

Community Questions

Emergency and Transitional Housing

14452 Yonge Street, Town of Aurora

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated: January 2024

York Region is proposing new emergency and transitional housing at 14452 Yonge Street in the Town of Aurora. The development is in the planning application review process with the Town of Aurora.

York Region is committed to engaging community members throughout the planning, design and construction phases. This allows community members to have input as we build strong, caring, safe communities where everyone can access the services they need and people experiencing homelessness can find and keep housing. Thank you to all community members who have inquired or provided input on the project to date.

Answers to frequently asked questions from the community, including questions raised at the Town of Aurora public planning meeting, are covered in this document and organized as follows:

- [Environmental Impacts of Development](#)
- [Project Location](#)
- [Existing Infrastructure](#)
- [Site Design](#)
- [Community Safety](#)
- [Programming](#)
- [Future Residents of the Emergency and Transitional Housing Building](#)

Additional information about the project, including feedback shared to date, can be found in the [What We've Heard So Far](#) summary.

For more information and to sign up for updates, please visit york.ca/14452Yonge or contact the Community Liaison at 289-338-8063 or by emailing 14452Yonge@york.ca

All studies referenced in the document are part of the planning application submission and are available for review from the Town of Aurora. Please visit aurora.ca or call the Town of Aurora Planning Division at 905-726-4700 for further information.

This document will be updated to reflect ongoing community input.

Planning for the proposed emergency and transitional housing development is ongoing. As plans evolve, information and details may change. York Region will share updated information online at york.ca/14452Yonge

YORK REGION

1-877-464-9675

york.ca/14452Yonge



Environmental Impacts of Development

DEVELOPMENT ON THE OAK RIDGES MORaine

Is development permitted on the Oak Ridges Moraine?

Updated in 2017, the [Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan](#) was first established in 2002 following the adoption of the [Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001](#). The plan divides the Moraine into four land use designations, including natural core, natural linkage, countryside and settlement areas. Within settlement areas, urban uses and development, as set out in municipal official plans are permitted.

The property at 14452 Yonge Street is identified as a settlement area under the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and as such, urban use and development are permitted on this portion of the land (as per the Town of Aurora's Official Plan).

How does this project comply with requirements to develop on land use designations, such as settlement areas on the Oak Ridges Moraine?

Land use within settlement areas of the Oak Ridges Moraine should support the development of complete communities and a long-term goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emission communities. Building complete communities includes facilitating the co-location of multiple public services to address community needs that are accessible by active transportation and transit.

PUMPING STATION LOCATION

Are residential developments allowed close to a pumping station?

Sewage pumping stations, like the one at 14452 Yonge Street, are located in neighbourhoods throughout York Region, including some that are located directly adjacent to residential homes. York Region owns and operates twenty-two sewage pumping stations in total; eleven of which are located within a 50-metre radius of a residential dwelling, representing 50% of the total number of pumping stations.

Examples of privately owned and Regional sewage pumping stations located close to residential dwellings:

- **Private Pumping Station:**
100 Butternut Ridge Trail, Aurora – proximity to residential dwelling: 30 metres
- **York Region Joe Dales Pumping Station:**
127 Joe Dales Drive, Georgina – proximity to residential dwelling(s): 27 metres
- **York Region Sutton Woodrider Bend Pumping Station:**
91 Woodrider Bend, Georgina – proximity to residential dwelling(s): 10 metres
- **York Region Bogart Pumping Station:**
319 Gaston Place, Newmarket – proximity to residential dwelling(s): 18 metres

York Region's sewage pumping stations are required to meet Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks standards to ensure there is minimal to no odour emitted from the facility.

How far is the proposed housing facility from the Henderson Sewage Pumping Station?

The proposed location of the emergency and transitional housing building is approximately 34 metres from the Henderson Pumping Station; well within standard practice across York Region.

How will noise from the pumping station impact residents of the new building?

The major pump systems are located inside the Henderson Pumping Station and the impact on the proposed emergency and transitional housing building is not expected to be greater than from other ambient noise sources.

The emergency and transitional housing building was designed to [Passive House energy efficiency standards](#), making the building airtight and soundproof.

Throughout planning and design, measures were taken to ensure the proposed emergency and transitional housing building complies with noise criteria set by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. An initial Noise Impact Study, completed in June 2022 by engineering consulting firm Thornton Tomasetti, did not identify any significant concerns.

IMPACT ON TREES

How many additional trees will be removed for construction?

Based on the current proposed design and location of the emergency and transitional housing building, approximately 36 additional trees will be removed, which are predominantly young trees.

An arborist evaluated 118 trees on the property to assist with the landscape and tree inventory plans. The majority of the trees identified as being in fair-to-good condition will not be removed to accommodate construction. Most trees being removed were assessed as satisfactory to poor condition.

What age are the trees that are being removed?

Tree diameter at chest height, used to estimate age, places them all at less than 50 years of age.

How will tree removal impact the canopy?

The removal of the trees for construction will not impact the existing tree canopy on the property. A wooded buffer ranging between five and 15 metres will be maintained immediately to the west of the proposed emergency and transitional housing building. This buffer will protect the existing woodland and tree canopy in the area. The size of the buffer has been reviewed and approved by the Lake Simcoe Regional Conservation Authority.

Will the trees that are being removed be replaced?

In accordance with requirements set by the Town of Aurora and the Lake Simcoe Regional Conservation Authority, each tree removed will be replaced with two new trees to meet the required 2:1 tree planting ratio.

