
To: Regional Council

Date: August 28, 2025

From: Erin Mahoney
Chief Administrative Officer





Re: **Preparation for September 4, 2025 Special Meeting on Council's Vision**

This memo provides an update on Regional Council's Vision of Strong, Caring, Safe Communities and its 20 community indicators, in preparation for the Special Meeting on September 4, 2025. The session will be highly interactive. Council members are asked to attend in person and bring their cellphones to fully participate in engagement activities during this meeting.

Council approved refreshed Vision in 2021 and reaffirmed their commitment to the Vision Statement of "Strong, Caring, Safe Communities"

For over two decades, Council has had the Vision Statement of "Strong, Caring, Safe Communities." [Vision](#) outlines Council's commitment to our communities and guides York Region's corporate activities. Council reaffirmed its commitment to Vision in 2021, identifying four Areas of Focus (Figure 1) needed to advance its Vision: Economic Vitality, Healthy Communities, Sustainable Environment and Good Government.

Figure 1
Vision's Four Areas of Focus

Area of Focus for the wellbeing of our communities	 ECONOMIC VITALITY	 HEALTHY COMMUNITIES	 SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT	 GOOD GOVERNMENT
Definitions	Focuses on what is needed to encourage and sustain economic growth and vitality in the Region	Focuses on the livability, health, safety and social well-being of our communities	Focuses on the need to protect and sustain the natural and built environment and reduce our ecological impact	Focuses on a sense of community as one that is democratic, accessible, equitable and reliable, where civic engagement and participation is welcomed from all

Community indicators align with global and national standards and help measure progress toward Council's Vision during each four-year term

Community indicators across these four Areas of Focus are reported each term of Council to monitor our collective community progress toward Council's Vision. Refer to Attachment 1 – Vision Community Indicators Scorecard for the latest update.

Vision's community indicators were selected through environmental scanning from data sources such as the Region's Community Opinion Polling Program and Statistics Canada Census Data. They align with existing global and national standards such as the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#), [Canadian Index of Wellbeing](#) and [ISO standards for sustainable cities and communities](#). Indicators were prioritized based on those best aligning with Council's Vision Statement.

While the Region has a role in influencing community indicators, outcomes for these areas cannot be achieved by Regional Council and staff actions alone. Multiple partners are involved in supporting progress and results in these areas.

York Region's Accountability Framework ensures consistent, corporate-wide application and alignment with Council's Vision

York Region's Accountability Framework (Figure 2) helps keep the organization focused on Council's Vision. Every four years, the Region sets priorities through a Corporate Strategic Plan, which aligns with the four Areas of Focus in Council's Vision. This Strategic Plan guides the Region's Multi-Year Budget and shapes Departmental and Individual Performance Plans. Together all elements of the Accountability Framework ensure progress is made on issues that matter most in York Region.

Figure 2
York Region's Accountability Framework



Council's Vision is monitored through assessing progress on 20 community indicators across all four Areas of Focus

Each term of Council, progress on advancing the 20 community indicators is assessed. The update on these indicators for this term of Council is summarized in Attachment 1. This summary provides a high-level overview of the status across Vision's 20 indicators, organized under the four Areas of Focus.

Currently, most of Vision's 20 community indicators are trending in the desired direction. A high-level summary of progress is as follows:

- **Economic Vitality:** Community indicators have remained stable in this area. All Economic Vitality community indicators are trending in the desired direction except for labour force participation rate, which is declining due to the Region's ageing population.
- **Healthy Communities:** Two out of five community indicators are trending in the desired direction in this area, with issues around affordability, mental health and safety. Spring 2025 Community Opinion Polling reinforces these trends, showing residents' top issues include public safety, cost of housing and cost of living.
- **Sustainable Environment:** The Region continues to see progress in this area. Most Sustainable Environment community indicators are trending in the desired direction and, while mobility was last reported as not trending as of the 2021 Census, recent supporting data shows this trend is recovering post-pandemic.
- **Good Government:** Two out of five community indicators are trending in the desired direction in this area, with issues arising around community engagement and civic participation like what is happening in these areas at provincial and national levels.

