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Report of the Chief Administrative Officer  
**2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan Year 1 (2023) Progress Report**

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## 1. Recommendation

Regional Clerk circulate this report to local municipalities.

## 2. Purpose

This report provides a summary on progress made in 2023, year one of the [2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan](#).

### Key Points:

- In 2023, 34 of 48 (71%) of *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* performance measures were trending in the desired direction (see Attachment 1)
- The *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* builds on the success of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan*, with 19 of 31 performance measures from the previous plan being carried over for monitoring and reporting
- York Region's Strategic Plan progress reporting is exception-based and provides explanations for performance measure variances (see Appendix A)

## 3. Background

### **Strategic Plan sets out critical steps needed for the Region to move towards 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. Strategic Plan alignment with Vision ensures decisions made today set a course for the desired future.

On [February 23, 2023](#), Council approved the *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* tabled with the *2023 to 2026 Regional Budget*. This plan builds upon successes of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan*, with 19 of 31 performance measures carrying over for monitoring and reporting. The *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* introduces additional performance measures, including resident satisfaction with core services and measures to sustain and increase affordable housing choices. It includes additional internal service measures supporting core service delivery under Corporate Management and Governance.

York Region released an [introduction video](#) providing an overview of the *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* available on [York.ca/StratPlan](#). Strategic Plan progress reports are presented to Council annually. This report provides a summary on progress made on performance measures in year one (2023) of the *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan*.

## **Performance accountability considers York Region’s specific contributions to well-being of our communities**

York Region has 15 core services. Performance accountability is measured through performance measures capturing how well a regional core service contributes to our communities’ well-being.

Performance measures in the *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* are tracked to ensure objectives are met, with variances reported to Council annually. These performance measures are anchored in York Region’s 15 core services to ensure the Region continues to meet its legislative obligations while remaining flexible and responsive to changing needs of our residents.

## **4. Analysis**

### **2023 TO 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Performance measures play a role in showcasing York Region’s direct impact on well-being of our communities. Since 2015, York Region has applied a Results-Based Accountability® (RBA) framework approach to our strategic planning process. This framework is a comprehensive method for accountability, budgeting, and ensuring value for money.

York Region’s Year 1 (2023) Progress Report summarizes progress using baseline trends over five data points where feasible, comparing 2023 data with 2019 data. While annual variances are common, focusing on baseline trends over a five-year impact provides more meaningful understanding of progress over the Council term.

This method ensures reporting focuses on overall impact of our efforts on our communities’ well-being, and goes beyond year-to-year changes. Focus is on achieving meaningful results in turning performance measure curves in the desired direction.

### **York Region received the Goodman Award for Excellence in Strategy**

In 2023, York Region received the Goodman Award for Excellence in Strategy from the International Association for Strategy Professionals. The award recognition letter commended the Region for

*"demonstrated exceptional levels of excellence in strategy that stood out... built on firm foundations by adding a long-term policy commitment to strategy through an accountability framework that applies results-based accountability from senior management to all regional employees."*

## **Seventy-one percent of Strategic Plan performance measures were trending in the desired direction**

In 2023, 34 of 48 (71%) performance measures trended in the desired direction. Attachment 1 is a Year 1 (2023) Progress Report summary with tables summarizing all 48 performance measure trends. Thirteen of York Region's 15 core services, including internal services supporting core service delivery captured under Corporate Management and Governance, have performance measures in the Strategic Plan trending in the desired direction. Activities supporting performance measures' progress were captured in the [2024 Budget](#) (approved December 21, 2023) and will be highlighted in the [2023 Community Report](#) to Council in June 2024.

York Region accomplished a great deal in 2023. To highlight a few achievements, York Region:

- Achieved higher-than-forecast transit ridership as part of post-pandemic recovery while continuing to make the network more efficient
- Increased collection of unpaid Provincial Offences Act fines through progressive methods, creating enhanced road safety in our communities by deterring violations, promoting compliance, and encouraging safer driving behaviours
- Advanced planning and development for 563 new community housing units
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions through a total of 14 electric buses in the transit fleet and adding five fully electric vans to the corporate fleet
- For the third consecutive year, was named on the Forbes list of Canada's Best Employers in 2023. York Region was recognized as the second highest-ranking government employer in Canada and 36<sup>th</sup> overall among 300 organizations.