The approximately 36 trees anticipated for removal will be replaced by 72 native tree species either at this site or on other Regional properties. This process has been reviewed and approved by the Lake Simcoe Regional Conservation Authority. As part of the creation of the landscaping plan for the site, the Region will aim to plant as many of the replacement trees as possible onsite.

What types of trees are being removed?

A variety of native and non-native tree species are among the 36 trees to be removed, including eastern white cedar, white spruce, Norway spruce, white ash, Scotch pine, poplar and black walnut. For each tree removed, two new native tree species will be planted.

Are there any at-risk tree species known to be living in the area?

Three butternut trees have been identified within the woodland area to the west of the property. An Environmental Impact Study concluded that the butternut tree habitat would not be impacted by the proposed emergency and transitional housing building, as these trees are located more than 50 metres from the site. The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks has confirmed there are no associated impacts.

IMPACT ON ANIMALS LIVING IN THE AREA

How will animals living on the site be protected? Will they be relocated?

Under the [Oak Ridges Conservation Plan](#), 62% of the land is identified as natural core and natural linkage areas. Natural core areas protect lands with key natural heritage features and are critical to supporting healthy and diverse plant and animal habitat. Natural linkage areas provide connections between natural core areas and along rivers and streams.

The property at 14452 Yonge Street is on a designated settlement area of the Oak Ridges Moraine. The construction of the new building will not prevent animals living in the area from accessing water sources or moving between adjacent areas of the Oak Ridges Moraine. The natural core and natural linkage areas will continue to be protected and provide animal habitat.

What environmental studies or site walk-throughs were conducted?

Site visits and assessments were conducted by arborists, geologists, hydrogeologists and other consultants. Findings were then compiled by an environmental consultant, WSP Canada Inc., to create the Environmental Impact Study and Natural Heritage Evaluation for the project site. These reports were submitted to the Town of Aurora as part of the Zoning By-law Amendment application.

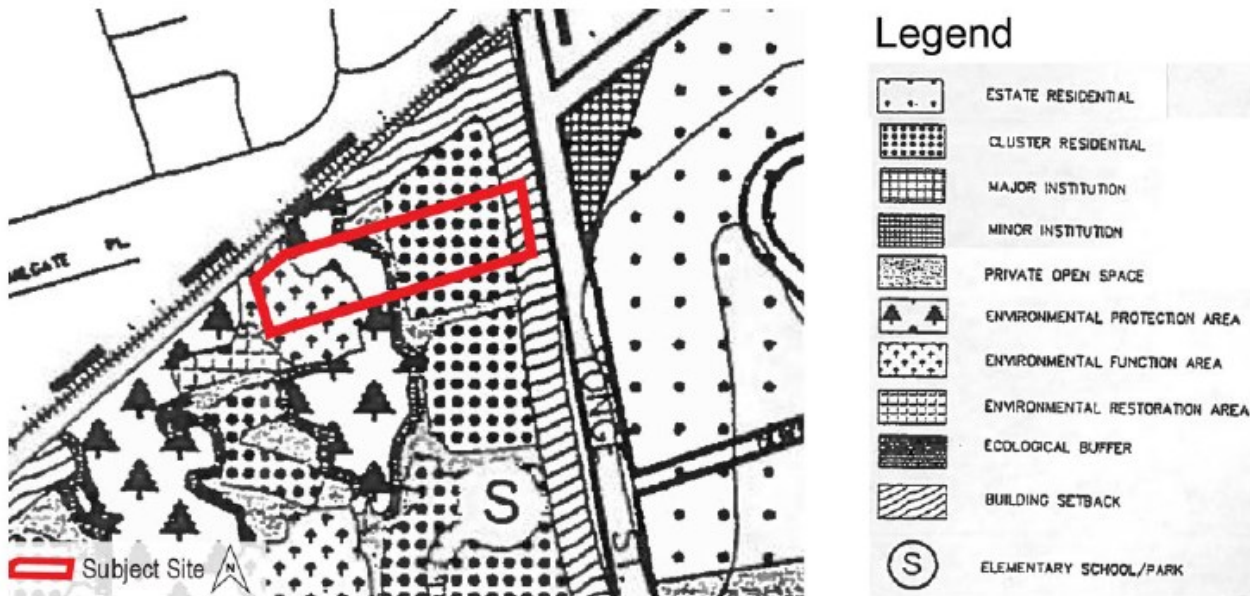
Project Location

TOWN OF AURORA OFFICIAL PLAN AND ZONING

Under the Town of Aurora Official Plan, what is allowed on the site?

The property at 14452 Yonge Street has multiple designations under the [Town of Aurora Official Plan](#) including building setback, environmental protection, environmental function, ecological buffer and cluster residential. The proposed emergency and transitional housing building will be located on the portion of the property identified as cluster residential.

Under the [Town of Aurora Official Plan](#), “special needs housing” is allowed in any designated area that permits residential uses, including cluster residential. Emergency and transitional housing buildings are considered “special needs housing.”



Does the proposed development comply with the Town of Aurora's Official Plan?

Yes, the construction of an emergency and transitional housing building at 14452 Yonge Street complies with and implements policies of the Town of Aurora Official Plan. The proposed development meets the Town's policies pertaining to the location of Special Needs Housing, Communal Housing and Community Facilities. Additionally, it conforms with the long-term vision guiding the Council-approved Official Plan: To develop the Town of Aurora into a healthy, strong and complete community that provides a range of places and opportunities to live, work, shop, be educated and play, in a manner that promotes sustainability in all its forms and protects the Town's natural environment and historic character.

