2024 Annual Report

BUILDING YORK REGION'S DIGITAL FUTURE

YORKNET

York Region

Vision

Helping create equitable
access to high-speed internet

Mission

Expanding open access to high-speed
internet throughout York Region

Focus

Planning, building and operating an affordable, reliable
and sustainable fibre network across York Region

Land acknowledgement

We acknowledge that York Region is located on the traditional territory of many Indigenous peoples including the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and Métis peoples and the treaty territories of the Haudenosaunee, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Williams Treaties First Nations. Today this area is home to many diverse Indigenous Peoples, and we recognize their history, spirituality, culture and stewardship of this land. We also acknowledge the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation as our closest First Nation community.

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> " Our commitment to enhancing the lives of residents through the power of dark fibre and providing high-speed internet access to underserved communities has never been stronger. "

A message from the 2024 Chair of the Board

At YorkNet, our mission is to transform digital access for York Region's over 1.2 million residents. Reflecting on the past year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the hard work and dedication of the YorkNet team. Our commitment to enhancing the lives of residents through the power of dark fibre and providing high-speed internet access to underserved communities has never been stronger. Together, we have made a significant impact and will continue to do so in 2025 and beyond.

2024 was marked by significant progress and achievements for our corporation. We consistently delivered results, exceeding our goals for expanding the dark fibre network. Notably, we constructed 296 kilometres of conduit infrastructure, the highest in YorkNet's history, significantly enhancing connectivity across York Region.

YorkNet also achieved an important milestone in our journey toward more connected and inclusive digital communities. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our government partners, community leaders, construction teams and internet service provider partner, Galaxy Fibre, we successfully brought high-speed internet to eligible homes in Pefferlaw within the Town of Georgina. This achievement marks the beginning of many more households that will be connected to high-speed internet under the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF), with more eligible home connections continuing in 2025.

As we continue to live and work in a digital age, YorkNet is ready to navigate the path ahead. Fast, effective broadband infrastructure is now essential for the Region's success in delivering crucial Regional services and providing reliable connections to our many municipal, educational and healthcare partners. Reliable digital connectivity is also critical to support economic development and attract new investment to York Region.

As Chair, and on behalf of every member of the YorkNet Board of Directors, I extend our gratitude for the ongoing support and dedication from our partners in the private and public sectors. By working together and harnessing the power of dark fibre, we can narrow the digital divide, fostering a more connected and inclusive York Region.

Margaret Wauk

2024 Chair of the Board of Directors, YorkNet
Mayor, Town of Georgina

A message from the General Manager

As we continue our journey towards enhancing connectivity across York Region, I am excited to share some key updates relative to YorkNet's progress.

YorkNet is proud to build and operate a world-class dark fibre network, helping to ensure equitable access to high-speed internet and enhancing Regional services.

Over the past year, we expanded our network to a total of 1,010 kilometers of conduit across the Region. Our goal of reaching more than 1,600 kilometres is within sight, driven by the support of the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF).

YorkNet's expansive fibre infrastructure will allow York Region to invest in advanced network technology to develop a more robust and resilient communications network to support its business operations.

YorkNet's dark fibre infrastructure plays a crucial role in delivering essential services for our more than 1.2 million residents, including health care, emergency response, water quality monitoring, traffic optimization and real-time transit updates. Our network supports vital business and municipal operations, and connects community services, significantly improving the quality of life for residents.

As we move forward, our goal remains clear: to create connected and empowered communities.

I extend my sincere appreciation to York Regional Council and our Board of Directors for their leadership and trust in YorkNet. We are deeply grateful for the commitment and vision, which has guided us toward a plan that strengthens Regional connectivity, promotes equitable access to communication infrastructure across our communities and creates a promising future for underserved communities.

Together, we will continue to build a future where everyone can have access to the digital resources they need to thrive.

Sincerely,

Laura Bradley
General Manager, YorkNet

" Our network supports vital business and municipal operations, and connects community services, significantly improving the quality of life for residents. "

Governance

YorkNet is one of three York Region-owned corporations and is funded by the Region. It is governed by the *Ontario Business Corporations Act*, the *Municipal Act* Regulation and Shareholder direction.

