



To: Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: October 10, 2024
From: Dino Basso
Commissioner of Corporate Services
Re: **Inventory of Regional Buildings and Properties Update to Council**

In [April 2024](#), Council directed that Regional staff undertake a review of all Regionally-owned buildings and properties for the purposes of identifying those that are under and/or unused and provide an analysis of those that can be potentially repurposed for other Regional priorities.

The vast majority of Regional buildings house Regional programs and services

The 282 buildings the Region operates are used for:

- Public Works, Environmental Operations (145)
- Community and Health Services, Community Housing (50)
- Community and Health Services, Paramedic Response Stations (26)
- Public Works, Transportation Operations (24)
- York Regional Police (YRP) Operations (18)

The remaining 19 buildings are a combination of warehouse and office buildings located in industrial areas, and public service buildings with supporting office functions. The latter predominately provide Court, Public Health and Social Services to the public.

Staff use of Regional buildings increased significantly since July 2024

Since the start of the pandemic, staff have been tracking the use of Regional buildings by collecting and analyzing access card strike activity. Since the new hybrid work policy started on July 1, 2024, card strike activity has increased significantly, especially in larger Regional buildings such as 17250 and 17150 Yonge Street, 50 High Tech Road and 9060 Jane Street.

Staff continue to optimize space use through partnerships and consolidations

In 2020, staff consolidated seven locations (six leased and one owned) into the newly built building at 17150 Yonge Street. This avoided seven lease renewals, generating overall savings of more than \$30M over 30 years. The one building owned by the Region at 62 Bayview Parkway in Newmarket was subsequently demolished, and the vacant land will be repurposed by Housing York Inc. to construct affordable housing.

Staff continue to consolidate and work with partners in the public and private sectors to maximize efficiencies in space use. For example:

- Providing YRP with 39,000 sq. ft. of additional space at three Regional buildings and consolidating staff into the Administrative Centre
- Reaching a sublease agreement with the Catholic Community Services of York Region (CCSYR) for the first floor at 50 High Tech Road, after Court Services was consolidated at 17150 Yonge Street

There are no feasible options for residential conversions within the Region's building portfolio

In reviewing other jurisdictions where existing office buildings were repurposed into residential buildings (Calgary and Ottawa), several common factors determined which buildings were selected. These buildings were generally older, with a smaller gross floor area relative to today's office standard, and vacant.

In addition, the cost of vacating a large Regional facility such as 17150 Yonge Street would be considerable. Based on an analysis of buildings the Region owns and operates, at this time there is no cost-effective opportunity to vacate a Regional building and convert it to address other Regional priorities.

The Region owns land that can be developed to meet Regional priorities

There are potential opportunities to repurpose Regionally owned land in support of a response to a shortage in Housing and Shelter solutions.

Of the Region's land inventory, 251 acres are identified as potential excess land in the following categories:

- 50 acres in 25 parcels are "underdeveloped" parcels where an existing facility is situated, but there is additional land available to potentially allow an independent development
- 201 acres in 57 parcels are considered "unencumbered" (i.e. there are no buildings on these parcels) and potentially developable on a case-by-case basis

Staff work is ongoing to determine how many of the 251 acres are developable. Considerations such as environmentally sensitive land, servicing availability, and possible expansion of the existing use need to be assessed against each parcel.

There are a number of Regional programs and services that could be considered for use on these parcels of land, including: Public Works, Emergency Services, Social Services, Public Health and Housing.

Implementing a highest and best use methodology will inform future use for Regional properties

In 2024, the Region contracted Ernst and Young to provide a methodology for evaluating “highest and best” use of Regional properties. Ernst and Young will consider economic, social and strategic factors, including Council priorities, when creating the highest and best use methodology. Once the methodology is finalized, staff will evaluate Regional properties against the criteria and report back to Council with findings and recommendations in Q1 2025.

For more information on this memo, please contact Michael Shatil, Director, Property Services Branch at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71684. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Dino Basso
Commissioner of Corporate Services

Erin Mahoney
Chief Administrative Officer

September 24, 2024
#16366504