Why is York Region requesting a Zoning By-Law Amendment?

Town of Aurora Zoning By-law does not restrict where “special needs housing” can be located. Currently, the site at 14452 Yonge Street is zoned as “Oak Ridges Moraine Rural General,” which allows for some residential uses on portions of the site in compliance with the [Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan](#).

York Region has filed an application with the Town to amend the site's zoning permissions to include institutional uses, which best describes the proposed development's programming and building requirements. The institutional zoning designation will apply to the eastern portion of the site (closest to Yonge Street), and the western portion of the site will continue to carry a zoning designation that protects the environmental use on the lands within the protected Oak Ridges Moraine.

Are you allowed to build emergency and transitional housing near a daycare, school, retirement home or community with children?

Yes, the [Town of Aurora Official Plan](#) and zoning by-laws do not restrict the location of special needs housing next to these mentioned uses. Emergency and transitional housing buildings are considered special needs housing.

IMPACT ON PROPERTY VALUES

What will happen to the value of my property?

Despite a recent slowing in the market, demand for homes located in York Region remains high. Home values on average have risen year over year for more than a decade. Within York Region, property values in neighbourhoods near emergency and transitional housing developments have seen the same trend of appreciation. Using publicly accessible data from [HouseSigma](#), property values near HYI developments, including Belinda's Place, an emergency and transitional housing building for women in the Town of Newmarket, have increased similar to home prices across the broader community. Since 2016, the average sale price for homes near Belinda's Place has increased by more than 60%.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission has indicated that many studies on affordable housing conclude that there is no impact on property values. For more information these studies, visit oharc.on.ca

This is further supported by extensive Canadian and international peer-reviewed research. For example, a report on [Exploring the Impacts of Non-Market Housing on Surrounding Property Values](#) looked at 13 case study sites in British Columbia to research the market impacts of introducing non-market housing into a neighbourhood. The property values in the immediate area surrounding the cases study sites typically either mirrored or surpassed similar housing in the surrounding municipalities.

Additionally, a [study](#) by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Centre for Real Estate looked at large, mixed-income buildings developed in single family neighbourhoods – particularly those where concerns about property devaluation were greatest. Results showed that these developments had no negative impact on property values.

LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

Why was this site chosen?

The proposed location at 14452 Yonge Street, which will replace Porter Place in the Town of East Gwillimbury, was chosen because the site meets all our needs. It is large enough, centrally located in York Region, and on a major Regional transit corridor allowing people to travel easily to places of employment, and social and medical services. Planning for emergency and transitional housing at this location also aligns with Provincial, Regional and Town planning policies.

Could York Region retrofit Porter Place instead of finding a new location?

Across York Region, there is an urgent need to increase emergency and transitional housing capacity to meet the current and anticipated demand for services. Since 2015, Porter Place has consistently operated at or near capacity and the current building does not meet modern design or building standards, such as Accessibility for

Ontarians with Disabilities Act ([AODA](#)), resulting in barriers to service. Additionally, the existing property is not equipped with sufficient site services to accommodate a new building (e.g., septic system, wells, fire ponds; no municipal site servicing).

There is a significant need for emergency and transitional housing in southern and central York Region to provide suitable space where people experiencing homelessness can access critical services. Although the majority of York Region's population currently resides in the southern and central areas of the Region, the only year-round emergency and transitional housing option in the area is for youth. Currently, there are no year-round emergency and transitional housing options for adults in central and southern York Region.

Renovating Porter Place would not meet the community's needs and would be costly and difficult to implement.

Were other locations considered? Was the location of the former Howard Johnson Hotel, in the Town of Aurora, considered?

In 2018 and 2019, several properties were considered as potential sites for a new emergency and transitional housing development, including the former Howard Johnson Hotel, located at 15520 Yonge Street. After a feasibility study was completed on the retrofit potential for the building, it was decided to no longer pursue due to fiscal impact.

What are the cost implications of purchasing another property?

The cost of purchasing another property will vary based on real estate values and location, but the most recent [Community Benefits Charges Strategy](#) determined an average land valuation of more than \$4 million per acre for suitable sites in the Town of Aurora along a major corridor such as Yonge Street.

York Regional Council has approved a budget of \$23.5 million for the construction of a new emergency and transitional housing building. Purchasing additional land will reduce the funds available for design and construction of a new building on a new site, or will require additional tax-levy funding to cover increased project costs.

Existing Infrastructure

SERVICES AND AMENITIES

What services and amenities are in the area?

The proposed location for this building is at 14452 Yonge Street (just south of Industrial Parkway South) in the Town of Aurora. The location was chosen because of its size, central location in York Region and proximity to transit, potential places of employment and social and medical services.

- **Transit:** Yonge Street is a main transit corridor that travels north-south through the Town of Aurora and throughout York Region. Having access to public transit within walking distance provides an affordable and accessible mode of transportation which is vital for residents of the emergency and transitional housing program.