2024 Board of Directors

Reporting to the Shareholder (Regional Council), Directors of the Board are required to oversee YorkNet's business and affairs, approve the annual business plan and budget, appoint or hire officers of the Corporation and delegate day-to-day management to officers.

Board of Directors

Chair of the Board
Margaret Quirk
Mayor
Town of Georgina

Vice Chair of the Board
Steve Pellegrini
Mayor
Township of King

Director and CEO
Wayne Emmerson
York Region
Chairman and CEO

Director
Iain Lovatt
Mayor
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Director
Frank Scarpitti
Mayor
City of Markham

Director
Michael Chan
Regional Councillor
City of Markham

Director
Joe DiPaola
Regional Councillor
City of Richmond Hill

Director
Mario G. Racco
Regional Councillor
City of Vaughan

Director
Tom Vegh
Regional Councillor
Town of Newmarket

Executive Leadership Team

Dino Basso
Vice President

Laura Bradley
General Manager

David Di Giovanni
Chief Financial Officer

Mandate

YorkNet is dedicated to shaping the digital future of York Region through:

Growing York Region's dark fibre network

Improve the delivery of Regional services, such as traffic management, transit systems, water/waste water control management, security monitoring, policing and cloud-enabled applications

Collaborating with public-sector organizations to improve high-speed internet service

Work with municipalities, hospitals, libraries, fire halls, schools, community centres and other public-sector organizations to improve broadband services they deliver using our network

Providing private-sector organizations with open access to the network

Drive economic and social benefits and enhance broadband service for the Region's residents and businesses, particularly in rural and underserved areas of the Region

Dark fibre: the backbone of modern public infrastructure

At a time when digital connectivity is paramount, dark fibre stands out as a crucial component of our public infrastructure. But what is dark fibre and why is it so essential?

Understanding dark fibre

Dark fibre refers to optical fibre cables that have been laid, but are not yet lit. Unlike traditional fibre networks that are already active, our dark fibre remains unlit until it is activated by a service provider. This infrastructure provides York Region with the flexibility to control and manage its own high-speed network.

YorkNet's dark fibre infrastructure plays a pivotal role in enabling the delivery of essential health care, improved response times for emergency services, continuous monitoring of water quality, optimized traffic flow on roads and instant updates on transit services. YorkNet's network allows data to be collected and analyzed in real time, helping to ensure vital business operations are delivered in a timely, cost-effective manner.

Many York Region municipalities also use the network to connect vital community services such as libraries, administration buildings and community centres. These partnerships are instrumental in expanding Regional and municipal services and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Fibre networks are the backbone of modern infrastructure. By supporting essential services in health care, education, economic development and public safety, YorkNet contributes to a smarter, more resilient York Region. The network can adapt to technological advancements and increased data requirements, securing York Region's infrastructure for years to come.

Connecting digital communities

The internet connects us to whatever we need, whenever we need it, at the click of a button. However, building the infrastructure to support high-speed internet is a monumental task.

Building high-speed internet infrastructure involves extensive planning, design permits, construction, time and resources. Each step must be precisely executed to help ensure the network's reliability and security.

1 **IDENTIFYING NEEDS:** The YorkNet team locates underserved areas and plans reliable networks, determining optimal routes to remote locations.

2 **SECURING INVESTMENTS:** Obtaining financial backing from government and private partners is essential, though finalizing these investments can delay construction.

3 **PREPARATION:** The team carefully plans and coordinates the installation of hundreds of kilometres of fibre cables.

4 **SURVEYING AND MAPPING:** Civil technologists survey the land, inspect the area and map out digging sites, a process that can take months, but is crucial for accurate construction.

5 **PERMITS:** Applying for necessary permits involves multiple layers of approval and can be a lengthy process.

6 **CONDUIT INSTALLATION:** Conduits are installed underground to house and protect the fibre cables, helping to ensure easy access for maintenance.

7 **FIBRE CABLES:** Fibre optic cables, containing numerous tiny strands, are spliced together with precision and expertise.

8 **EQUIPMENT PLACEMENT AND TESTING:** Equipment is installed and rigorously tested to help ensure everything functions correctly.

