1,000,000	\$3,000,000
Increase capacity of the Community Paramedicine Outreach Response Team program starting Summer 2024	Add four permanent Outreach Workers and four permanent Community Paramedics to provide supports to people living unsheltered/in encampments	\$200,000	\$480,000
Increase capacity of Outreach Workers to support clients living unsheltered/in encampments starting Summer 2024	Add four temporary Outreach Workers to provide supports to people living unsheltered/in encampments and expand hours of service to 10 p.m.	\$190,000	\$420,000
Additional program funding to help people who are chronically homeless starting in 2024	Provide funding to service providers to provide supports to additional people who are chronically homeless	-	\$1,000,000
Total		\$3,060,000	\$8,430,000

Note: 2024 net operating impact will be absorbed within the approved CHS budget. 2025 net operating impact requires a 0.5% tax levy increase above approved outlook (approximately \$7 million), with the balance being funded through the existing CHS budget.

Proposed rapid deployment actions will create 139 new emergency, transitional, hotel and seasonal shelter beds

Table 3 provides a breakdown of existing and proposed emergency, transitional, hotel and seasonal shelter beds.

Table 3
Proposed New Emergency and Transitional Housing Capacity

Bed Type	Total Current Beds	Total Proposed New Beds
Emergency Housing	183	15
Transitional Housing	66	15
Seasonal Shelter*	50	75
Hotel Program	34	34
Total	333	139

*Note: seasonal shelter beds do not operate year-round.

Capital funding will be required to support development of new emergency and transitional housing capacity to meet growing need

Rapid redeployment actions are intended to bridge the gap until the Region's supply of permanent emergency and transitional beds can be increased to meet need. Meeting these needs will require land and capital funding in future years.

Based on current numbers and the 2030 forecast, staff are developing a capital plan to be part of the 2025 budget process for construction of two new emergency and transitional housing projects. The two new projects will add approximately 75 emergency and 60 transition housing beds to the system, a total of approximately 135 new beds. The estimated capital cost of these two projects is \$70 million (includes cost of land). Ongoing operating costs will also be required for new facilities, with those costs to be brought forward in future operating budget submissions.

The two new projects are in addition to the three existing emergency housing facilities to be replaced already included in the 10-year capital plan. Where practical and subject to funding, opportunities to expand their capacity upon redevelopment will be explored, including the addition of transitional housing. The facilities are:

- Porter Place Men's shelter, 30 beds, Town of East Gwillimbury
- Leeder Place Family shelter, 60 beds, Town of East Gwillimbury
- Sutton Youth Services, 16 beds, Town of Georgina

Increasing the supply of affordable housing options, including community housing, is also critical to reduce the risk of homelessness and help people remain stably housed. To help address this need, two new Regional Community Housing Projects will be considered as part of the 2025 budget process.

A review to identify potential locations for emergency, transitional and community housing is currently underway

Planning Services staff are currently consolidating data on Regionally and municipally owned lands that may be available for housing initiatives including emergency and transitional housing, community housing or partnerships with the private sector for market affordable housing. Corporate Services is concurrently completing a review of Regionally-owned properties and buildings to explore additional opportunities. This work supports the Community Housing Supply Plan and Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan and is targeted for completion in Q4 2024.

As sites are identified, pre-development activities will commence, such as retaining planning and architectural design consultants to secure approvals and prepare construction documents. Work will be funded in 2024 from the existing Community and Health Services capital budget. Additional funding for pre-development work and to advance construction will be sought through annual budget approval processes.

Additional 2024 work in support of the rapid deployment actions is planned

York Region will continue to advocate in partnership with local municipalities, to the provincial and federal governments for additional operating and capital funding to address the homelessness and housing supply issues.

Given the rapid increase in the number of encampments, the Region's practices and protocols for working with local municipalities (especially by-law enforcement) require updating. Development of a new, comprehensive protocol is planned to start in fall 2024, in partnership with local municipalities and other stakeholders.

Finally, the Region has received requests from local municipalities to again offer training to their staff on homelessness and available programs. Staff will be providing training upon request, beginning in summer 2024.

Association of Municipalities Ontario and Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario provide an opportunity for elected officials to engage in advocacy

Regarding the request for staff to explore establishing a housing and homelessness advocacy group consisting of elected officials, staff have conducted research and have engaged with the Association of Municipalities Ontario and Ontario Municipal Social Services Association. There are two tables of elected officials where housing and homelessness advocacy is discussed: Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario and Association of Municipalities Ontario Social Policy and Human Services Transformation Task Force.