- **Employment and commercial centres:** Commercial plazas are located less than one kilometre to the north and provide access to grocery stores, restaurants, retail and potential employment opportunities. Additionally, to the east of the site, the Industrial Parkway South area is one of York Region's major employment areas and features manufacturing and wholesale trade employment.
- **Social and medical services:** The availability of nearby community-based social and medical services will complement the diverse range of supports and services that will be offered in the new building to provide greater life stabilization for York Region residents experiencing homelessness. There are several social and medical services within two kilometres of the site, including walk-in clinics and pharmacies, as well as the Aurora Food Pantry, Addiction Services Central Ontario, York Support Services Network, and the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Services and supports provided to building residents, both onsite and in the community, will offer more inclusive and flexible supports for people experiencing homelessness to develop life skills, gain employment and work towards moving into permanent housing.

TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION

Is transit access an important consideration in site selection?

Yes, access to local transit, such as York Region Transit, is a critical factor in evaluating site suitability for an emergency and transitional housing development. Within York Region, the Town of Aurora is the only Regional municipality located along Yonge Street – a major transit corridor – without emergency housing.

What are the transit options to Porter Place?

York Region Transit [route 52](#) and the GO 68 are the closest transit options for Porter Place. Bus stops for the two routes are located 1.2 kilometres south of Porter Place.

York Region Transit route 52 only operates on weekdays and travels from Queensville Sideroad and Yonge Street to the Newmarket Bus Terminal.

Where are bus stops located near the proposed development? Will there be a new transit stop put in?

The property at 14552 Yonge Street is located along the Yonge Street transit corridor. The area is well serviced by York Region Transit and no additional transit stops are being considered at this time.

The nearest northbound bus stop is located 100 metres north of the site and the nearest southbound bus stop is located 260 metres to the south.

Where are the school bus stops located? How will you ensure the safety of children waiting for the school bus?

A YRT bus stop servicing the local public and Catholic elementary schools is located more than 300 metres from the York Region Transit stop and nearly 650 metres from the site at 14552 Yonge Street.

York Region and York Region Transit will monitor and evaluate the need for enhanced safety measures for the bus stops located on Yonge Street that provide service to local high schools.

What about sidewalks on Yonge Street?

The 2020 [Town of Aurora's Master Transportation Study](#) includes an analysis that was conducted to identify and prioritize the construction of new multi-use paths along Yonge Street. Construction of pathways on both sides of Yonge Street between Bloomington Road and the GO Transit Rail Bridge (north of Industrial Parkway South) are expected to begin construction in 2025, and design and planning on these works are currently underway by the Town. The construction of these sidewalks would provide safe walking paths for pedestrians travelling north and south along Yonge Street. Should the need arise, the Region will work with the Town to provide a temporary sidewalk or pathway to facilitate safe pedestrian connection.

What other transportation options are available in the area?

Active transportation options in the area include paved shoulders on Yonge Street, a shared roadway along Industrial Parkway and a multi-use cycling and pedestrian trail along Vandorf Sideroad which connects to the Oak Ridges Trail and the off-road multi-use Holland River Valley Trail (also known as the Nokiidaa Trail).

RAIL SAFETY

Are there safety concerns due to the proximity of the train tracks? Will additional safety barriers be installed?

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Railway Association of Canada guidelines for new developments near rail corridors require safety berms – a raised dirt mound to protect against train derailment – and a minimum of 30 metres distance between the rail line and any developments. The proposed emergency and transitional housing development is approximately 80 metres away from the rail line. The natural grading of the environmental protection area and the wooded area acts as a natural barrier between the rail line and the proposed development.

The installation and maintenance of fencing systems is a key part of GO Transit's safety strategy. Current guidelines recommend 1.83-metre-high chain link fence to prevent trespassing. As part of ongoing work along the rail corridor, Metrolinx is installing high-security fencing in the area to further enhance the safety of neighbourhood residents. Fencing along the rail corridor prevents unregulated crossing of the railway and trespassing.

A Rail Safety Study Assessment was completed in 2023. The study did not identify any significant issues relating to illegal rail crossing or trespassing in the area in recent years.

What about the noise impact of the railway, including the impacts of potential dual track expansion?

A Noise Impact Study was completed in June 2022. The study did identify the potential for transportation noise to exceed noise criteria set by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, particularly if rail traffic were to increase significantly. The proposed emergency and transitional housing building has been designed using Passive House standards which includes soundproofing. This construction technique will reduce noise levels by 50% and mitigate any potential impacts from rail traffic.

Are there any concerns about vibrations as a result of rail traffic?

Although there are no specific guidelines relating to the impact of railway vibration in the land use approval process, in May 2013, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Railway Association of Canada issued [Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations](#).

The 2013 guidelines identify dwellings within 75 metres of a railway as susceptible to vibration impact. Since the proposed emergency and transitional housing development is located nearly 80 metres from the railway, there is no requirement for vibration measurements. This requirement has been reviewed by Metrolinx with no major concerns identified.

TRAIL ACCESS

Will people experiencing homelessness have access to the trails? Can the opening to Ridge Road be closed?

The Town of Aurora maintains more than 60 kilometres of trails connecting neighbourhood parks, Town facilities and green spaces and trails are for all residents to enjoy. There are no current plans in place for direct trail access from the property at 14452 Yonge Street.

How will you ensure safety on trails?

Trail users are reminded to follow [general safety tips](#) when using Town of Aurora trails, including travelling with a friend and planning to be off the trail system a half hour before dusk.

Site Design

Does this site permit the proposed density for further housing?

A density of two units per acre was originally established by a Growth Management Study that was conducted in 1996, with the density target further defined to provide the general density of Yonge Street South Secondary Plan area to be two units per acre across the environmentally constrained and unconstrained portion of the land. This two-unit per acre density is an average density and is not intended to include institutional uses comprised of rooms. The Yonge Street South Secondary Plan also allows supportive housing in residential designations, with no cap on units or rooms.