9 **ISP CONNECTION:** Internet service providers connect the drop cable to their network, linking it to buildings or homes, thus delivering high-speed internet to users.

10 **USER ACCESS:** With the connection established, users can enjoy fast, reliable internet.

Building a dark fibre network is a significant undertaking that requires careful planning, significant investment and a dedicated team. The result is a secure and reliable network that can support the growing demand for high-speed internet and is crucial for closing the digital divide in York Region.

LAYING THE DIGITAL FOUNDATION...

2024 accomplishments

As YorkNet expands its network, access to high-speed internet in underserved communities will grow quickly, allowing customers to connect faster and more reliably to what they want, when they want.

YorkNet is bridging the digital divide and unlocking the immense potential of the Region's digital future.

256 KM
of conduit constructed through UBF, contributing to a total of 300 km built in 2024

1,010 KM
total conduit constructed across York Region

935
total network connections

48
total connections made to municipal and Regional locations

...FOR TOMORROW'S BRIGHT FUTURE

2025 key priorities

EXPAND
- Fibre network by more than 350 kilometres funded in part by UBF

CONNECT
- More underserved neighbourhoods in York Region and enable eligible residents to access high-speed internet services through UBF
- More Regional, municipal, public-sector and third-party connections to the network

COLLABORATE
- With third-party partners to achieve efficiencies from joint construction and facilitate use of the YorkNet fibre network
- With internal partners to implement new digital solutions for the Region

CONTINUE
- Construction funded through York Region, federal and provincial governments, and private-sector partners to expand into rural communities to bridge the digital divide in York Region
- Support for internet service provider partners to activate bringing fibre to the home for eligible customers as part of UBF

Boosting connectivity in York Region

YorkNet is diligently constructing its dark fibre network and will build hundreds of kilometres over the next few years. The network will join more Regional and local municipal facilities, supporting connected communities.
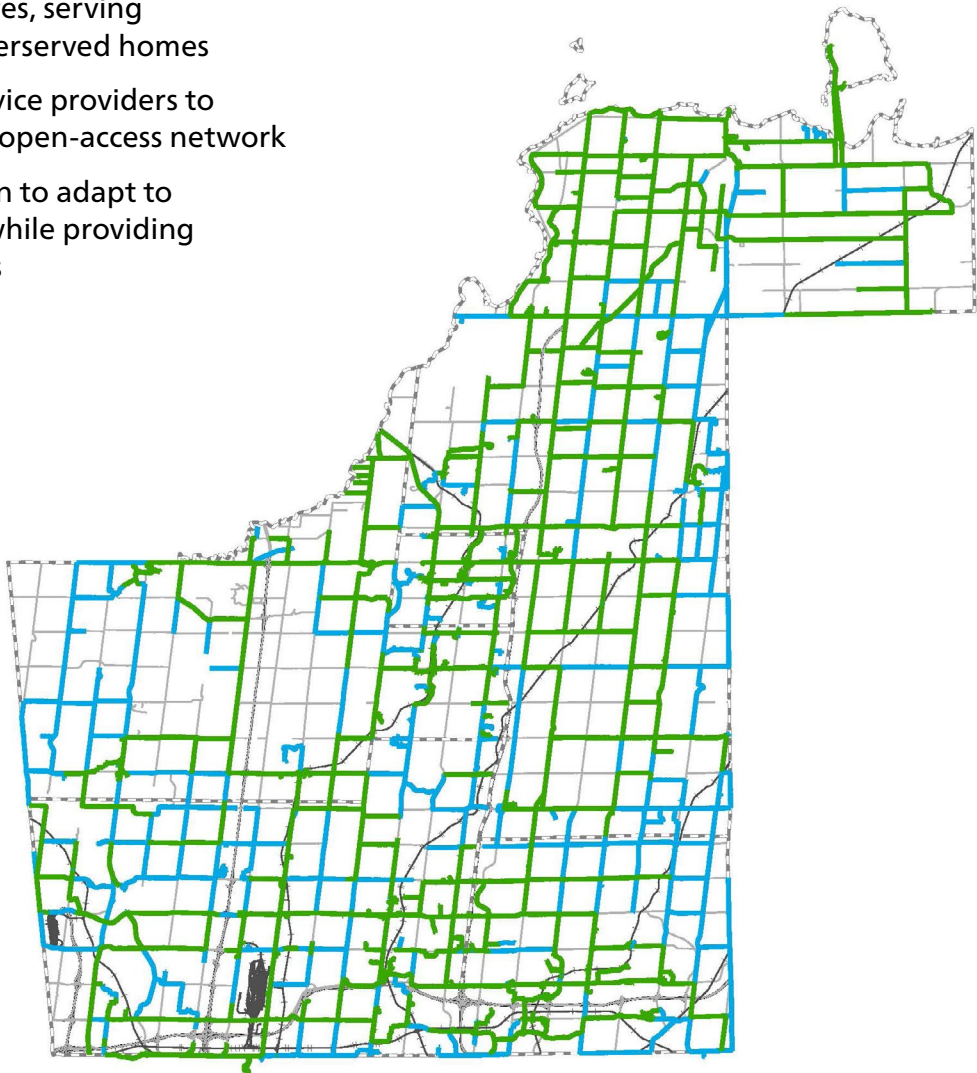
Guided by its expansion project with support from the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF), YorkNet has and continues to make considerable progress delivering equitable access to reliable, cost-effective broadband in underserved communities. What was once just a vision to connect all corners of the Region, is now on its way to becoming an exciting reality.

