

# The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole  
Finance and Administration  
May 5, 2022

Report of the Chief Administrative Officer

## **2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan Year 3 (2021) Progress Report and 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan Development**

### **1. Recommendations**

1. Council approve the approach for development of the draft 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan, outlined in this report, in alignment with the four [Vision](#) areas of focus: Economic Vitality, Healthy Communities, Sustainable Environment and Good Government.
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to local municipalities.

### **2. Summary**

This report provides a summary on the progress made in 2021, year three of the [2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan](#).

Key Points:

- In 2021, 23 of 31 (74%) of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* performance measures were trending in the desired direction (see Attachment 1). While most performance measures are trending in the right direction, the Region's Strategic Plan progress reporting is exception-based and provides explanations for performance measure variances
- The Strategic Plan was developed to withstand changing operating environments by anchoring into core services to ensure the Region continues to meet its legislative obligations while remaining flexible and responsive to residents' needs
- Building on the success of Council direction over this Council term, staff are beginning the process to develop the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan in alignment with the 2023-2026 Budget

### 3. Background

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

On [February 28, 2019](#), Council approved the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* tabled with the *2019 to 2022 Regional Budget*. Strategic Plan progress reports are presented to Council annually. This report provides a summary on the progress made on performance measures in year three (2021) of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan*.

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

Performance accountability is measured through performance measures that capture how well a core regional service is working to contribute to our communities' well-being. Performance measures in the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* are tracked to ensure that objectives are met, with variances reported to Council annually.

#### **In March 2020, York Region declared a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

On March 23, 2020, York Region declared a state of emergency in response to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, the province has put public health measures in place to limit the transmission of COVID-19. This resulted in the cancellation of organized events, closures of facilities and businesses and shutdown of non-essential services. York Region administrative facilities were closed to the public and included temporary disruption to some York Region programs and services. In 2021, York Region facilities remained closed to the public. During these times of uncertainty and rapid change, the number one priority is protecting the health and safety of residents and all our communities while providing core service delivery.

### 4. Analysis

#### **IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON YORK REGION'S *2019 TO 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN***

#### **The *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* was developed to withstand changing operating environments**

The *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* was developed to withstand changing operating environments by anchoring the plan in core services to ensure the Region continues to meet its legislative obligations while remaining flexible and responsive to residents' needs. This approach was critical in maintaining progress during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan's* priorities, objectives, performance measures and key activities set for the four-year Council term are still relevant. Programs and services the Region provides have not changed even though how the Region provides them in our changing operating environment may have been impacted.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about major changes in the way people live, work and play. For example, all modes of travel were affected, even after restrictions were eased. Private vehicle travel fell sharply at the start of the lockdown but eventually rebounded. There was a noticeable shift in traffic patterns as volumes became more uniform through the day. Some of these shifts may last well beyond the pandemic with a positive outlook on the future for York Region residents. For example, key partnerships were developed between York Region and partner agencies to coordinate and leverage services and funding opportunities for those impacted by COVID-19. These partnerships and lessons learned will help inform York Region service and response even after the pandemic.

## ***2019 TO 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES***

Performance measures help demonstrate York Region's specific contribution to the well-being of our communities. The baseline trend in the Year 3 (2021) Progress Report is based on comparing the 2021 data with 2017 data. As fluctuations can occur from year-to-year, it is more meaningful to report on the baseline trend as a five-year impact summary rather than annual variance.

### **74% of the Strategic Plan's performance measures were trending in the desired direction**

In 2021, 23 of 31 (74%) performance measures' current baselines were trending in the desired direction (see Attachment 1). York Region accomplished a great deal in 2021 despite COVID-19's impacts. To highlight a few achievements in 2021:

- Launched a refreshed *Vision*, with Council renewing their commitment to strong, caring, safe communities
- Achieved top scores in the Ontario Chief Drinking Water Inspector's report, with 100% of samples meeting provincial standards to support safe communities
- Purchased six more electric buses, moving closer to Council's goal of zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2051 to deliver and promote environmentally sustainable services
- Planted 92,154 trees and shrubs through the Regional Greening Strategy Program to enhance and preserve green space. This is a 52% increase from 2020 when tree planting programs were heavily impacted by COVID-19
- Continued to implement the Regional Fiscal Strategy that helped build reserves and reduce the debt level. The reserve-to-debt ratio grew from 86% to 147% between 2017 and 2021

- Worked to finalize the Municipal Comprehensive Review, updating the Transportation Master Plan and Water and Wastewater Master Plan for final Council approval of the Regional Official Plan in 2022

### **Five performance measures were not trending in the desired direction**

Five (5) out of 31 (16%) of the performance measures' current baseline trends were not trending in the desired direction (see Attachment 1):

- Number of transit ridership per capita (due to COVID-19)
- Percentage of regional roads with sidewalks and/or dedicated bike lanes in urban areas
- Percentage of individuals and families remaining stably housed after six months who were homeless or at risk of homelessness (due to COVID-19)
- Number of megalitres of treated water consumed per 100,000 population
- Percentage of regional assets with a condition assessment rating of fair or better condition

In 2021, three (3) performance measures had no data available for reporting:

- Percentage of 17-year-old students in compliance with *Immunization of Schools Pupils Act* (due to COVID-19)
- Percentage of food service premises with a certified food handler at all times (due to COVID-19)
- Percentage of York Region clients receiving help to improve their housing stability

Attachment 2 is an exception report summarizing these performance measures. The summary outlines contributing factors for performance relating to each measure and activities planned to support future progress.

### **Building on the success of Council direction over this Council term, staff are beginning the process to develop the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan to align with the 2022 to 2026 Council term**

York Regional Council's commitment to strong, caring, safe communities is the guiding star for the Region's activities.

Public consultation is completed through the visioning process. Comprehensive community consultation on the future vision for York Region was conducted between 2018 to 2021 and informed the renewal of York Region's *Vision*, approved by Council November 2021.

York Region establishes a new Strategic Plan and Multi-Year Budget every four years at the start of a four-year Council term to work towards Council’s Vision. The strategic planning process involves five phases (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
**Five Phases to Strategic Planning**



The Region sets priorities over each four-year term of Council through the Strategic Plan, in alignment with Vision’s four areas of focus – Economic Vitality, Healthy Communities, Sustainable Environment and Good Government and focuses on York Region’s 15 core services (see Figure 2). Continuing to anchor the Strategic Plan in core services will help to ensure the Region continues to meet its legislative obligations while remaining flexible and responsive to the changing needs of our residents.

**Figure 2**  
**York Region’s 15 Core Services**



The 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan will build off the success of Council’s direction this term with the current *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan*. Core components captured in the plan are priorities, objectives, and performance measures. Table 2 captures the emerging priorities informing the development of the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan. The draft 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan

will be presented at the start of the next Council term for approval in alignment with the 2023-2026 Budget. Once Council has approved the plan, performance measures will be tracked and reported to Council annually.

**Table 2**

**Emerging 2023 to 2027 Priorities in Alignment with *Vision* four Areas of Focus**

Areas of Focus	Emerging Priorities
Economic Vitality	Encourage Economic Growth
Healthy Communities	Support Community Well-Being Deliver and Promote Affordable Housing
Sustainable Environment	Reduce Our Ecological Impact
Good Government	Deliver Trusted and Efficient Services Support Employee Well-Being

**5. Financial**

Costs associated with the delivery of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* are aligned with the multi-year budget. The 2022 Regional Budget, approved on December 16, 2021, supports fiscal responsibility within a complex environment and continues to focus on delivering the priorities of the *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan*, while responding to fiscal challenges, including COVID-19 impacts and investments in infrastructure.

Impacts to the Region’s budget directly affects 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 requiring revisiting commitments identified in the Strategic Plan.

**6. Local Impact**

The Region’s *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan* shares similar priorities as local municipalities. The progress made in year three of the Region’s four-year Strategic Plan continues to support the strong alignment of priorities profiled in many of the local municipalities’ plans.