During the initial submission and review of the Zoning By-Law Amendment, the application was circulated to the Town's Policy Planning Division of the Planning and Development Services Department. The division confirmed in their comments dated November 25, 2022, that the proposed development "is a type of 'Special Needs Housing' and conforms with and implements policies of the Town of Aurora Official Plan". No mention of a density transfer being applicable has been raised by the Town.

Will there be a fence installed around the property? If so, how high will the fence be?

Currently there is fencing planned along the northern edge of the property and along the rail corridor. Fencing along the west and southern properties is under consideration and discussion with the Town of Aurora. If desired, fencing will be placed and can be captured through the Town's Site Plan Agreement review process. The height of the fence would comply with the Town's Zoning By-law standards.

Community Safety

The resident turnover rate is high at emergency housing. Will this have an impact on safety?

The safety and security of building residents as well as neighbours is a priority for York Region. The emergency and transitional housing building will have skilled staff available onsite 24 hours a day to support residents. Staff will work closely with residents to develop an individualized housing plan and support them to find and maintain permanent housing. One of the key goals of emergency housing is to rapidly re-house individuals into longer-term, sustainable housing in the broader community and make episodes of homelessness as brief as possible.

Data from York Regional Police's [Community Safety Map](#) shows there is no evidence that the presence of an emergency and transitional housing building increases crime in the area.

How will York Region ensure community safety?

The safety and security of building residents and neighbours is a priority for York Region. All Housing York Inc. properties are designed with safety in mind. Plans for the new building includes Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. CPTED is a crime prevention approach based on the theory that community design and layout impact behaviour. Using this design approach can lead to a drop in crime occurrence as well as reduced fear of crime. [CPTED strategies can also be employed by homeowners](#). York Regional Police continues to be a close partner for this project and will review all development plans.

Throughout planning and development, York Region will continue to engage the Community Liaison Committee to ensure all perspectives about the design of the building and surrounding property are considered.

Once the emergency and transitional housing building is complete, York Region will work with the community to develop a Good Neighbour Agreement. Similar to a lease or rental agreement, a Good Neighbour Agreement outlines expectations for positive community living and sets out accountability for all neighbours. Residents of the emergency and transitional housing building will sign the Good Neighbour Agreement upon intake into the program. If an individual in emergency or transitional housing were to violate the signed Good Neighbour Agreement, and the violation was minor in nature, staff will work with the individual to ensure they understand the importance of the agreement and put in place supports to prevent any further issues. If the violation puts others at risk and a satisfactory mitigation protocol is not available, then an individual may be discharged from the program. Staff would make every effort to facilitate access to another program that meets their needs. In extreme cases, individuals may be restricted from attending any future programming onsite, including drop-in programming. Skilled staff will also be on onsite 24 hours a day to support residents.

PROPERTY DAMAGE AND INSURANCE

If my property is damaged, who is responsible?

Community safety is a shared responsibility. Across the Region, York Regional Police (YRP) serves one of the most diverse and fastest-growing communities in Canada, patrolling areas ranging from serene rural landscapes to urban cityscapes and ensuring the safety and security of residents.

No evidence suggests incidents reported on YRP's [Community Safety Map](#) in neighbourhoods located close to emergency or transitional housing are connected to these facilities.

Residents in all neighbourhoods in York Region are encouraged to report criminal activity. If a resident has been a victim of or witness to a crime, they can make a report [online](#) or by calling 1-866-876-5423. If a resident is in danger, they should call 911.

Will insurance increase if someone breaks into neighbouring homes or cars? Who will compensate homeowners?

No evidence suggests incidents reported on YRP's [Community Safety Map](#) in neighbourhoods located close to emergency or transitional housing are connected to these facilities.

Incidents of property damage and vandalism should be reported to YRP. Reports can be made [online](#) or by using their non-emergency number, 1-866-876-5423.

Home insurance rates vary for a number of reasons including renovations, changes in the value of your home and past insurance claims. If you have questions about insurance, contact your insurance provider directly.

If the new emergency and transitional housing building negatively impacts my business, who will compensate for potential revenue loss? What if my insurance company does not renew my business insurance?

There is no precedence in York Region of emergency and transitional housing buildings having a negative impact on nearby businesses or preventing insurance coverage.

For guidance or assistance with your business, you can contact York Region's Economic Development Team at edo@york.ca, your local [Chamber of Commerce](#) or your local [economic development office](#).

SITE SECURITY

Will there be a security system installed at the emergency and transitional housing site?

The proposed building will be equipped with a security system. Security cameras will provide video footage both inside and outside the building on the Region's property. The monitoring and review of security camera footage is conducted in accordance with all applicable privacy laws.

Will there be an accompanying policing plan for this site? Has it been drafted? What are the highlights or can the entire plan be shared? Is there a plan in place to deal with panhandling, fights outside the property, etc.

York Region has been supporting people experiencing homelessness for many years. York Regional Police's [Community Safety Map](#) shows there is no evidence of any connections between the presence of emergency and transitional housing in a community and an increase in neighbourhood crime. People call YRP for many reasons, including when they need help. Over a 12-month period, most calls to YRP from emergency and transitional housing locations in the Newmarket/Aurora area were to support individuals in crisis and not crime related.