Further advocacy from the Region on housing and homelessness could be brought forward to both tables as needed. In addition, a meeting of federal, provincial and local municipal elected officials to discuss the response to homelessness may be considered. At a staff level, the Region will continue to work with community partners and through existing tables as appropriate.

Advocacy is important as Federal and Provincial funding will be critical in supporting the Region to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to find and keep housing. The Region will continue to advocate for additional federal and provincial investment, including direct funding to respond to homelessness, permanent portable benefit programs, such as the COHB, multi-year funding, sustained federal and provincial funding, and policy changes to increase the supply and access to affordable housing of all types.

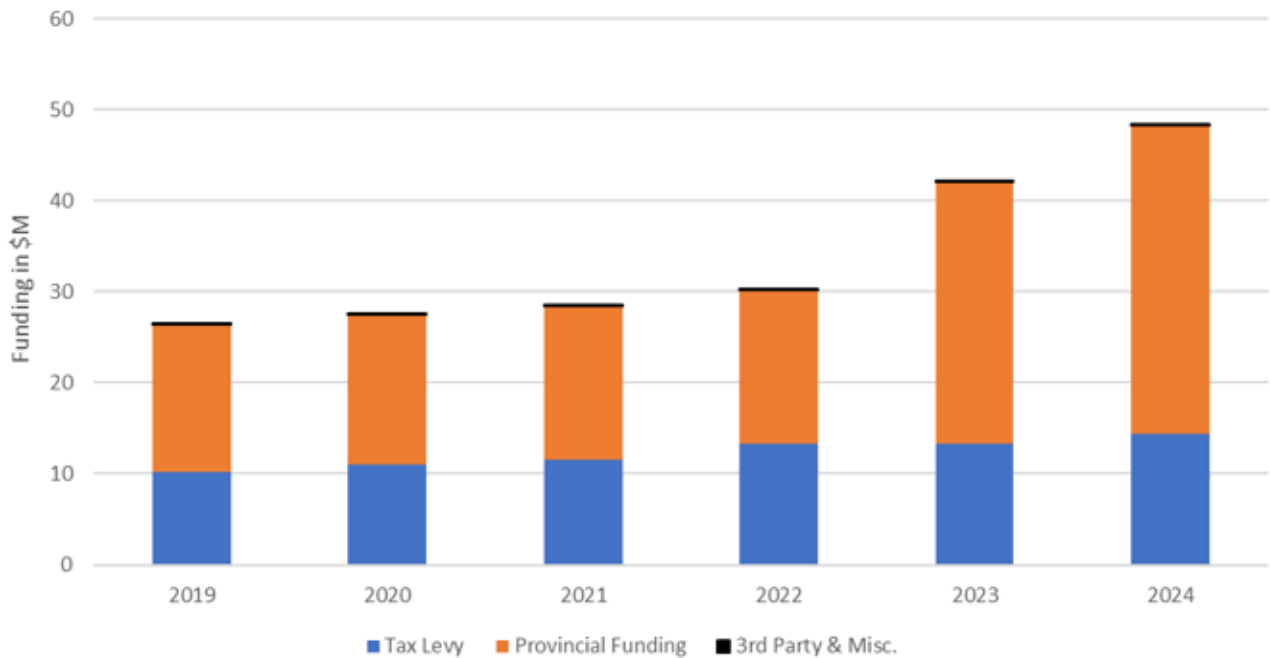
The System Plan supports the Healthy Communities Area of Focus

Through a focus on helping residents who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness to find and keep housing, the System Plan will contribute to York Region's [2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan](#) priority to Support Community Well-being, and aligns with Council's Vision for York Region as strong, caring and safe communities.

5. Financial Considerations

Total gross expenditures in the approved 2024 operating budget for Homelessness Community Programs are \$48.5 million. \$34 million (70.1%) is funded by the province, \$14.4 million (29.5%) is funded by tax levy and \$0.1 million funded by other funding sources, such as Federal Reaching Home funding. Figure 2 below shows the Homelessness Community Programs budget and funding sources for 2019 to 2024.