## 7. Conclusion

The Year 3 (2021) Progress Report provides Council with an update on how the Region is progressing towards meeting its priorities. York Region accomplished a great deal in 2021 despite COVID-19's impacts on much of the operating environment. In Year 3 (2021), 74% (23 of 31) of performance measures are trending in the desired direction. This demonstrates York Region's dedicated commitment made in Year 3 in taking specific, implementable strategies and actions, while responding to COVID-19, to address turning and maintaining the curves of performance measures toward achieving the priorities captured in the Strategic Plan. It is recommended that Council approve the approach for development of the draft 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan and that this report be circulated to local municipalities for 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:

**Bruce Macgregor**  
Chief Administrative Officer

April 8, 2022  
Attachments (2)  
#13724193

# 2019 TO 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN YEAR 3 (2021) PROGRESS REPORT



SUMMARY: 23 of 31 = 74% of Performance Measures Trending in the Desired Direction

Result Area	Performance Measure	Historical Data			YEAR 1 2019	YEAR 2 2020	YEAR 3 2021	Baseline Trend
		2017	2018					
Economic Vitality	Increase % of business engagements resulting in business retention, expansion and attraction	45%	37%	53%	61%	52%	●	
	Maintain # of transit ridership per capita	20.8	20	19.8	9.5	8.9	●**	
	Increase # of kilometres of bus rapidways	12.30	12.30	27.30	33.70	33.70	●	
	Increase # of people and employment within 500 metres of transit	Data not available for reporting	241,000	257,000	265,000	272,300	●	
	Maintain % of on-time performance on all transit routes	94.14%	91.45%	91.48%	94.74%	95.64%	●	
	Increase # of road lane kilometres	4,229.70	4,265.12	4,293.00	4,318.00	4,382.00	●	
Healthy Communities	Maintain % of residents that rate York Region as a safe place to live	96%	94%	95%	96%	95%	●	
	Maintain police emergency (Priority 1) response time in minutes	7:06	7:00	6:50	6:44	6:52	●	
	Maintain % of municipal drinking water samples meeting Ontario Drinking Water Standards	99.93%	99.89%	100.00%	99.98%	100.00%	●	
	Increase % of regional roads with sidewalks and/or dedicated bike lanes in urban areas	Data not available for reporting	88%	84%	85%	86%	●	
	Increase % of 17-year-old students in compliance with Immunization of School Pupils Act	86.43%	91.83%	92.00%	Data not available for reporting		▲**	
	Increase % of food service premises with a certified food handler at all times	52%	68%	77%	Data not available for reporting		▲**	
	Increase % of York Region clients receiving help to improve their housing stability	Data not available for reporting						▲
	Maintain paramedic response time for emergency response services to meet Council approved targets	78%	76%	76%	76%	75%	●	
	Increase # of advocacy activities related to long-term care beds	Data not available for reporting	3	13	10	21	●	
	Decrease # of days to determine York Region residents' eligibility for social assistance	9	8	8	3	5	●	
	Decrease # of children with an immediate need waiting for subsidized childcare	1,258	1,575	2,152	1,855	421	●	
	Increase % of individuals and families remaining stably housed after six months who were homeless or at risk of homelessness	Data not available for reporting		83%	81%	74%	●**	
Sustainable Environment	Maintain % of wastewater receiving treatment	99.97%	99.99%	100.00%	99.97%	99.99%	●	
	Maintain % of residential solid waste diverted from landfill	93%	94%	94%	93%	92%	●	
	Decrease # of megalitres of treated water consumed per 100,000 population	9,605	9,855	10,004	10,368	10,245	●	
	Decrease # of per capita greenhouse gas emissions across Regional operations in tonnes	64.80	65.20	65.40	55.50	53.70	●	
	Increase % of growth occurring within the built-up areas	46.9%	59.3%	75.0%	59.0%	58.0%	●	
	Increase % of development applications meeting timeline commitments	Data not available for reporting		100%	100%	100%	●	
	Maintain # of trees and shrubs planted annually through the Regional Greening Strategy Program	85,464	101,122	102,332	60,539	92,154	●	
Good Government	Maintain / Improve comparative \$ of operating cost per unit of service*	0.91	1.00	1.01	0.95	1.04	●	
	Increase % of public-facing transactions that can be completed online or with a mobile device	Data not available for reporting	60%	73%	75%	75%	●	
	Increase % of reserve-to-debt ratio	86%	99%	111%	126%	147%	●	
	Maintain % of regional assets with a condition assessment rating of fair or better condition	91%	90%	87%	86%	86%	●	
	Maintain % of York Region residents that are satisfied with Regional government	78%	75%	81%	87%	80%	●	
	Increase # of open data sets	177	214	228	228	228	●	

