



2024 to 2027

York Region Plan To Support Seniors

Navigating Forward Together

york.ca/PlanForSeniors

March 2024



The background of the page is a soft-focus photograph of a sun-dappled forest. In the foreground, a portion of a wicker basket is visible on the left side, resting on a bed of green grass and small plants. The sunlight filters through the trees, creating a bokeh effect of bright yellow and green spots against a darker background.

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.

A MESSAGE FROM YORK REGION CHAIRMAN AND CEO AND MEMBERS OF REGIONAL COUNCIL



Chairman & CEO
Wayne Emmerson

The Regional Municipality of York is facing unprecedented growth, with the number of seniors living in our communities expected to double over the next 30 years. While many of these older residents remain active and connected to their communities, others require higher levels of care and support.

As our communities grow and change, we must think differently about how we serve residents of all ages, including our seniors population. The *2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors* looks at the changing seniors population, defines our role in serving seniors and sets the course for action to best support the aging population. It builds on successes of the *2016 York Region Seniors Strategy* and identifies new actions to foster healthy aging so our seniors can continue to live, work and age in place.

The updated plan is inclusive and responds to community needs. York Region's Plan to Support Seniors will guide York Regional Council in action and advocacy to build complete communities where seniors can age in place, connect to services and live healthier and longer. Together with community partners, local cities and towns and other levels of government, Regional Council remains focused on fostering healthy aging for our seniors.



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City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Michael Chan
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Jim Jones
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
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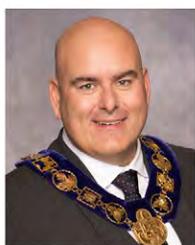
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2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors



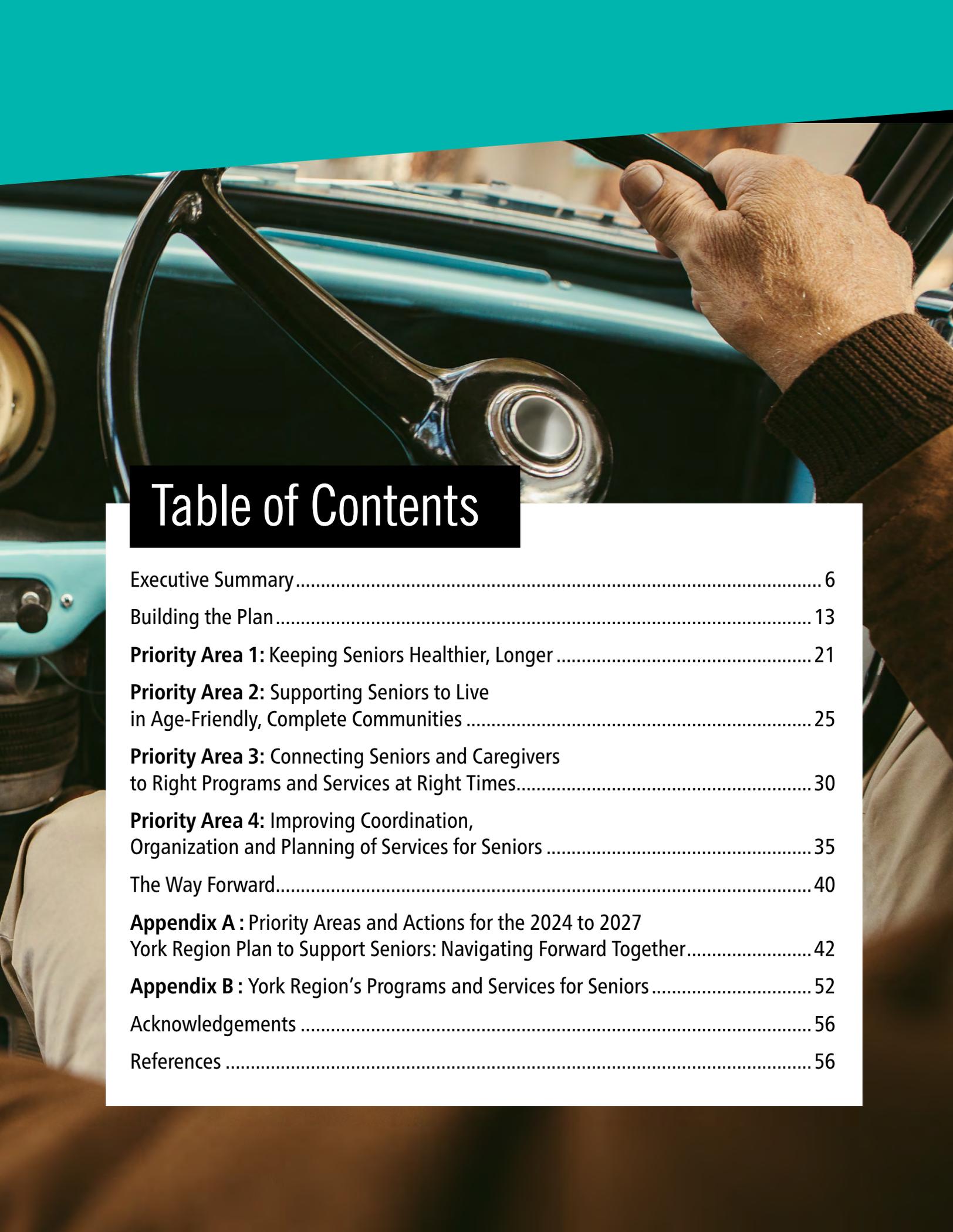


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Executive Summary

The *2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors: Navigating Forward Together* (the Plan) identifies priority areas, objectives and related actions and advocacy the Regional Municipality of York (the Region) will take to enhance health and well-being of our growing and diverse seniors population. It focuses on supporting seniors to “age in the right place” based on their preferences, circumstances and care needs. The Plan identifies actions where the Region has responsibility and an advocacy agenda where other jurisdictions have responsibility to act.

The Plan’s priority areas directly align with the [2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan](#), and other corporate plans to help achieve the Region’s vision of strong, caring, safe communities.