The network expansion entails:

- Extending the network by nearly 750 last-mile kilometres, serving more than 3,800 underserved homes
- Enabling internet service providers to connect to YorkNet's open-access network
- Preparing York Region to adapt to future technologies while providing connectivity solutions

UBF is a $3.225 billion investment by the Government of Canada designed to help provide high-speed internet access to 98 per cent of Canadians by 2026 and achieve the national target of 100 per cent access by 2030.

YorkNet's efforts are not just about building infrastructure, but about fostering digital inclusion and economic growth. By providing the infrastructure for high-speed internet access, YorkNet is enabling remote work, online education, telehealth services and digital business opportunities. This connectivity is crucial for the social and economic development of the Region, so all residents have the tools they need to thrive in a digital world.

YORKNET NETWORK MAP

— Completed network

— Network to be built

$61.2M
York Region's contribution

$48.7M
approved contribution from federal and provincial governments

$124.9M
total project cost

$15M
internet service provider's contribution

Estimates are based on 2024 pricing.

Spotlight on resident connectivity

First customer connections

In November 2024, YorkNet reached a significant milestone in its mission to enhance connectivity for underserved communities by helping to deliver high-speed internet to the first set of homes in Pefferlaw, within the Town of Georgina, under the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF).

This achievement marks the beginning of a broader initiative, as many more eligible households are set to be connected throughout 2025. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our government partners, community leaders, construction teams and our internet service provider partner, Galaxy Fibre, we continue to bring high-speed internet to all corners of York Region.

These initial connections underscore the power of collaboration and investment in bridging the digital divide, showcasing YorkNet's dedication to closing 99 per cent of the underserved gaps in the Region by 2030.

YorkNet partners with Galaxy Fibre to bring high-speed internet to underserved homes

YorkNet has built a strong partnership with Galaxy Fibre, a leading internet service provider dedicated to bridging the digital divide in underserved communities across Canada. This collaboration aims to enhance internet connectivity in York Region helping to ensure residents have access to the fastest and most reliable high-speed internet technology available.