\*NOTE: 2018 as baseline year and considered trending in the right direction compared to inflation. 2021 data may be subject to change based on finalized FIR data.

**LEGEND** ● = Trending in the desired direction ● = Not trending in the desired direction ▲ = Data Not Available for Reporting  
\*\*Performance measures negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Exception Report Summary**

### **2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan Year 3 (2021) Progress Report – Performance Measures**

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

Five (5) of 31 (16%) of the Strategic Plan's performance measures' current baseline trends were not trending in the desired direction (see Attachment 1):

- Number of transit ridership per capita (due to COVID-19)
- Percentage of regional roads with sidewalks and/or dedicated bike lanes in urban areas
- Percentage of individuals and families remaining stably housed after six months who were homeless or at risk of homelessness (due to COVID-19)
- Number of megalitres of treated water consumed per 100,000 population
- Percentage of regional assets with a condition assessment rating of fair or better condition

Contributing factors for the performance of each of these measures are detailed below.

#### **Performance Measures With No Data Available for Reporting**

In 2021, three (3) performance measures had no data available for reporting:

- Percentage of 17-year-old students in compliance with *Immunization of Schools Pupils Act* (due to COVID-19)
- Percentage of food service premises with a certified food handler at all times (due to COVID-19)
- Percentage of York Region clients receiving help to improve their housing stability

Explanations for each of these measures with no data available for reporting are detailed below.

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## Performance Measures Not Trending in the Desired Direction



### ECONOMIC VITALITY

#### **Maintain number of transit ridership per capita**

The number of transit ridership per capita decreased significantly in 2020 and 2021 compared to previous years, reaching 8.9 million riders across the York Region Transit system in 2021. Ridership was primarily impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic with work-from-home initiatives, changes in ridership behaviour as a result of distancing and risk of COVID-19 transmission, school closures and limitations on travel for leisure. In addition, the York Region service area population decreased slightly in 2020 and 2021, as select low performing services were discontinued due to ridership decline. However, Mobility On-Request service areas were expanded to assist with service coverage and address changes in travel patterns.

Prior to the pandemic, transit ridership was impacted by reduced service hours and construction across the region. Revenue service hour decreases have been a result of budgetary restraints to pay for capital expenditures. A clear trend was identified between construction areas and corresponding ridership. In areas where construction was occurring, ridership in those corridors and routes connecting to them decreased due to increased travel times and delays.

The regional road network continues to be under pressure due to significant growth across York Region. To manage this demand on regional roads, highways and transit system, the Region is continuing to focus on providing mobility for all modes of travel (walking, cycling, transit and auto uses) through improved transit services, development of complete and walkable communities, improved network infrastructure and connections as well as promoting active transportation through the implementation of cycling facilities.



### **Increase percentage of regional roads with sidewalks and/or dedicated bike lanes in urban areas**

In 2021, 86% of regional roads have an adjacent sidewalk and/or dedicated bike lane in urban areas.

2018 was the first year the percentage of regional roads with sidewalks and/or dedicated bike lanes in urban areas was measured. This performance measure illustrates the number of regional roads that have a sidewalk or bike lane adjacent to it. In 2019, the data collection methodology was refined to provide more accurate data. As the data sets are refined fluctuations may appear due to data reporting becoming more accurate. York Region continues to include pedestrian and cycling facilities as part of road improvement projects in partnership with local partners, and this trend is expected to be maintained or increase as the urbanization of the Region continues.