## **Twenty-one percent of Strategic Plan performance measures are not trending in the desired direction**

Ten out of 48 (21%) performance measures in the Strategic Plan are currently not trending in the desired direction. Attachment 1 identifies performance measures not trending in the desired direction. Current performance measures not trending in the desired direction span five of York Region's 15 core services (Transit, Public Health, Community Housing, Social Assistance, Water), including internal services under Corporate Management and Governance supporting core service delivery.

Performance measures for transit and public health were significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although these performance measures were not trending positively in 2023, there has been a remarkable recovery from the pandemic's impact. Service resumptions are well underway, with the aim of reaching pre-pandemic levels.

Availability of affordable housing options across York Region remains limited, and financial instability has increased, affecting residents' ability to maintain housing. Factors such as high rental costs, rising interest rates, and overall cost of living, combined with low rental vacancy rates, have negatively impacted residents' housing stability. These challenges have had a noticeable impact on community housing performance measure trends.

Appendix A is an exception report summarizing these performance measures, outlining contributing factors for performance relating to each measure, and activities planned to support future progress.

### **Performance measures without trend information**

Two (4%) performance measures in the Strategic Plan currently do not have trend information available for reporting (see Attachment 1). Annual progress reports summarize progress using baseline trends over five data points where feasible, comparing 2023 data with 2019 data. However, there may be cases where five data points are not available (e.g. new performance measure being monitored and reported).

Minimum number of data points needed to establish a trend can vary depending on the context and specific analysis of the performance measure. In general, at least three data points is considered minimum to begin identifying a trend. With three data points, patterns and directionality in the data can start to be seen, although more data points provide more reliable trend analysis. These measures lack trend information, making it challenging to assess their progress at this time for the Year 1 (2023) Progress Report.

### **Performance measures with data not available**

Data is currently not available for reporting on two (4%) performance measures in the Strategic Plan. Appendix A highlights the two performance measures, includes a summary of why the data is not available for reporting and activities planned to support future reporting.

## **5. Financial Considerations**

Costs associated with delivery of the *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* are aligned with the multi-year budget. The [2024 Budget](#), which Council approved on December 21, 2023, supports fiscal responsibility within a complex environment and continues to focus on delivering the priorities of the *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* while responding to fiscal challenges.

Impacts to the Region's budget directly affect 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 *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan* shares similar priorities as the local municipalities. Progress made in year one of the Region's four-year Strategic Plan continues to support strong alignment with priorities profiled in many of the local municipalities' plans.

## 7. Conclusion

The Year 1 (2023) Progress Report is the first in a series of annual progress reports on the *2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan*. York Region accomplished a great deal in 2023, and this report highlights the Region's achievements and significant progress made towards the Strategic Plan priorities and objectives. In Year 1 (2023), 71% (34 of 48) of performance measures are trending in the desired direction. This demonstrates York Region's dedicated commitment made in year one in taking specific, implementable strategies and actions 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: **Erin Mahoney**  
Chief Administrative Officer

April 25, 2024  
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Appendix A – Exception Report Summary  
Attachment 1 – Year 1 (2023) Progress Report Placemat

## Exception Report Summary

### 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan Year 1 (2023) Progress Report

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



#### ECONOMIC VITALITY

##### Maintain # of York Region Transit service passenger trips per capita

York Region Transit ridership has shown a remarkable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic's impact, surpassing initial expectations. Annual ridership for 2023 is approaching pre-pandemic levels and is projected to continue trending in the desired direction.

At the beginning of 2020, ridership drastically dropped due to the pandemic, resulting in a significant decrease in service passenger trips per capita. In 2023, transit ridership increased, with riders returning most notably on weekends and on Viva and base routes. These routes provide connections to the TTC subway, industrial areas, and key destinations along major travel corridors. Ridership per capita increased in 2023 as riders returned to transit.

Planned activities over this Council term to support this measure include implementing initiatives, projects, and engagement outlined in the Transportation Master Plan and Transit 5-Year Business Plan. These efforts aim to make transit more convenient and accessible through service improvements and fare integration with provincial efforts to encourage ridership.

##### Increase % of residents satisfied with York Region Transit

York Region is above the 2023 average municipal norm of 51% satisfaction with transit sourced from the Citizen's First 2023 Government Performance Benchmarking Survey.