The Plan builds on successes of the [2016 Seniors Strategy](#) and core guiding principles, which include:

- Evidence-based decision-making
- Partnerships, alignments and collaboration
- Prevention and promotion, and education
- Fiscal sustainability and balance

By 2051, close to one in four (23%) York Region residents will be aged 65 and above. While many seniors remain healthy, active and connected to their communities, over time some will require additional supports and age-friendly services across the broader health and social care continuum.

The Region is one of many service providers supporting seniors. Addressing current and future needs of our aging population requires collaborative planning and evidence-based innovation with all levels of government, local municipalities, and community organizations and private sector.

The Plan will address system challenges and identify opportunities for seniors in York Region through the following actions and advocacy over the next three years. Appendix A provides a detailed summary of actions and advocacy with performance measures, targets and deliverables identified.

PRIORITY AREA 1: KEEPING SENIORS HEALTHIER, LONGER

Objective: Provide seniors, caregivers and staff supporting seniors information to help them improve physical activity and social connectedness, and slow decline of, or prevent chronic disease

ACTIONS	OUTCOME
Communicate information on healthy aging to raise awareness with seniors, caregivers and staff to help seniors stay healthy and connected	Seniors provided with information to improve their health/well-being and promote better access to information and services
Communicate information on York Region Public Works services to raise awareness with seniors, caregivers and staff to help seniors stay healthy and connected	
Advocate to the Province for annual health professional in-home or supported virtual visits for seniors 75 years of age and over	Seniors are connected to services to support them to live well and age in the right place

PRIORITY AREA 2: SUPPORTING SENIORS TO LIVE IN AGE-FRIENDLY COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

Objective: Better integrate services for seniors

ACTIONS	OUTCOME
Complete design and construction, and operationalize the seniors hub and community centre located in Unionville Commons	Improved access to services to support health, well-being and enable seniors to age in the right place
Develop policies and programs that link built environment to healthy aging	Improved health and well-being of seniors through built environment
Deliver innovative paramedic and community paramedicine services to support seniors in the community	Seniors are supported in their homes for as long as possible through preventative and responsive care
Engage seniors' networks to inform development of Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan (AHIP)	Worked with partners to increase supply of affordable private market housing that seniors would have opportunity to access
Explore opportunities to enhance and continue programs that support seniors' access to York Region Transit (YRT)	Provided more equitable access to transportation
Advocate for improved policy planning and funding across a supportive seniors continuum of health and social care	Improved program delivery and policy planning for advancing seniors' needs in their communities
Advocate to the Province for sustainable funding to expand Community Paramedicine programs	Seniors supported in their homes for as long as possible through preventative and responsive care

PRIORITY AREA 3: CONNECTING SENIORS AND CAREGIVERS TO RIGHT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AT RIGHT TIMES

Objective: Improve system navigation for seniors

ACTIONS	OUTCOME
Promote Access York to seniors and caregivers as a central access point for York Region and community resources	Connected seniors and caregivers in need with appropriate services
Advance accessible seniors focused self-serve tools on York Region website to search for York Region and community resources	
Share knowledge and training on seniors specific resources on York Region navigation tools with regional staff and local municipalities	
Collaborate with Ontario Health Team Partners to develop an access and navigation model for a seamless approach to senior specific customer information and referrals	
Develop a York Region specific navigation guide for seniors	
Help connect subsidized housing wait list applicants, including seniors, to available programs and resources while they wait for housing	Seniors (60+) on subsidized housing wait list were supported to connect to financial benefits and resources to which they are entitled, supporting income stabilization and providing resources while they wait for subsidized housing options
Review Regional Low-Income Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Tax Relief program	Supported evidence-based decision making
Incorporate a seniors lens to support development and implementation of proposed York Region 2024 to 2027 Plan for Newcomer Inclusion	Strengthened processes for seniors lens in newcomer-focused community planning and implementation to reflect their needs
Expand broadband infrastructure in York Region to enable access to high-speed internet in underserved communities	Expanded broadband infrastructure to support internet options for seniors and caregivers in underserved areas to stay connected
Promote and collaborate with organizations that provide digital access/technology and technology training for seniors	Supported seniors to stay connected through better access to digital information and improved connectivity
Advocate for Provincial investments to sustain, scale and spread programs and supports that enhance seniors access to digital technology	Supported seniors to stay connected through better access to digital information and improved connectivity



PRIORITY AREA 4: IMPROVING COORDINATION, ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING OF SERVICES FOR SENIORS

Objective: Collaborate on and support strategic improvements for the overall system supporting seniors

ACTIONS	OUTCOME
Implement York Region Integrated Response for Vulnerable Seniors Network (VSN)	Stabilized vulnerable seniors in immediate crisis, including those experiencing homelessness, with needs-based solutions, wrap-around care and harm-reduction approaches to minimize potential for future crises
Evaluate VSN and share learnings York Region wide	Regional services aligned with client needs
Develop tools and products that allow sector stakeholders access to current evidence and data on York Region seniors to inform program planning	Supported evidence-based decision making
Provide education and training opportunities to long-term care home staff and community partners in York Region serving seniors and caregivers	Staff serving seniors and caregivers feel more equipped to support their needs
Strengthen and modernize the way we work with, and deliver services to seniors in the Region’s two long-term care homes and Adult Day Programs	Modernized operations and care planning leading to improved care for seniors
Advocate to the Province to establish a service system manager for seniors programs and services	Improved coordination of currently fragmented seniors services sector

2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors

The *2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors: Navigating Forward Together* (the Plan) identifies actions and advocacy the Regional Municipality of York (the Region) will take to support needs of its growing seniors population. The Plan helps achieve the [Region's Vision](#) of strong, caring, safe communities and supports the Healthy Communities priority in the [2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan](#).

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED THROUGHOUT THE PLAN:

Senior is broadly defined as an individual aged 65 or older understanding that some may age more rapidly than others. Programs may have eligibility criteria that defines a senior differently – with physiological and chronological factors being considered as well.

Pre-senior refers to an individual aged 55-64.