Galaxy Fibre, a subsidiary of Community Network Partners Inc., has a long-standing history of providing high-speed internet services to remote and underserved Canadian communities. With more than 30 years of experience, Galaxy Fibre's mission, much like YorkNet's, is to make the full potential of online connectivity available to everyone, regardless of where they live.
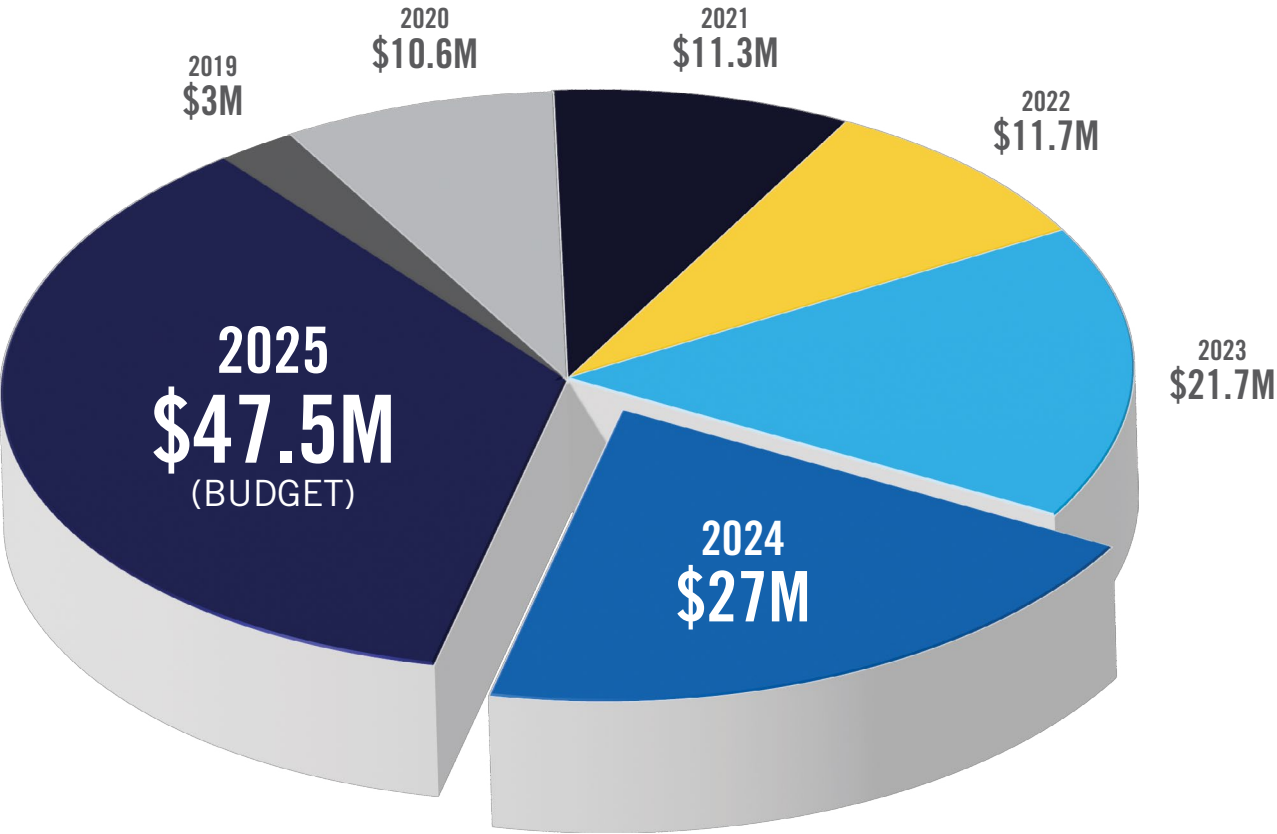
Through this partnership, Galaxy Fibre and YorkNet are dedicated to empowering communities and improving the quality of life for York Region residents by providing the fast, reliable high-speed internet services needed to thrive in today's digital world.
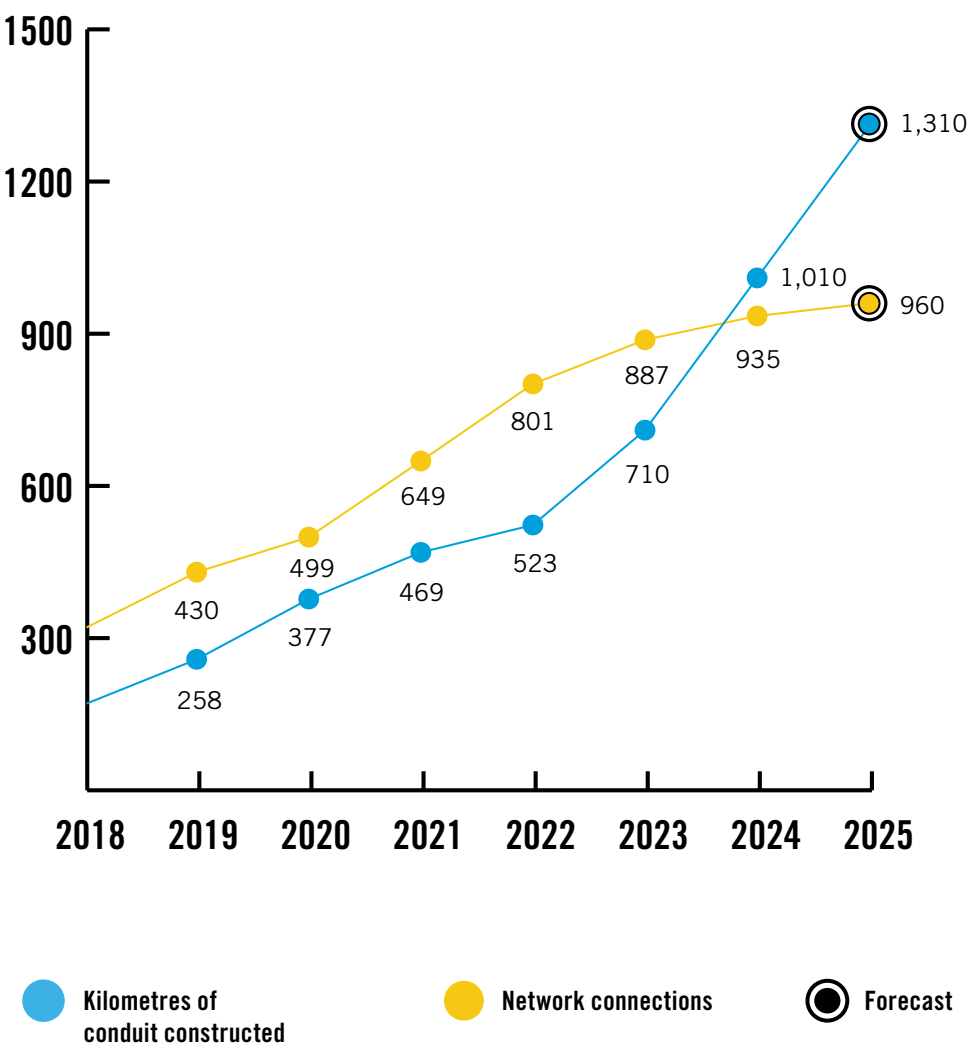
GALAXYfibre