**Figure 2
Homelessness Community Programs Budget - Funding Sources 2019 to 2024**



*Note: The Region also received approximately \$48 million between 2020 and 2022 in temporary Social Services Relief Funding to assist with responding to social service impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Provincial funding in the Homelessness Community Programs budget has increased by \$17.8 million or 110% since 2019, from \$16.2 million to \$34 million. Tax levy funding for this budget has increased by \$4.1 million or 40%; \$1.5 million of the increase is from transfer of existing tax levy funding from the Community Investment Program to Homelessness Community Programs to ensure continued funding of critical homelessness projects (such as seasonal shelters).

York Region received additional funding from the Province in 2023, however it is not enough to address increasing homelessness in the Region

In March 2023, the Province increased total Homelessness Prevention Program funding by \$202 million. As a result, York Region’s allocation increased by \$15.8 million over the 2022/23 funding allocation of \$20.9 million, bringing the new total to \$36.7 million for fiscal 2023/24. \$33.4 million of this funding is included in the Homelessness Community Programs budget, with the remaining \$3.3 million funding rent supplements under the Housing budget. This additional funding is to help address York Region’s historical underfunding from the province, as reported in the 2021 Ontario Auditor General’s Report. The province has committed to providing \$36.7 million every year to York Region through its Homelessness Prevention Program until 2025/26.

Council approved Critical Social Infrastructure Funding to help address critical social issues

In [February 2023](#) Council approved \$12.8 million in funding to the Community and Health Services budget. One of the three priorities identified was homelessness with allocated funding of \$4.8 million. New provincial funding received by the Region was used to replace the Regional funding originally committed for Council-endorsed homelessness initiatives. These initiatives, summarized in Table 4, expanded capacity to help people experiencing homelessness meet their immediate needs and provide longer-term support to stabilize in housing. The System Plan and rapid deployment actions recommended in this report will further support Homelessness Community Programs to respond to growing needs and continue to build capacity to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness where possible and provide supports to help more people become and remain stably housed.

**Table 4:
Impact of Critical Social Infrastructure Projects**

Initiative	Outcome
Extend Inn from the Cold to provide year-round emergency and transitional housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added 25 ongoing emergency beds and 5 transitional units to the service system
Heat Relief Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided additional supports for people experiencing homelessness during extreme hot weather, such as providing supplies and drop-in programs • Over 450 cooling kits provided in 2023
Expanded Community Paramedicine and Outreach Response Team (CPORT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided primary health care, mental health and addiction support and social services support to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness • 505 unique clients supported by CPORT in 2023, including 83 at known encampment locations
Added housing supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded service providers to offer temporary rent assistance and support services to help people stabilize in housing • 144 unique clients supported in 2023

Proposed rapid deployment actions would be funded from within Community and Health Services Department budget for 2024; funding will be needed for 2025

Current projections of Community and Health Services operating surplus for 2024 suggest the rapid deployment actions implemented in 2024 (approximately \$3.1 million) can be managed within the Community and Health Services 2024 approved budget.

All rapid deployment actions would require continued funding in 2025. There are significant initial investments required such as the hiring and training of staff by funded community agencies and the Region, and continuation of rent assistance funding for unsheltered people that have been housed. Based on current information and estimates, Community and Health Services cannot fully fund these actions in 2025 or beyond.

The net operating impact in 2025 is anticipated to require a 0.5% tax levy increase above the approved outlook (resulting in approximately \$7 million), with the balance funded through the existing Community and Health Services budget. Staff will work through the 2025 budget process to request these funds and will explore all potential alternate funding sources including any available federal or provincial funding opportunities.

A capital plan for new emergency and transitional housing is being developed

Two new Emergency and Transitional Housing projects will be presented for consideration as part of the 2025 10-year capital plan, at an estimated cost of \$70 million. Ongoing operating costs will also be required for these facilities. Funding options for the two new projects will be put forward through the budget process. Pre-development work will commence in 2024, funded through the existing approved Community and Health Services capital budget.

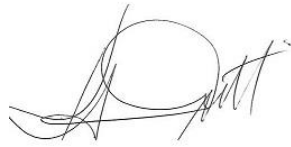
6. Local Impact

Homelessness affects all local municipalities in York Region. The Region engaged with local municipalities, community agencies, service providers, and people with lived experience to develop the System Plan.