Caregiver is anyone – family, friend, neighbour – who provides unpaid care or support to a senior with activities that help them to remain as safe and independent as possible. This could include providing help with grocery shopping, housekeeping, cooking, bathing assistance, getting dressed, getting around, accompanying to appointments, finding suitable services, or checking in to see that everything is okay.

Age in the right place, as defined by the National Institute on Ageing, is “the process of enabling healthy ageing in the most appropriate setting based on an older person’s personal preferences, circumstances and care needs”.¹



Equality and Equity² : Equality generally means treating people the same way, to give everyone equal access to opportunities and benefits in society. Equity includes treating some people differently, to take into consideration some people's particular needs and situations. For example, requiring public buildings to have wheelchair accessible entrances to accommodate persons with disabilities (rather than deciding that everyone can climb stairs or open doors themselves).

Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) are groups of health care providers and organizations, including hospitals, primary care providers, community support service providers, emergency health services, and long-term care homes, that are clinically and fiscally accountable for delivering a full and coordinated continuum of care to the population of a defined catchment area. The goals of OHTs are to improve patient and caregiver experience and health outcomes, achieving better value, strengthening local services, and making it easier for people to navigate the health care system at all stages of their lives.

We recognize the important role caregivers play, and many of the Plan's actions and advocacy will positively impact caregivers too. In 2018, 27% of the Ontario population were caregivers and they generated \$42 billion in annual economic value. It would require 1.2 million full-time workers to replace the amount of work caregivers do.³

AccessYork



Building the Plan

In November 2016, York Regional Council approved [*York Region Seniors Strategy: Thinking Ahead*](#) to support seniors to age in place in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. Building on successes of the 2016 Strategy, the updated Plan will advance actions and an advocacy agenda that could enhance the health and well-being of our aging population across the broader continuum of seniors health and social care.

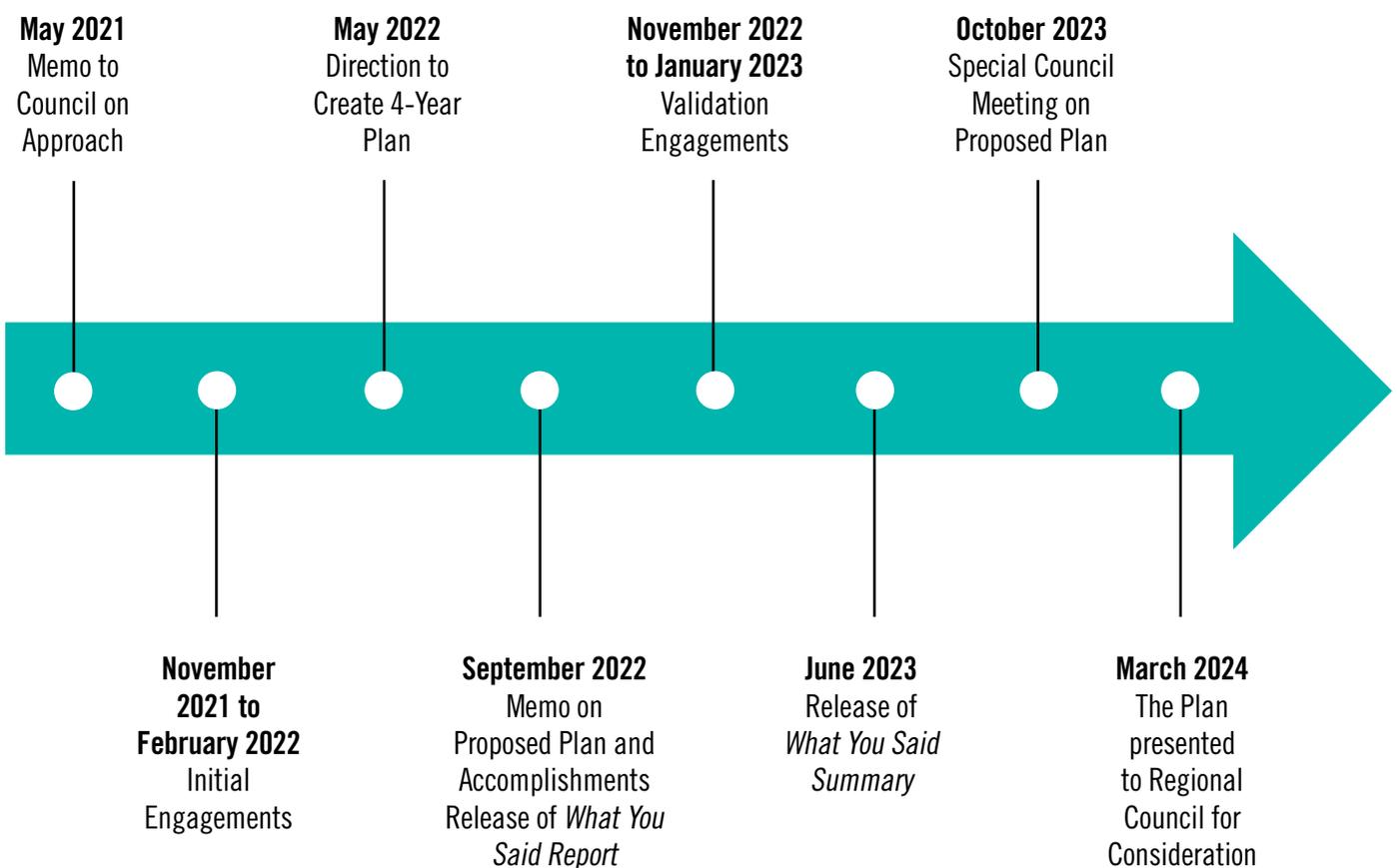
The Plan builds on four original guiding principles:

- Evidence-based decision-making
- Partnerships, alignments and collaboration
- Prevention and promotion, and education
- Fiscal sustainability, balance and equity

The fourth principle was broadened to include equity and aligns with our [*Corporate Strategic Plan*](#) commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion to those we serve and who serve others. This lens helps identify and address barriers that may disproportionately affect equity-deserving or marginalized communities in designing, implementing and evaluating seniors programs.