When people experiencing challenging life circumstances receive appropriate and timely supports, they are more likely to succeed in finding and keeping housing, securing employment and maintaining their overall well-

being. According to a [Simon Fraser University study](#), providing people experiencing homelessness with appropriate support and resources, including housing and community connections, often results in a reduction in crime.

While policing plans are not required as part of Zoning By-law Amendment application, under the *Police Services Act*, municipalities are required to develop a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. York Region's [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan](#) is a long-term tool with a goal of enhancing overall safety and well-being using a crime prevention through social development approach.

Throughout the planning and development of the proposed emergency and transitional housing building, York Region will work closely with many community agencies, including YRP, to provide inclusive and responsive supports and services to residents of the proposed emergency and transitional housing building.

ENCAMPMENTS

Will tents be allowable on the property or nearby?

York Region has a dedicated Outreach Team who regularly visits encampments across the Region and connects with individuals living unsheltered to provide support and referrals to a wide range of programs and services including housing and income support.

Outreach staff work closely with Community Paramedics, YRP, municipal staff (including By-Law Officers) and other agencies to support individuals sheltering outdoors with the goal of assisting individuals to find more appropriate housing and to access a range of community and health services.

York Region Outreach Workers use a rights-based approach, in alignment with the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), when working with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Outreach Workers work with people to understand their unique needs and will offer and/or provide homelessness services and supports as appropriate. York Region Outreach Workers do not subscribe to an enforcement approach when dealing with encampments and they treat all individuals with dignity and respect.

Programming

What is the difference between emergency housing and shelter/drop-in programs?

Emergency housing offers safe, short-term accommodation for people who have lost their housing and may be experiencing a personal crisis. Individuals staying in emergency housing have access to their own living space – a temporary home — as they search for permanent housing.

In addition to emergency housing programs, which operate 12 months a year, York Region operates a seasonal shelter program from October to June, which offers a warm place to sleep and access to basic necessities like food, hygiene supplies and assistance to develop a housing plan.

Drop-in programs operate in the daytime and provide services for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. They offer access to necessities, including:

- Meals
- Showers
- Hygiene products
- Clothing
- Laundry services
- Transportation

Emergency housing, seasonal shelters and drop-in programs often work with other agencies to connect clients to services and supports in the broader community.

The proposed building will offer emergency housing, longer-term transitional housing and drop-in programming for residents in need.

Do residents staying at the new building have to vacate the facility every day during the day only to be allowed back in the evening? Do residents have to line up daily to secure a bed in the new building or are they guaranteed a bed for days? Weeks? Months?

The new emergency and transitional housing building will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week and individuals will not be required to vacate the facility during the day or line up to secure a bed. The length of stay varies depending on the individualized housing plan for each person. Individuals staying in emergency housing may stay up to 30 days and individuals staying in transitional housing may stay for up to one year.

Who will operate the programming at the new facility?

A community-based service provider to operate the facility, including overseeing programming and support services, will be selected through a competitive process. Applicants will need to demonstrate their experience working with individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and their ability to develop and maintain strong partnerships with neighbours, local municipalities, businesses and community agencies within the Town of Aurora and across the Region.

INTAKE PROCESS

What is the intake criteria for residents living in emergency and transitional housing?

The proposed emergency and transitional housing program will provide services for people 16 years of age and older who are experiencing homelessness in York Region. Individuals must be able to care for their own basic physical needs (i.e., bathing, toileting, dressing, eating).

What happens during the intake process?

Individuals experiencing homelessness are asked to contact the York Region Emergency Housing Central Intake Line, which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Intake staff conduct a pre-assessment over the phone to determine an individual's needs and refer them to an appropriate service, which may include emergency housing.

Upon arrival, staff provide clients with an orientation which typically includes reviewing facility rules and client rights and responsibilities.

Shortly after admission and as part of the intake process, staff work closely with clients to assess their needs, initiate an individualized housing and life stabilization plan and connect them with a case manager.

What happens if there are too many people for the available beds? Are they turned away?

Individuals experiencing homelessness can contact the York Region Emergency Housing Central Intake Line, which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to inquire about bed availability.

If there are no emergency housing beds available in York Region, intake staff will assist individuals to find alternative options, including providing referrals to services in nearby municipalities (e.g., Peel Region, Durham Region, City of Toronto, Simcoe County).

To support improved outcomes and to decrease pressure on the emergency housing system, the Region operates a Diversion Program to help people experiencing homelessness to find alternatives to emergency housing such as staying with a friend or family.

York Region operates programs to support residents with eviction prevention by providing temporary financial assistance to keep people housed and this includes in the private market.

Is the intake of people limited to during the day?

No, intake can occur throughout the daytime and evening hours to ensure that an individual in need has a safe place to spend the night.

Drop-in programming will have predetermined hours of operation and will close overnight.

ONSITE SUPPORTS

What will residents do during the day? Do they have programs?

During their stay, residents will work on their individual housing and life stabilization plans with their case manager. There is no set agenda/structured routine that emergency and/or transitional housing residents must follow. Many residents work or attend schooling/education training programs during the day and/or evening hours.

Drop-in programming will operate during the day and will provide specialized life skills programs and services.

Onsite programs will include:

- Supports to find and maintain permanent housing
- Individual counselling
- Life skills training
- Employment services
- Training and educational opportunities
- Mental health and addiction support
- Peer support programs operated by people with lived experience

The service provider will also collaborate with community agencies to connect people with external programs and services across the Region that best supports their needs.