The evolution of YorkNet

BUDGET SPENT

2019 $3M
2020 $10.6M
2021 $11.3M
2022 $11.7M
2023 $21.7M
2024 $27M
2025 $47.5M (BUDGET)

NETWORK CONNECTIONS AND KILOMETRES BUILT

Kilometres of conduit constructed

258, 377, 469, 523, 710, 1,010, 1,310

Network connections

430, 499, 649, 801, 887, 935, 960

Legend:
- Kilometres of conduit constructed
- Network connections
- Forecast

The above statistics do not include the UBF/ICON routes. Numbers are current as of 04/07/2025.

Partnership power

Harnessing dark fibre for safe water and wastewater services in York Region

Partnerships and collaboration are crucial for the successful development and expansion of the network. YorkNet's dedication to forging strong relationships with key stakeholders, including the Region's water and wastewater team, underscores this commitment. By fostering these partnerships, YorkNet helps to ensure a more integrated and efficient approach to addressing community needs.

The York Region Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system operates as an independent network for remote monitoring, control and data collection from more than 200 water and wastewater facilities. Leveraging YorkNet fibre, most of these facilities are connected by dedicated dark fibre strands, providing direct, secure connections. This infrastructure offers numerous benefits, including enhanced security, greater bandwidth, minimal delays, improved network design and cost savings. The system is precisely engineered to meet strict operational and regulatory standards and facilitates the autonomous operation of more than 200 facilities around the clock, with remote monitoring and control from a centralized operations centre. This network is vital for timely notifications and effective operational responses, ensuring regulatory compliance and safeguarding drinking water and the environment.