Key Milestones

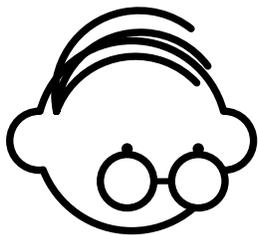
Figure 1: Development of the Plan included the following key milestones



York Region Seniors at a Glance

We evaluated our progress, researched emerging seniors issues and demographic trends to understand and ensure the updated Plan reflects current and future needs of York Region seniors. Infographics based on 2021 Census data.⁴

York Region seniors are growing as a group



200,000 seniors aged 65+ living in York Region – an increase of **23%** over 2016

More seniors than children younger than 15

In the next 30 years (by 2051):

- York Region's total seniors population is projected to more than double
- 75+ population more than triples
- All Boomers will be 85+

What this means

Responding to health concerns of an aging population will have implications on programs and services provided by the Region with the greatest pressure coming from the growing 75+ population. By 2031, the demand for Paramedic Services is forecasted to increase by 119% over 2021 levels, largely driven by seniors.

York Region seniors are diverse



76% were born outside of Canada

About **18%** do not speak English or French

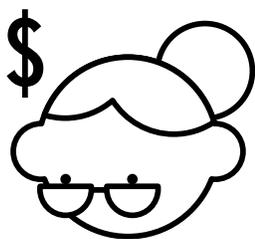
Top 5 non-official languages most often spoken at home by York Region seniors include Cantonese, Italian, Mandarin, Russian and Tamil

Of almost **54,000** newcomers settling in York Region in last 5 years, approximately 5,400 were seniors

What this means

Our diversity underscores importance of cultural and language considerations when engaging and supporting seniors.

York Region seniors financial wellbeing



The share of seniors living with low-income is growing – **1 in 4** of those experiencing low-income is a senior⁵

Proportion of seniors living with low-income has grown over the last 10 years and reached almost a quarter of the total low-income population

What this means

An increased number of seniors in York Region will similarly increase the proportion of those experiencing low-income. While York Region seniors may report low incomes, they often have access to assets that can be converted to cash (liquid assets), and/or real estate holdings.

York Region seniors place of residence

About **97%** of seniors in York Region live in private dwellings within the community. Of these seniors living in the community:



89% live in households that are owned and **11%** live in households that are rented.

Housing affordability is a bigger issue for seniors who are living in renter households, with **47%** spending **30%** or more of household income on shelter.

14% of seniors 65+ are living alone; **26%** being 85+ years old.

The remaining **3%** of seniors live in collective dwellings (e.g., long-term care homes, retirement homes). Older seniors are more likely to live in collective dwellings than younger seniors, with **63%** being 85 years and over.

What this means

Affordable and accessible community programs, services and housing options are essential to support seniors' ability to age in the right place based on their personal preferences, circumstances and care needs.

York Region Seniors and Homelessness

Findings published in, [I Count 2021: York Region's Homeless Count Report](#), revealed the percentage of respondents aged 65 and over reporting homelessness in York Region increased from 4% in 2018 to 8% in 2021. As defined in [I Count 2021](#), homelessness is the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent appropriate housing, or immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it.

York Region Seniors and Disability

 York Region

64,350 seniors or **41.0%**

Canada

1,972,310 seniors or **37.8%**

Ontario 

870,360 seniors or **43.1%**

In 2017, the proportion of those aged 65 and over living with a disability was reported higher in York Region than in Canada but still lower than in Ontario.⁶

What this means

Importance of building equity considerations into our actions and our advocacy agenda.

Engagements with Seniors, Caregivers, Community Organizations, Staff and Regional Council

Between November 2021 and January 2022, we engaged York Region seniors, pre-seniors, caregivers, senior serving organizations and York Region staff to inform the development of the Plan. Pandemic restrictions at the time required virtual engagements. Additional validation sessions were held in Fall 2022 to reach equity-deserving groups that may have been missed; this included in-person, telephone, and online options. These sessions confirmed proposed direction for the updated Plan and are available in the [“What You Said Report”](#) and [“What You Said Summary”](#).

“Who we heard from”

Fall 2021

9 VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

with regional staff, and participants from York Region/United Way Seniors Cluster Table, the three York Region Ontario Health Teams, members of the Human Services Planning Board and residents of the Region’s two long-term care homes and their families.

2 VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSES

with seniors and caregivers.

IN 2021, WE HEARD FROM MORE THAN

50 staff members

50 stakeholders

40 seniors and caregivers

1,315

RESPONSES

Online survey engaged seniors, pre-seniors and caregivers with 1,315 responses in total: 900 seniors (aged 65 or over) and 415 pre-seniors (aged between 55 and 64). A similar survey of caregivers received 118 responses.

Fall 2022

38 SENIORS **4 CAREGIVERS**

Validation sessions held with 38 seniors and 4 caregivers. Sessions conducted in-person and over the phone to hear from seniors and caregivers with diverse experiences, meeting at a range of locations including drop-in-centres, emergency housing, seniors housing and housing with supports.

VALIDATION SESSION FINDINGS aligned with priorities and concerns identified during the initial engagements and reaffirmed the Plan's direction.

Quotes in this document were taken from our engagements and will be identified by:

ONLINE PARTICIPANT
for online survey

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT
for Fall 2021 workshops and open houses

VALIDATION PARTICIPANT
for Fall 2022 validation sessions

Fall 2023

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING TO PRESENT PROPOSED PLAN TO SUPPORT SENIORS TO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Regional Council heard how findings from engagements, research and insights from sector experts and community partners informed the Plan. Council was supportive of directions in the Plan and expressed ongoing commitment to supporting the health and well-being of York Region seniors.

Direction for 2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors

The Plan lays out four priority areas and objectives that provide a strategic framework to identify opportunities and address system challenges for seniors living in York Region. The Plan includes actions where the Region has a responsibility and, where responsibilities fall outside of its control, identifies areas where the Region will advocate.