Public Works staff reviewed call centre data to examine customer feedback from 2019 to 2023 to identify leading categories related to transit operations. In reviewing feedback, the following was observed:

- Given lower ridership, the pandemic years impacted the number and nature of interactions with lower feedback levels observed over the 2020 to 2022 period
- "Bus late" was the top interaction recorded over the five-year period (~8,000 cases)
  - 2019: 53% of these cases generated in 2019 alone. "Route consistently late" was also reported as a top five concern comprising another 165+ cases
  - 2023: 24% of late bus cases generated in 2023. This aligns with improved overall On-Time Performance for transit exhibited over the same period

- Over a five-year period from 2019 to 2023, top three interactions recorded included:
  1. Bus late
  2. Argumentative, rude, not helpful, uncooperative
  3. Drove by waiting passenger
- Passenger Issues and Incidents is the leading interaction recorded for Mobility-On-Request Services (in 2023 and over the five-year period)

Planned activities over this Council term to support this performance measure include the implementation of initiatives, projects and engagement outlined in the Transportation Master Plan, York Region Transit 5-Year Business Plan and Transit Fleet Electrification Plan. A transit customer satisfaction survey is also planned to be conducted by early 2025. These initiatives aim to enhance transit services and overall customer satisfaction.



## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

### **Increase % of 17-year-old students in compliance with *Immunization of School Pupils Act* among designated cohorts of students (negatively impacted due to COVID-19 pandemic)**

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the pause of *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA) enforcement activities. In 2023, resumption of in-school and community-based immunization clinics offered a variety of routine immunizations. However, the target of 59% compliance among 17-year olds was not achieved because this age group was not included in the phased resumption of ISPA student suspension activities and compliance enforcement in local schools in 2023. ISPA enforcement activities restarted in the 2023/2024 school year, focusing on 7- and 8-year-old students starting in January 2024. Rates are projected to return to pre-pandemic levels with resumption of reporting and enforcement activities in the 2023-24 school year.

Planned activities over this Council term to support this performance measure include the continued resumption of ISPA student suspension activities with an aim to improving compliance among designated cohorts of students.

### **Increase % of individuals and families remaining stably housed after six months who were at risk of homelessness**

Affordable housing options across York Region continue to be limited and financial instability has increased, impacting residents' ability to maintain housing. Factors such as high cost of rent, increasing interest rates and cost of living, in combination with low rental vacancy rates, negatively impacted residents' ability to maintain housing.

Housing retention rates at six-months have remained stable, with rates comparable between 2023 (79%) and 2022 (81%). This composite measure includes data from multiple Homelessness Community Programs providing housing stability supports.

Planned activities over this Council term to support this performance measure include strengthening homelessness services and supports to prevent and reduce homelessness, as well as supporting housing stability. Other planned activities include advocating for more affordable housing and implementing recommendations from the Homelessness Service System Plan and the next 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan, including the Community Housing Master Plan and Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan.

### **Decrease # of monthly social assistance cases per 100,000 households**

York Region Social Assistance administers the provincial Ontario Works program, which provides financial support for basic needs and shelter. There has been a substantial increase in social assistance (Ontario Works) cases per 100,000 households in York Region. From March 2018 to December 2023, the overall social assistance (Ontario Works) caseload in York Region surged by 92%. Factors such as unemployment and lack of coordinated retraining programs dedicated to job vacancies, increasing interest rates and cost of living resulted in more people needing financial support for basic needs and shelter.

The provincial government is continuing to implement a multi-year plan for social assistance delivery in Ontario, which includes centralizing intake of Ontario Works applications at the provincial level. Municipalities now focus on helping people navigate and access supports (such as housing, primary health services, child care, literacy programs, and transportation) to address barriers preventing them from participating in employment. The Region continues to offer supports such as tax filing assistance, programs to build financial literacy and empowerment, and transit assistance.

Planned activities over this Council term to support this performance measure include providing stability supports to help individuals overcome barriers and reach their financial and life goals.



## **SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT**

### **Decrease # of megalitres of treated water consumed per 100,000 population**

This measure tracks water consumption at York Region. Annual values were determined using treated water consumed data (annual billed volume) and serviced population data.

Weather plays a significant factor in seasonal water use fluctuations, particularly in 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 the greater the amount of water consumed. The slight increase in 2022 over 2021 may be attributed to drier summer months, and in 2023, the decrease may be due to the summer months temperature being lower with higher rainfall compared to 2022.



