

# The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole  
Community and Health Services  
September 12, 2019

Report of the Commissioner of Community and Health Services

## Submission to Provincial Government Consultation on its Planned Seniors Strategy

### 1. Recommendation

Council endorse York Region's submission to the province's Seniors Strategy Consultation provided in Attachment 1.

### 2. Summary

On July 19, 2019, Regional staff responded to the province's consultation on the development of Ontario's Seniors Strategy (Attachment 1). Staff was not able to bring the submission to Council for approval in advance of the deadline as there was no Council meeting within the consultation period. This report seeks Council's endorsement of the submission.

Key Points:

- From June 7 to July 19, 2019, the province held consultations and an online survey to seek Ontarians' input on how the province can best support its aging population
- Feedback from the consultations and survey will inform the development of a provincial seniors strategy, expected to be announced in the fall of 2019
- Staff's submission was developed based on actions previously endorsed by Council in the York Region Seniors Strategy and the corporate 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

### 3. Background

#### **The province is developing a Seniors Strategy, expected to be released by Fall 2019**

Seniors are the fastest growing age group in Ontario. The province predicts that there will be more than three million seniors by 2023 – an increase of more than 400,000 seniors from today. The growth in the seniors population creates several challenges, with a primary issue being that while seniors want to remain active and live independently at home for as long as they can, many seniors face challenges accessing the programs and services they need.

To understand how the province can best support the aging population, the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (the Ministry) held consultations and an online survey from June 7 to July 19, 2019, targeted to seniors, their caregivers, and organizations that support them.

The province states it, “consulted with hundreds of seniors, their families, caregivers and organization who support and care for them” and that “thousands of people completed the online survey”, which was available in English, French and 12 other languages.

The Ministry will use the information collected to inform the development of a cross-government seniors strategy, which is intended to help seniors:

- Age at home and in communities
- Remain healthy, active and socially engaged
- Stay safe and secure, and
- Participate in the labour market and economy

The province plans to announce a government-wide seniors strategy this fall.

### **To respond to the growth in York Region’s seniors population, Regional Council approved the York Region Seniors Strategy in [November 2016](#)**

The Region’s Seniors Strategy sets the course for action over the next 10 to 20 years by focusing on four areas for action and advocacy to support seniors to age in place:

- Balancing the needs of seniors with all residents
- Keeping seniors healthier, longer
- Supporting age friendly, complete communities
- Connecting seniors and caregivers to the right programs and services at the right time

## **4. Analysis**

### **Staff’s submission to the province was based on actions previously approved by York Region Council**

Staff prepared a submission for the province that recommended several actions included in the Corporate 2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan and the Region’s Seniors Strategy (see Attachment 1). The staff submission requested the province to:

- Work with municipalities on policy, planning and decision making to increase long-term care beds
- Improve system navigation across the province to help seniors and caregivers access programs and services faster

- Invest in prevention programs to keep seniors healthier longer
- Increase community and home care supports to prevent and divert non-emergency calls to 911
- Increase infrastructure funding for housing services and plan for a variety of housing options, particularly rental and affordable retirement homes
- Provide sustainable funding to operate multi-service hubs, such as the Unionville Seniors Hub

## **The Submission to the province supports the Healthy Communities goal of the Strategic Plan**

The Healthy Communities goal focuses on the health, safety and well-being of the Region's residents, with one objective being to improve access to health and social support services. The submission to the Ministry serves as an important advocacy action for advancing the Healthy Communities goal because two of its recommendations align with the key activities in the Corporate 2019-2023 Strategic Plan including: (1) advocate to improve policy planning and decision-making for long-term care beds by developing a forecast for York Region, including required number, type and location, and (2) work with the Province's health agencies to design and implement a multi-service centre (hub) that will co-locate services to respond to the needs of seniors.

## **5. Financial**

There are no new financial implications resulting from the recommendation made in this report.

## **6. Local Impact**

Making the submission to the Provincial consultation on its planned Seniors Strategy is another way that York Region is advocating for needed services to benefit all local municipalities.

## **7. Conclusion**

The Province's consultation provided a significant and proactive opportunity to influence the development of a provincial seniors strategy by sharing the Region's experience and expertise in planning for meeting the needs of the growing seniors population, and advocating for actions contained in the corporate Strategic Plan's goal for Healthy Communities.

The consultation timelines did not allow sufficient time to engage with Council prior to submitting the staff response. For this reason, the submission informs the Province that the

Region will forward Council's endorsement of the staff submission to the Ministry this fall, together with any additional comments Council may have.

Staff will provide Council with an update on the province's seniors strategy when it is released.

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For more information on this report, please contact Lisa Gonsalves, General Manager, Paramedic and Senior Services at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72090. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Recommended by: **Katherine Chislett**  
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

Approved for Submission: **Bruce Macgregor**  
Chief Administrative Officer

August 29, 2019  
Attachment (1)  
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