Promising Practice: Pandemic Inspired Digital Innovation

In April 2020, York Region/United Way Seniors Cluster Table formed to bring seniors serving organizations together to address immediate needs of vulnerable seniors and caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to technology emerged as a new social determinant of health for seniors and a way for many to stay connected through virtual platforms, programs and online supports.

Members of Seniors Cluster Table were successful in a collaborative funding application for Technology Assistance Support for Seniors (TASS) project, led by Human Endeavour, which provides seniors with easy-to-use tablets and access to a technology support helpline. A subsequent evaluation found that TASS bridged digital gaps, improved seniors well-being, and encouraged learning across generations.⁷ Through additional successful collaborative funding opportunities, TASS has fostered ongoing collaboration with partners post pandemic with further customization of this technology to support people living with mild to moderate dementia and their caregivers.



Priority Area 1

Keeping Seniors Healthier, Longer

Objective: Provide seniors, caregivers and staff supporting seniors information to help them improve physical activity and social connectedness, and slow decline of, or prevent chronic disease.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

The Region will provide information about programs and services for seniors to support them in making informed choices about health and wellbeing. Supporting healthy lifestyles and choices can delay onset and severity of disease and protect one’s ability to remain independent in the community.

For Canadian seniors, the likelihood of living with two or more prevalent chronic conditions increases as they age, impacting about one-third of people aged 65 to 74 and almost half of those over 85.⁸ The onset of dementia, an umbrella term for several diseases affecting cognitive abilities and behaviour, can add further complexity to managing multiple health needs with almost 950,000 Canadians projected to have dementia by 2030.^{9,10}

Age related declines can affect a person’s ability and interest to stay informed and connected. A person’s health status can also be affected by social, political, and economic factors. Seniors facing low-income, experiencing homelessness, limited ability to communicate in English and other equity issues can experience greater risk for social isolation and related consequences, including poor mental health, earlier onset of chronic disease, and cognitive decline. Changes in sensory abilities (vision, hearing), and loss of social supports can also affect one’s ability to find information and access programs.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Not knowing about available services is a significant barrier to accessing programs and services. In the online survey, just over half of seniors and almost two-thirds of caregivers said that not knowing what was available was a major barrier to accessing programs and services.

The Region offers a range of services to help seniors stay healthy, safe, and independent (see **Appendix B**). Communicating information on supports available early, and using accessible formats (vision, hearing) platforms and events will increase knowledge and keep seniors healthier, longer.

Key highlights from engagements

Promising Practice: Denmark's annual nurse home visit program

Denmark has a national program of preventative nurse home visits. Anyone who is 75 can receive one free nurse home visit, flexible visits up to the age of 79 and then at least an annual visit for those 80 years of age and older. "These visits are an opportunity for assessing functional ability and potential needs for support of older people and for offering information and guidance to enable older people to remain independent for longer".¹¹

"One of the most common sentences that I hear from clients of all ages, not just seniors, is that I didn't know this service existed."

– WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

"I would like to know about supports to assist with senior loneliness and isolation when living independently. What can we do to ensure seniors do not feel alone in their journey?"

– ONLINE PARTICIPANT

"Trying to avoid the crises is so important – we need information so we can avoid crisis"

– VALIDATION PARTICIPANT

Aligning actions with need

To support seniors to stay healthy and connected to programs, services and the communities where they live, Public Works is prioritizing targeted communication of services to raise awareness for seniors.

Public Works Supporting Seniors

Public Works will leverage its extensive community and municipal partnerships to provide information directly to seniors about services and programs. Campaigns will continue to be proactive in engagements using print and digital media, including accessible formats. Print formats include postcards that can be shared at senior's fairs or posters that are put up in common areas of senior's buildings and activity centres.

Examples of programs and services to raise awareness with seniors include:

- [Mobility On-Request Transit Services 65+](#): provides on-request transit service for seniors 65 years and older, within 5 km of their home. This service is offered throughout York Region for seniors who want to try taking public transit using a smaller vehicle that picks seniors up at home
- [MyRide Travel Training](#): provides travel training for customers of all ages and abilities who need additional knowledge and skills to use YRT independently
- [Discounted YRT Seniors Fare](#): seniors aged 65+ are eligible for the senior fare when paying with PRESTO or YRT Pay/Transit App. Starting January 1, 2024, senior travellers can ride YRT for free after 28 trips in a calendar month, using PRESTO
- [Be Visible. Be Seen](#): highlights importance of pedestrians being visible to motorists especially during darker hours. Safety messaging is included for intersections and crossing the street safely. Tips can be found on [traffic safety program webpage](#)
- [York Regional Forest Accessible Trails](#): four trails accessible to wheelchairs, strollers and other assistive devices that are wider, clear of large obstructions and graded for ease-of-movement

WHAT WE WILL DO

We will communicate health and wellness program information and advocate for home visits.

A key element of the Plan is being proactive. This means connecting with seniors early to provide information that can help support their wellbeing, independence and where to go in a crisis.

To advance this Priority Area we will:

ACTIONS	OUTCOME
Communicate information on healthy aging to raise awareness with seniors, caregivers and staff to help seniors stay healthy and connected	Seniors provided with information to improve their health/ well-being and promote better access to information and services
Communicate information on York Region Public Works services to raise awareness with seniors, caregivers and staff to help seniors stay healthy and connected	
Advocate to the Province for annual health professional in-home or supported virtual visits for seniors 75 years of age and over	Seniors are connected to services to support them to live well and age in the right place