Planned activities over this Council term include supporting businesses and institutions to reduce water use, helping residents be efficient, and further reducing outdoor demands. There will be a renewed focus on updating non-revenue water key performance metrics, improving water audit data quality, and reducing non-revenue water and system losses in both the Regional and local municipal distribution systems.



## **GOOD GOVERNMENT**

### **Increase % of residents that agree their interaction with York Region was easy**

In fall 2023, the majority of residents who contacted a York Region representative agreed that interacting with York Region was easy (75%). This 2023 result (75%) is 7% below the five-year average (82%).

When benchmarked against other Canadian municipalities using an accredited research vendor, York Region outperformed the 2023 municipal norm for “ease of interaction,” which stood at 69%. Groups such as the Institute for Citizen-Centred Services have cited that issue resolution has been a leading factor in customer service assessment across Canada (and all levels of government). Other areas of priority for residents include shorter wait times, user-friendly websites, and higher quality information when interacting with government services. In 2023, York Region saw a decline in scores for ‘contact resolution’ (63% resolved), and ‘ease of finding information’ (69% easy), which may be related to current ease of interaction scores.

Planned activities over this Council term include content modifications to York.ca to make it easier for customers to find the programs and services they are looking for; introducing enhanced self-serve options to enable customers to manage their own services on their own time through the channel of their choice, use of technologies to support customers, such as Live Chat, Chatbots and generative AI; continued customer service training, process reviews and improvements, and enhancing navigation support and referrals for Access York customers.

### **Increase % of surveyed residents who would speak positively about their experience with York Region staff**

In fall 2023, nearly 7 in 10 (69%) residents who contacted a York Region representative expressed that they were likely to speak positively about the services they received from York Region. The 2023 result (69%) is 4% below the five-year average (73%).

Across Canada, and as cited by groups such as the Institute for Citizen-Centred Services, ratings of services at all levels of government have seen a consistent pattern of decline since 2020, with municipalities averaging 57% satisfaction in 2023 (according to an accredited research vendor). This sentiment of discontent towards government is likely to contribute to York Region resident attitudes. In 2023, 63% of residents stated their reason for contacting the

Region was ultimately resolved, and 72% of residents agreed that staff were knowledgeable, with both measures in decline from previous years.

Planned activities over this Council term include implementing and investing in customer experience recommendations, continued customer service training, enhanced use of communication tools and strategies, and enhancing navigation support and referrals for Access York customers.

### **Decrease % of York Region staff reports on revised Council and Committee meeting agendas**

In 2022, 16% of items were on the revised agenda. New rules for revised agendas were implemented effective from the June 2023 Committee of the Whole cycle. These changes resulted in a reduction to 8% of staff items on the revised agenda. Emergent items, such as Provincial announcements, may continue to impact this performance measure in the future.

Planned activities over this Council term to support this performance measure include identifying and tracking staff items and reporting back to Commissioners and/or CAO.

### **Maintain % of York Region residents rating 'Good' value for taxes**

In fall 2023, most residents (73%) stated they receive good value for their tax dollars. However, this rating has shown a declining trend over the past few years. The shift in residents' concerns from issues like traffic congestion to housing affordability and the cost of living has influenced their perceptions of tax value. External factors such as high inflation, high interest rates, gas and food prices, and increasing housing prices have played a role in shaping these perceptions.

This change in attitude towards tax value reflects residents' evolving preferences for tax and service delivery. In recent years, there has been decreased support for tax increases at the rate of inflation, with more residents leaning towards maintaining taxes and potentially reducing services. This shift suggests a desire to prioritize household expenses due to concerns about financial stability and declining personal financial situations over the past three years.

Despite these shifts, seven out of 10 residents still believe they receive good value for their taxes, and residents' satisfaction with York Region Government overall (73%) remains higher compared to the municipal benchmark (57%).

Planned activities over this Council term include upholding prudent financial policies, enabling the Region to navigate pressures effectively while delivering on Council priorities.

## Performance Measures With No Data Available for Reporting



### GOOD GOVERNMENT

#### **Maintain % of Regional core assets (Water/Wastewater, Roads) with a condition assessment rating of fair or better condition**

Data for 2023 is not yet available, as core asset condition data is quantified in June annually. 2023 figures will be available in July and reported in the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan Year 2 (2024) Progress Report.

#### **% of overall job satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is a measure of employee sentiment towards the organization, their job, and other factors in the work environment. It is typically tracked through engagement surveys, pulse surveys, or other means of employee listening. Development of an employee experience measurement approach is currently underway.