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

In 2021, 74% of individuals and families remained stably housed after six months who were previously homeless or at risk of homelessness. Ongoing waves of the pandemic in 2021 made it challenging for York Region to conduct follow-ups with clients at the six-month post-service check-in.

The 2021 update excludes data from the three external emergency housing providers that employ housing support workers. However, in 2021, York Region met with the emergency housing partners to provide guidance and capacity building supports to strengthen tracking and reporting of performance and outcomes to ensure accurate and consistent data collection. 2022 will be the first full year of available data from emergency housing providers.

During the pandemic, affordable housing options across York Region has continued to be extremely limited and financial instability has increased, affecting the ability of residents to maintain their housing.

This measure excludes clients for whom 'housing status' was unknown or unavailable at six months, and may not reflect unique customers, as it is possible to access multiple programs in a calendar year.



## SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

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

The number of megalitres of treated water consumed per 100,000 population is used to track water consumption at York Region. In 2021, 10,245 megalitres of treated water was consumed per 100,000 population. Annual values are determined using treated water consumed (annual billed volume) and serviced population data.

Weather plays a significant factor in seasonal water use, particularly in the 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 there is a greater amount of water consumed.

In addition to weather patterns, in December 2018, one of the main bulk water supply meters was replaced with new technology which increased the accuracy and confidence in total water demand volumes.



## GOOD GOVERNMENT

### **Maintain percentage of regional assets with a condition assessment rating of fair or better condition**

This performance measure includes only service areas deemed as "core assets" per O.Reg 588/17. (e.g. Water/Wastewater, Roads).

In 2021, the percentage of regional assets with a condition assessment rating of fair or better condition remained the same as 2020 at 86%. This is primarily due to aging road assets which did not have a sustainable funding source. In 2019, Regional Council approved drawing from the Asset Management Reserve to fund road assets.

The Region continues improving asset management practices to better understand risks and vulnerabilities to service delivery and better link asset management decision-making with broader provincial acts and regulations, corporate policies, plans and budgets. The goal of asset management is not to achieve 100% of assets in fair or better condition but rather to ensure critical assets are replaced at optimal intervals. Corporate Asset Management review cost, risk and performance drivers (level of service) to determine optimal asset invention requirements.

Corporate Asset Management updates Council regularly on asset management progress. The next Annual State of Infrastructure Report is scheduled for Fall 2022 and an update on the Corporate Asset Management Plan and policy planned for 2024.

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## Performance Measures With No Data Available for Reporting



**HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

### **Increase percentage of 17-years-old students in compliance with the *Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA)***

In 2021, due to the ongoing staffing requirements for the COVID-19 operational response, this program was suspended as per Ministry of Health guidance, resulting in 2021 data for this performance measure not being available.

### **Increase percentage of food service premises with a certified food handler at all times**

Due to the COVID-19 response, including redeployment of staff in 2020 and 2021, and requirements of the *Reopening Ontario Act* for the closure of premises, 2021 data for this performance measure is not available.

### **Increase percentage of York Region clients receiving help to improve their housing stability**

The performance measure outlining the percentage of York Region clients receiving help to improve housing stability has been reported as data not available in the past three years due to data collection constraints. Staff have been working to develop a methodology to report on this measure but have concluded there is no broad denominator representing York Region clients that can be used to support its calculation. This performance measure will be reassessed and updated with a more meaningful, reliable, and reportable measure as part of developing the draft 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan for Council's consideration next term.

Working with community partners, York Region delivers several housing stability programs providing a range of shorter- and longer- term supports, including rent-geared-to-income subsidies, portable housing benefits, outreach, case management and counselling and emergency and transitional housing. In 2021, 9,802 households received housing assistance through short- and long-term programs delivered directly by the Region and through partners, an increase of approximately 6% from 2020 with 9,244 households.