Priority Area 2

Supporting Seniors to Live in Age-Friendly, Complete Communities

Objective: Better integrate services for seniors

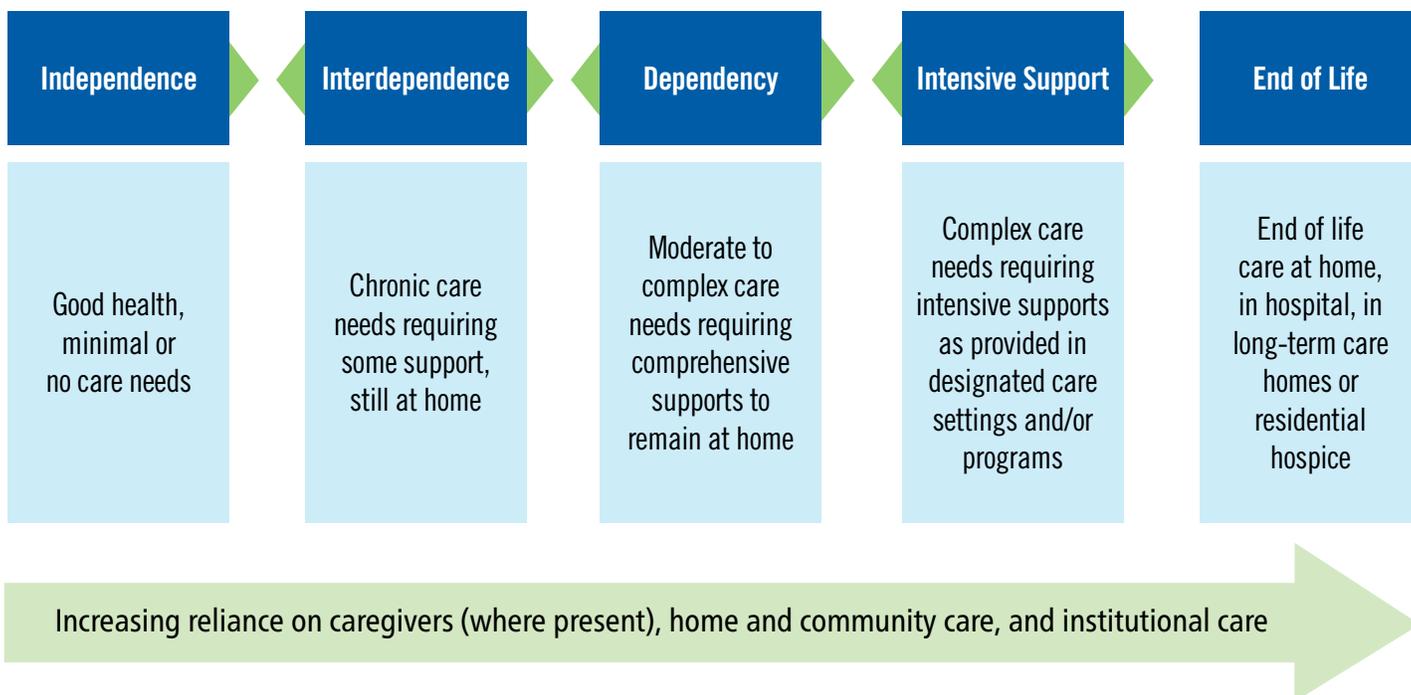
WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

It is important to support seniors across a broad continuum of health and social care.

The majority of seniors in Canada live in the community and wish to remain close to family, friends and chosen communities as they age. Complete communities are designed to address the needs of people of different ages, abilities, backgrounds and interests, and to be accessible, dense and walkable, where most amenities are in close proximity, and meet people’s needs for daily living through their lifetime. Senior friendly housing options are also an important consideration as outlined in [Getting Better with Age](#).

Aging in the right place for one’s own circumstances, preferences and care needs can involve a range of programs, services and supports along a continuum of care that can fluctuate over time.^{12,13}

Figure 2: Seniors Health and Social Care Continuum



Actions and advocacy in the Plan are considered through a broader seniors health and social care continuum (see Figure 2) – a high-level framework to support analysis and understanding of varied needs across an aging population.^{14,15,16,17} It shows that increasing complexity of need can significantly impact a person’s ability to live independently, type of care they may require, and potential care setting options. Seniors may not move through each stage of the continuum, and some may have higher level needs before they reach the age of 65.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Seniors want to age in the right place and long-term care homes, should not be a default option. Most seniors want to age in place in their own home or community.¹⁸ For this to be feasible, a diverse range and intensity of support across the health and social care continuum is necessary.¹⁸

Key highlights from engagements

“I would like to live at home as long as possible but may need help at home as I get older. Eventually, I may need to have access to assisted living or long-term care. Prefer those to be close to the same community I currently live in so my family can visit.”

– ONLINE PARTICIPANT

“Having somewhere in Town to downsize to at a price I can afford.”

– ONLINE PARTICIPANT

“As much as I would like to stay at home there may be a time when I can’t. There is a need to provide a different type of long-term care where residents are able to feel safe and not warehoused, that includes them (where able) in their care.”

– ONLINE PARTICIPANT

Home care and long-term care homes are key components of the health and social care continuum. In 2021, the Provincial government announced the addition of 30,000 long-term care beds by 2031 and improvements in care. Expansion and improvements of long-term care may not be sufficient to meet the growing number of high needs seniors eligible for placement. The Region’s [November 2020 Forecast for Long-Term Care and Seniors’ Housing Implications](#) predicted rapid growth of the seniors population, particularly the 75+ population, would result in an unmet need of 14,954 long-term care beds across York Region by 2041.¹⁹

Even with Provincial announcements of almost 3,500 new long-term care beds and roughly 350 upgraded beds for the Region as of October 2023, the gap between need and beds will remain. Additional investments are needed in age-friendly community-based care supports, affordable housing options and preventative assisted living programs that combine housing with supports. Working with our municipal partners, the Region will advocate to secure Provincial funding to address housing affordability challenges and infrastructure needs in our communities.

Even when age-friendly supports exist, timely access to information about and integration of these services is often poor. This lack of awareness can lead to potentially avoidable 911 calls, visits to emergency departments, hospitalization, or long-term care placement when community-based options may have served seniors and caregivers better, if available.²⁰

Promising practices to support aging in the right place

The report [*It's Time to Unleash the Power of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities in Canada*](#) explores Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) as a housing model that can help support older Canadians age in the right place by bringing a mix of proactive services and supports to buildings and neighbourhoods that house 30% or more older adults.^{21,22} Learnings from NORC initiatives and related research can inform development and scaling of this preventative model across urban and rural settings.