By collecting real-time data from various water and wastewater processes, instruments and parameters—such as water quality, levels, flow, pressure, power and pump status—the system enhances informed decision-making and rapid responses, ultimately improving the efficiency and reliability of the water and wastewater infrastructure.

YorkNet's fibre network is crucial for the sustainability and resilience of water and wastewater infrastructure. Employing multiple communication technologies, the system guarantees robust and reliable connectivity. This combination of dedicated dark fibre links and advanced network design maintains the integrity and efficiency of water and wastewater systems, contributing to their long-term sustainability and resilience. YorkNet's increased bandwidth allows for more efficient system administration.

Looking forward, significant advancements and expansions in the use of dark fibre networks for water and wastewater monitoring are expected. As YorkNet continues to grow, the system will increasingly rely on YorkNet's dark fibre, enhancing network resilience and reliability. The objective is to transition from third-party connections to a more secure, dedicated infrastructure for monitoring and controlling water and wastewater systems. This shift will support enhanced performance, providing greater control, cost savings and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Region's water and wastewater infrastructure.
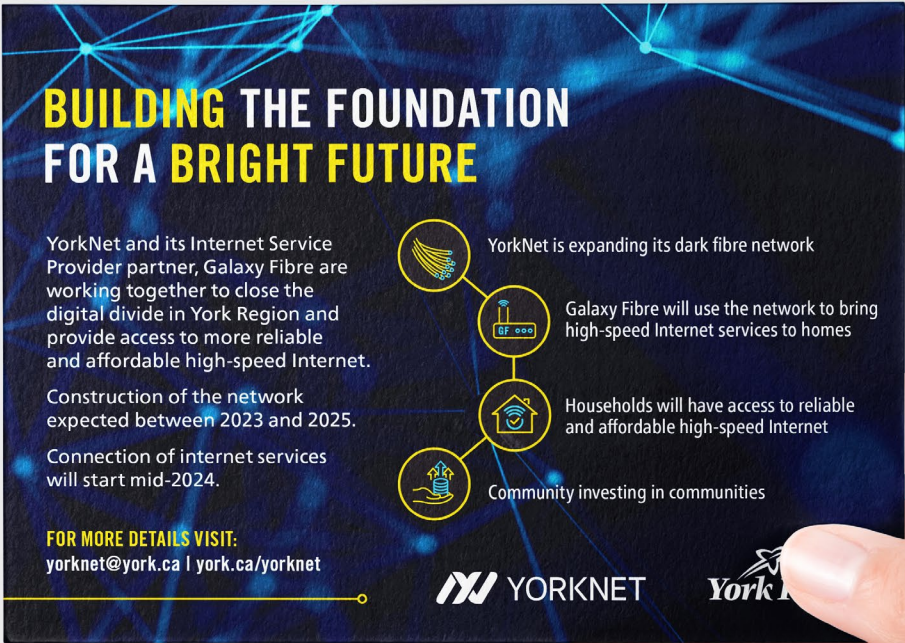
Connecting to and empowering communities

YorkNet continues to make significant strides in narrowing York Region's digital divide by extending dark fibre network and bridging critical connectivity gaps. By providing enhanced infrastructure, we empower communities to shift their focus toward growth and development, rather than foundational infrastructure challenges.

YorkNet employs various channels to engage with residents, sharing updates on the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) and our network expansion initiatives. We continuously assess our engagement strategies and practices to ensure effective communication and information delivery.

2024 highlights

- Issued four editions of *Connecting Digital Communities*, an electronic newsletter providing updates on construction and the project expansion

- Distributed more than 500 information cards about the role of YorkNet and its internet service provider partner in bringing high-speed internet to communities

- Celebrated the first customer connections in the Town of Georgina made possible through UBF

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

YorkNet and its Internet Service Provider partner, Galaxy Fibre are working together to close the digital divide in York Region and provide access to more reliable and affordable high-speed Internet.

Construction of the network expected between 2023 and 2025.

Connection of internet services will start mid-2024.

FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT:
yorknet@york.ca | york.ca/yorknet

YorkNet is expanding its dark fibre network

Galaxy Fibre will use the network to bring high-speed Internet services to homes

Households will have access to reliable and affordable high-speed Internet

Community investing in communities

YORKNET   York Region

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