Continuing to validate Vision through semi-annual polling ensures it remains relevant to and representative of York Region's communities

Since approval of Council's refreshed Vision in 2021, work continues to ensure organizational alignment with Vision, enabling staff to effectively deliver upon Council's priorities. Vision is regularly validated through municipal scans, media reviews and semi-annual resident polling.

Results of semiannual community opinion surveys (Spring and Fall) are representative of York Region's population. Surveys provide insights on resident preferences and opinions on top issues facing communities, service satisfaction levels, value for taxes, and progress towards achieving Vision. The Spring survey focuses on gathering resident perceptions on top issues, quality of life, Council's Vision, housing perspectives, core spending preferences and communication preferences. In addition to gathering resident insights on issues and housing perspectives, the Fall survey asks questions related to financial and personal outlooks, fiscal responsibility, core service satisfaction and customer service.

82% of residents are satisfied with overall quality of services from York Region

Spring 2025 Community Opinion Polling results show 76% of York Region residents agree that York Region is living up to its Vision of 'Strong, Caring, Safe Communities' and 82% of residents are satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by York Region. The most recent polling findings may be found throughout the key insights' sections in Attachment 1.

Many partners help advance Council's Vision of Strong, Caring, Safe Communities with 89% of residents recommending York Region as a place to live

Collaboration is essential to achieve Council's Vision and address community challenges. York Region plays multiple roles across Vision's Areas of Focus – leading in some areas, collaborating in others, and advocating where needed.

The livability indicator is a strong example of this partnership in action. It is trending in the desired direction, with 89% of residents recommending York Region as a place to live. While the Region delivers many services that support livability, quality of life is enhanced through partnerships with:

- **Local municipalities**, who respond to local needs
- **Community organizations**, who address complex social issues
- **Educational institutions**, who foster lifelong learning
- **Healthcare providers**, who promote wellness
- **Businesses**, who drive economic growth and job creation
- **Residents**, who actively shape their communities

Together, these partners create communities that residents would recommend to others. Such partnership is evidenced across all 20 community indicators captured in Vision, resulting in strong, caring, safe communities.

Special Council meeting will consider Council's preferred future for the Region and define what Vision's four Areas of Focus look like for its residents

The Special Meeting on Council's Vision will bring Council together to discuss Council's Vision for all 1.2 million residents. The purpose of this meeting is to consider Council's preferred future for the Region and define what Economic Vitality, Healthy Communities, Sustainable Environment and Good Government look like for its residents. Revisiting the definition of each of these four important Areas of Focus will inform development of the next 4-year update of the Region's Corporate Strategic Plan (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Next Steps Following the Special Meeting on Council's Vision

Date	Q3 2025	Q1 2026	Q1 2027
Milestone	Special Meeting on Council's Vision (September 4, 2025)	Follow Up Report to Council on feedback from Special Meeting and Next Steps Development of new Corporate Strategic Plan begins	Council Approval of 2027 to 2031 Corporate Strategic Plan along with multi-year budget

Dr. Sutherns of Sage Solutions will facilitate the engagement with Council with the objective of enriching a shared Vision of York Region's preferred future. Council members are encouraged to reflect on the following questions to support an engaging discussion:

- When you picture a "strong, caring, safe" community, what do you see? What is strongly present and noticeably absent in the scenario you imagine?
- How do each of the four Areas of Focus (Economic Vitality, Healthy Communities, Sustainable Environment, Good Government) show up in your scenario? What do you see that demonstrates the community is thriving in these ways?
- Is there anything in your ideal scenario not adequately captured by one of the Areas of Focus or the current Community Indicators?

Following the Special Meeting of Council, Regional Council will receive another update on Vision including insights, next steps and opportunities for engagement based on the meeting.

Staff are committed to ensuring Council's Vision remains relevant to and representative of the diversity of York Region's communities. Council's feedback from this meeting will inform development of the next 4-year Corporate Strategic Plan.

For more information on this memo, please contact Erin Mahoney, Chief Administrative Officer at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71200. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



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Attachment 1 – Vision Community Indicators Scorecard