Aligning actions with need

To better integrate services for seniors and support them to live in age friendly, complete communities, the Region will continue to deliver innovative paramedic and community paramedicine services to support seniors in the community.

Community paramedicine improves quality of life

York Region Community Paramedics are improving quality of life for seniors and creating efficiencies in access to health care by providing more care at home. In November 2020, Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care program launched in five communities across the Province, including York Region. In partnership with paramedics, it provides care to residents living with chronic and complex needs.

Participating paramedics received additional training in pre-emergency care, specialized geriatric education, and more. By providing proactive non-emergency care services for seniors on the long-term care wait list, the program improves quality of life, minimizes wait list growth and duration, reduces calls to 911 and avoidable hospital visits, and relieves pressure on broader health care system. In-home services benefit other seniors too, helping them stay safe in the comfort of their own homes and communities for longer. The program is fully funded by the Province and operated in partnership with local municipalities. Most recent data from January 2020 to August 2023 shows in-home or virtual supports were provided 5,491 times. There were also 6,171 client referrals to other services.

The Region seeks to continue and expand this program within new seniors buildings across York Region identified as requiring additional supports based on emergency call volume.



WHAT WE WILL DO

Integrating services across the continuum of health and social care services is key to supporting seniors and will require improvement in services such as more and better housing options, resources in the community, home and community care and better supports for caregivers. The Region will advocate for greater collaboration and innovation across partners and levels of government to create an accessible range of options to support seniors to age in the right place.

To advance this Priority Area we will:

ACTIONS	OUTCOME
Complete design, and construction and operationalize the seniors hub and community centre located in Unionville Commons	Improved access to services to support health, well-being and enable seniors to age in the right place
Develop policies and programs that link built environment to healthy aging	Improved health and well-being of seniors through built environment
Deliver innovative paramedic and community paramedicine services to support seniors in the community	Seniors are supported in their homes for as long as possible through preventative and responsive care
Engage with seniors' networks to inform development of Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan (AHIP)	Worked with partners to increase supply of affordable private market housing that seniors would have opportunity to access
Explore opportunities to enhance and continue programs that support seniors' access to York Region Transit (YRT)	Provided more equitable access to transportation
Advocate for improved policy planning and funding across a supportive seniors continuum of health and social care	Improved program delivery and policy planning for advancing seniors' needs in their communities
Advocate to the Province for sustainable funding to expand Community Paramedicine programs	Seniors supported in their homes for as long as possible through preventative and responsive care



Priority Area 3

Connecting Seniors and Caregivers to Right Programs and Services at Right Times

Objective: Improve system navigation for seniors

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Making the system easier to navigate, especially for older seniors who may have more serious health issues, fewer social connections and potential challenges with technology, leads to better outcomes for individuals and the system as a whole.

The Region, through Access York and in collaboration with community partners and local Ontario Health Teams, has an important role to play to improve navigation systems for seniors. For seniors, caregivers and service providers, accessing the right programs and services involves navigating a complicated and fragmented system. Easing the burden of navigation requires better access to information, greater integration of services, and consideration of seniors access to and ability to use technology and other methods of navigation support.

WHAT WE LEARNED

During our engagements participants shared their frustration with finding what programs and services are available, difficulties accessing them and a need for system wide improvements to integrate health and social supports. Improving navigation and care-coordination is especially important for vulnerable seniors experiencing frailty, social isolation, low-income, disability, precarious housing or homelessness.

The pandemic highlighted gaps in siloed systems supporting seniors and amplified the risk for vulnerability. To help address these gaps, York Region/United Way Seniors Cluster Table, a network comprised of seniors service providers, came together to navigate and support immediate needs of vulnerable seniors including initiatives to connect seniors to services and supports targeting food security, access to culturally appropriate food, vaccination clinics and being able to communicate information in one's own language.

Key highlights from engagements

"I am not aware of a single source for seniors to access information on available services and programs. If there is such a source, it needs to be communicated and promoted."
– ONLINE PARTICIPANT

"Loneliness is known to be physically and emotionally devastating for seniors, and people in general."
– ONLINE PARTICIPANT

"There are still some clients out there that don't feel comfortable using technology... how do we support these seniors?"
– WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

"If you are homeless on the street, where do you go to have a cell phone or another device to use it...where do you plug in your phone or tablet to apply for housing? You can go to the library, but then Covid happened. [Coffee shops] maybe, but that's unreliable."
– VALIDATION PARTICIPANT

The pandemic also raised awareness of disparities in access to technology and digital literacy. While technology is a potential solution for accessing services and reducing isolation, supports are needed to address barriers that many seniors can face.

Changes to Home and Community Care Support Services

There are 58 Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) in the Province tasked to provide improved ways of organizing and delivering care that is more connected to patients in their local communities. Under OHTs, health care providers and partners aim to work as one coordinated, collaborative team – no matter where they provide care. To support this work, the Province is investing over \$128.2 million to provide every Ontario Health Team, including all three York Region OHTs, with up to \$2.2 million over three years to better coordinate people’s care.

Three OHTs operate in York Region ([Eastern York Region North Durham](#), [Northern York South Simcoe](#) and [Western York Region](#)). York Region is a member of Eastern York Region North Durham and Northern York South Simcoe OHTs and works in close partnership with Western York Region OHT. As a member and close partner of the OHTs, the Region collaborates with hospital and community partners on innovative approaches that support the health and well-being of York Region residents of all ages and stages, including seniors and caregivers.

On [October 4, 2023](#) the Ontario government tabled [Bill 135](#), Convenient Care at Home Act, 2023 to consolidate the 14 Home and Community Care Support Services organizations into a single organization – Ontario Health atHome – and will make OHTs responsible for connecting people to home care services starting in 2025. Ontario Health atHome will provide home care plans through OHTs ensuring individuals know the care they will receive and when before being discharged from hospital. Ontario Health atHome will also provide placement services for long-term care. Bill 135 received Royal Assent in December 2023.

An initial group of [12 OHTs](#), none from York Region, were chosen to accelerate work to deliver home care in their local communities starting in 2025. The Ministry of Health will support them with an additional \$6.2 million in 2023-24.