What does life stabilization mean?

Life stabilization refers to supports and services to help individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness address current individual life challenges and develop goals for the future. Life stabilization support can include income and housing assistance, access to mental health and addiction services, legal aid, financial management, education, job skills training, employment assistance, meal preparation, connections to community programs and more.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

What type of employment services and options are available?

The service provider selected to operate the building will have strong partnerships with community agencies offering employment services to provide individuals with training and access to services both onsite and offsite.

Employment services may include:

- Resume writing and job search assistance
- Interview preparation
- Providing access to work appropriate attire
- Referrals to job-skills programs/workshops, employment counselling and career planning services

Where will residents go for employment?

Residents staying at the facility will be supported to find employment within York Region or outside of the region.

PROGRAM SUCCESS

What is the success rate of emergency housing? How many people are housed, how many people are employed, re-trained, etc.?

Between 2016 and 2021, Belinda's Place reported housing 549 women, including women who had experienced homelessness for more than 15 years. During this time, 1,191* clients were supported through their drop-in program¹.

Between 2016 and 2021, Porter Place supported 1,848* individuals and reported housing approximately 50% (918 individuals) to long-term and transitional housing².

In 2021, Porter Place supported 256 unique individuals through their emergency housing and drop-in programming³.

Of those who completed the exit interview when leaving Porter Place in 2021:

- 82% felt supported and provided with resources to search for housing
- 91% felt they were able to maintain their new housing arrangement
- 100% were connected to financial supports
- 91% felt better connected to social and community supports
- 100% felt staff were knowledgeable and helpful³

The new multi-service building is expected to achieve similar accomplishments as Belinda's Place and Porter Place.

¹ *The Governing Council of The Salvation Army of Canada, Belinda's Place, 2016 - 2021 Annual Reports*

² *Blue Door Support Services, Porter Place, 2016 - 2021 Annual Reports*

³ *Blue Door Support Services, Porter Place, 2021 Annual Report*

**Note, these numbers are not unique, meaning it could include the same individual using the facility on more than one occasion.*

What is the percentage of people using emergency housing for the first time?

In 2023, 57% of people who accessed emergency housing in York Region accessed it for the first time¹. Of the 218 people who stayed at Porter Place in 2023, 43% accessed emergency housing at Porter Place only once¹.

¹Source: HIFIS, v4

What housing opportunities are available? Where will the clients go after?

During a resident's stay in emergency housing, staff will support them in their search for a permanent home and connect them to services in the community. Some residents will move from emergency housing into transitional housing or market rental housing in the community, where they will continue to receive individualized support for up to one year.

Transitional housing provides individuals more time to access the services and supports they need to find permanent housing, reunite with family, find employment or participate in training, or address any challenges which may have prevented them from staying housed in the past. Supports may include developing financial literacy, building life-skills, pursuing education, training and/or employment to help people gain independence and stay housed.

Some residents find housing in the community through York Region's [Housing with Supports](#) program which offers permanent housing, meals and support with daily living activities. Other residents are housed through *Home Now* – the Region's Housing First program – with support to help individuals find and keep housing long-term. Referrals are made by service providers through the Region's Community Collaborative Table.

Additionally, York Region offers many other supports such as the [Housing Stability Program and Homelessness Prevention Program](#) to help people who are housed to stay in their homes when faced with circumstances that put their housing at risk (applies to rented or owned homes).

The Region also administers a [subsidized housing](#) program, providing individuals, families and seniors with low- to moderate-incomes subsidies to help them pay rent. At the end of 2022, there were more than 14,800 households on York Region's subsidized housing wait list.

How many people in York Region are chronically homeless?

Chronic homelessness describes anyone who has been homeless for six months or more in the past year, or a cumulative total of at least 18 months in the past three years.

In 2023, 388 adults (aged 18+ years) experienced chronic homeless. Approximately 56% of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in York Region were male.

Estimates suggest that up to 80% of people who experience homelessness in Canada are not visible and people experiencing hidden homelessness may not be captured in this data.

What are some trends in homelessness?

There is no single cause of homelessness. Rising housing costs, low income, a shortage of affordable and safe housing as well as health challenges and personal or family crisis all contribute to this complex problem.

The COVID-19 pandemic made it harder for some vulnerable residents to keep housing and many residents have experienced homelessness for the first time because of the economic downturn during the pandemic.

In 2021, York Region, in partnership with the United Way Greater Toronto, conducted a Point-in-Time count of individuals experiencing homelessness in York Region. Data from the Count found that more people were experiencing long-term or chronic homelessness when compared to previous Point-in-Time counts in York Region. Additionally, while homelessness affects people of many backgrounds, specific groups were overrepresented, such as people identifying as Indigenous, Black and LGBTQ2S+. Recommendations from the 2021 I Count included the need for substantial efforts to understand and respond to the housing and support needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness.

For more information and to read the full report, please visit york.ca/icount

Why are you bringing homeless people into Aurora?

A person can lose their housing due to a wide range of factors including rising housing costs, low income, a shortage of affordable and safe housing, as well as health challenges and personal or family crisis. Individuals experiencing homelessness may come from any part of York Region including from within the Town of Aurora. The people this housing will support are not strangers. These are our neighbours and friends and members of our community who need and deserve our caring support.

How much does it cost to rent a bedroom?

Emergency housing supports are provided free of charge to those in need. Individuals staying in transitional housing will pay a maximum of 30% of their total monthly income (or the shelter portion of their Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program payment).