7. Conclusion

Homelessness is a growing and complex challenge requiring a whole of community approach, including partnerships with other systems, community partners, local municipalities, and service providing organizations. The System Plan and the proposed rapid deployment actions will support York Region in working collaboratively with system partners to take action to address homelessness over the next three years and beyond. Continued advocacy for additional funding and support to the provincial and federal governments is also critical to supporting the ongoing response to support people who may be at risk of or experiencing homelessness in the Region.

For more information on this report, please contact Kevin Pal, General Manager at (877)-464-9675 ext. 72150. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

Katherine Chislett

Commissioner of Community and Health Services



Approved for Submission:

Erin Mahoney

Chief Administrative Officer

May 30, 2024

#16044409

Appendix A – Rapid Deployment Actions

Appendix B – Emergency and Transitional Housing Capacity

Attachment 1 – 2024 to 2027 Homelessness Service System Plan #16178578

Rapid Deployment Actions

Proposed Actions	2024 Estimated Costs	Annual Ongoing Costs	Descriptions	Key Outcomes
Add beds in existing emergency and transitional housing facilities	\$200,000 (one-time funding)	None	One-time capital funding to increase existing emergency and transitional housing capacity by 30 beds	Required furniture and equipment purchased and 30 beds made available for people.
	\$640,000	\$1,530,000	Annual operating costs to support new beds (e.g. meals, supports, community agency staffing)	Up to 120 additional people supported in Emergency and Transitional housing annually ¹
Add beds in hotels	\$840,000	\$2,000,000	Fund existing emergency and transitional housing providers to provide 34 additional hotel room beds and support services	Up to 136 additional people supported in hotels rooms annually ²
Add seasonal shelter beds	\$1,000,000	\$3,000,000	Fund existing emergency and transitional housing providers to provide 75 additional seasonal shelter beds (Heat Relief Plan, and Cold Weather Response)	Up to 525 additional people supported in seasonal shelters per cold weather season ³
Increase capacity of the Community Paramedicine and Outreach Response Team program	\$200,000	\$480,000	Add four permanent Outreach Workers and four permanent Community Paramedics to provide supports to people living unsheltered/in encampments and expand hours of service	Up to 248 additional people supported with social services through CPORT annually ⁴

¹ Based on historical data indicating up to four people may be provided services per one bed, annually

² Based on historical data indicating up to four people may be provided services per one bed, annually

³ Length of stay per client in seasonal shelters is highly variable and can change based on severity of weather. Seasonal shelters support many unique individuals on a nightly basis.

⁴ Based on historical data indicating an average caseload of approximately 60 clients per outreach worker providing intensive case management, per year

Proposed Actions	2024 Estimated Costs	Annual Ongoing Costs	Descriptions	Key Outcomes
Increase capacity of Outreach Workers to support clients living unsheltered/in encampments	\$185,000	\$420,000	Add four temporary Outreach Workers to provide supports to people living unsheltered/in encampments and expand hours of service	Up to 268 additional people supported through Outreach Services annually ⁵
Additional program funding to help people who are chronically homeless	-	\$1,000,000	Provide funding to service providers to provide supports to additional people who are chronically homeless	It is expected that with this additional funding, between 250 to 300 people will be supported with 180 receiving rent subsidy ⁶

⁵ Based on historical data indicating an average caseload of approximately 60 clients per encampment outreach worker, per year

⁶ Based on 2023 program data about 200 people were supported with about 100 of these people receiving rent subsidy

Comparison of Emergency and Transitional Housing Capacity with Neighbouring Service Managers

Service Manager	Number of Beds	Population*
York Region	183 emergency housing beds 66 transitional housing beds	1,173,103 (21 beds/100,000 population)
	249 total number of beds	
Waterloo Region	499 emergency shelter beds 130 interim/hybrid beds	587,165 (107 beds/100,000 population)
	629 total number of beds	
Peel Region	442 emergency housing beds 72 transitional housing beds	1,451,022 (35 beds/100,000 population)
	514 total number of beds	
City of London	305 emergency shelter beds 110 transitional rooms 16 Hub respite beds 27 Hub transitional beds	543,551 (84 beds/100,000 population)
	458 total number of beds	
City of Hamilton	408 emergency housing beds 80 transitional housing beds	569,353 (86 beds/100,000 population)
	488 total number of beds	
Durham Region	150 emergency housing beds 44 transitional housing beds	696,992 (28 beds/100,000 population)
	194 total number of beds	