What is the cost impact of providing emergency services as opposed to emergency housing?

It is estimated that [homelessness costs the Canadian economy \\$7.05 billion every year](#).

York Region is focused on preventing people from becoming homeless. The [10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan](#) outlines actions to strengthen the homelessness and housing stability service system to help more residents find and keep housing. The Region is in the process of updating its 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. The Region supports housing retention, and this proposed building will play an important role in helping more residents find and keep housing which in turn, will reduce demands on Regional services.

Future Residents of the Emergency and Transitional Housing Building

The proposed housing would be owned and maintained by Housing York Inc. (HYI), the Region's community housing corporation, and operated and staffed 24/7 by a community-based service provider. HYI has built community housing for many years, and the neighbourhoods surrounding our buildings continue to see the same trend of appreciating property values. As the largest community housing provider in York Region, HYI manages and maintains 37 housing properties with more than 4,500 residents in 3,027 units located in all nine local cities, townships and towns. HYI provides well-maintained, affordable housing options, from mixed income rental apartment buildings to emergency and transitional housing sites. As a responsible landlord, we continue to work with the local community to ensure HYI is a good neighbour and positive contributor.

The proposed emergency and transitional housing building will be managed by HYI, who will be responsible for property maintenance. HYI and the service provider will work collaboratively with York Region Public Health as required to keep the property safe.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND

Will homeless people in need of help be vetted?

What type of criminal records could homeless people have?

If a person experiencing homelessness has a criminal record, will they be denied access? Will some residents be out on parole or awaiting trial?

What happens if someone just released from prison calls the Central Intake Line?

The safety and security of all residents is a priority for York Region. Housing is identified as a human right and the Ontario Human Rights Code protects residents against discrimination. Denying someone housing due to a criminal background is discriminatory.

The proposed building will provide a safe, caring and supportive community that is welcoming and inclusive of adults at risk of or experiencing homelessness in York Region.

Skilled staff will be available in the building to support residents 24 hours a day. Where necessary, the service provider will also collaborate closely with community agencies and partners, such as John Howard Society of York Region and YRP, to ensure people are connected to programs and services that best support their needs.

Will staff be patrolling the surrounding woods?

No. Security cameras will provide video footage of the Region's property both inside and outside the building and staff will be onsite 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If security and/or staff patrols are conducted, they will be limited to the Region's property only.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION DISABILITIES

Will there be any screening for drug and/or alcohol addictions?

Individuals living at any of York Region's emergency or transitional housing sites are not restricted from services due to substance use. All residents must follow the program's substance use policies throughout their stay and refrain from any behaviour or actions that affect the safety and security of clients, staff, volunteers, or community partners providing services.

The service delivery model at the proposed emergency and transitional housing building will prioritize the health and well-being of all residents, including helping individuals access client-centred harm reduction programming, counselling and supports as needed, both on and off site.

Will there be recourse if residents of the new building who have drug addictions leave drug paraphernalia in the woods surrounding the entire proposed site?

Needles, syringes or other sharp objects, such as razor blades and broken glass, may be found anywhere in the community, including on private/public properties, roads or commercial properties.

These items can present a serious risk of infection to the general public if they are not handled and disposed of in a safe manner. Please refer to the [Safe Needle and Sharps Handling](#) and [I Found a Needle Now What](#) fact sheets.

For further information, contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653.

Will substance misuse be addressed following admittance into the shelter? Would an individual with substance misuse challenges be required to stay onsite to ensure their safety?

The service delivery model for the proposed emergency and transitional housing building will prioritize the health and well-being of all clients, including helping individuals access client-centred harm reduction programming, counselling and supports as needed, both on and off site.

This means that clinical and non-clinical staff members will meet people where they are in their journey and take a holistic approach to minimize the harmful effects of substance misuse and/or a trauma history.

Planned on site programs at the new building may include:

- Peer support programs operated by people with lived experience
- Outreach and support programs
- Trauma-informed counselling
- Mental wellness and healing support programs
- Broad harm reduction supports

Would an individual released following a 72-hour psychiatric hold be sent to the emergency and transitional housing building?

Any individuals experiencing homelessness can contact the York Region Emergency Housing Central Intake Line, which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Intake staff conduct a pre-assessment over the phone to determine an individual's needs and refer them to an appropriate service, which may include emergency housing.

Preventing and Ending Homelessness Takes a Community Coming Together

For many residents, York Region is a vibrant and prosperous place to live and work. However, for some, homelessness or the risk of becoming homeless is a daily reality.

Residents who will use this proposed building need a safe and welcoming space to access services – they are our neighbours, and they matter. They are brothers, fathers, uncles, sons, co-workers and friends who want to find stable housing and employment in York Region and contribute to our community.

HOW CAN I STAY INVOLVED?

The proposed emergency and transitional housing building at 14452 Yonge Street is in the planning application review process with the Town of Aurora and there will be further opportunities to provide feedback.

We are looking for neighbours, businesses and community partners to join our Community Liaison Committee (CLC). The CLC meets regularly to provide feedback, address issues throughout the planning and future construction period and act as community advocates.

To apply for the CLC, please email 14452Yonge@york.ca or visit york.ca/14452Yonge

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

For more information and to sign up for updates, visit york.ca/14452Yonge

If you have questions or would like to learn more about the proposed emergency and transitional housing development, please contact the Community Liaison at 289-338-8063 or 14452Yonge@york.ca