The plan to modernize home care aligns with priority areas of our Plan. Given that York Region, the three York Region OHTs and the Province are each striving to ensure our residents are healthy and supported across the health and social care sectors, and with strong partnerships in place and innovative solutions underway, there is much to gain by including all three York Region OHTs in the accelerated group to advance the delivery of connected and convenient care. Together we will continue to leverage our synergies with all three partner OHTs to enhance access to services, support seniors to age in the right place, improve system navigation and break down silos across health and social care sectors.



Aligning actions with need

To improve system navigation for seniors, the Region's Housing Services Branch supports applicants with more immediate needs through referrals to available services and resources.

Case Example of Supporting Holistic Needs

A senior couple living in subsidized housing in Richmond Hill, were coping with mental health challenges and had fallen behind in paying their rent. After learning about this household's situation, Housing Services helped the household complete an assessment of their financial situation. It was determined one member of the household was receiving support from Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and the other household member, who is over 65 years old, was receiving funds from Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS). The family was also helped to complete their taxes. It was discovered one household member was not receiving all of his seniors benefits nor had he received them for a number of years. Staff were able to connect the household to these seniors benefit back-payments as well as ongoing monthly installments.

By providing information and referral to key services this household was able to avoid homelessness, pay-off their rent arrears, afford their monthly rental payments, and increase their monthly grocery budget so they could eat healthier.

Educational workshops for wait list applicants on accessing key supports for seniors is identified as an action in the Plan.

WHAT WE WILL DO

The Region, through Access York and in collaboration with community partners and local Ontario Health Teams, has an important role to play to improve navigation systems which will improve lives of seniors.

To advance this Priority Area we will:

ACTIONS	OUTCOME
Promote Access York to seniors and caregivers as a central access point for York Region and community resources	Connected seniors and caregivers in need with appropriate services
Advance accessible seniors focused self-serve tools on York Region website to search for York Region and community resources	
Share knowledge and training on seniors specific resources on York Region navigation tools with regional staff and local municipalities	
Collaborate with Ontario Health Team Partners to develop an access and navigation model for a seamless approach to senior specific customer information and referrals	
Develop a York Region specific navigation guide for seniors	
Help connect subsidized housing wait list applicants, including seniors, to available programs and resources while they wait for housing	Seniors (60+) on subsidized housing wait list were supported to connect to financial benefits and resources to which they are entitled, supporting income stabilization and providing resources while they wait for subsidized housing options
Review Regional Low-Income Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Tax Relief program	Supported evidence-based decision making
Incorporate a seniors lens to support development and implementation of proposed York Region 2024 to 2027 Plan for Newcomer Inclusion	Strengthened processes for seniors lens in newcomer-focused community planning and implementation to reflect their needs
Expand broadband infrastructure in York Region to enable access to high-speed internet in underserved communities	Expanded broadband infrastructure to support internet options for seniors and caregivers in underserved areas to stay connected
Promote and collaborate with organizations that provide digital access/technology and technology training for seniors	Supported seniors to stay connected through better access to digital information and improved connectivity
Advocate for Provincial investments to sustain, scale and spread programs and supports that enhance seniors access to digital technology	Supported seniors to stay connected through better access to digital information and improved connectivity



Priority Area 4

Improving Coordination, Organization and Planning of Services for Seniors

Objective: Collaborate on and support strategic improvements for overall system supporting seniors

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

The Region, as one of many players in the complex system serving seniors, will:

- Advocate for better coordination of services provided to seniors
- Work to improve delivery of our own programs and services for seniors, and
- Collaborate with and, where possible, build capacity of community partners

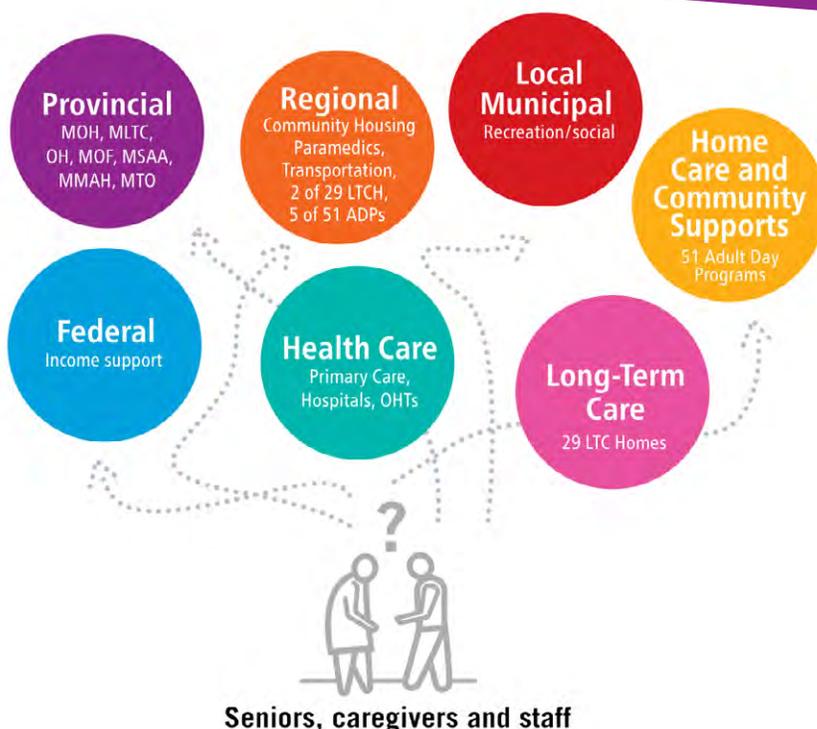
The previous three sections have described the impact of the complex and fragmented health and social care system and need for improved communication and integration of services to improve access to information and services while also reducing burden of navigation.

The most frequent feedback heard from York Region seniors and caregivers is that while there are many services available, it is very hard to learn about, find and access them.

Figure 3: Current State

In a fragmented system, seniors have to navigate multiple service providers to find and access the services they need.

Note: Diagram intended to provide illustrative examples for York Region Seniors, not an exhaustive list of programs and services.



Currently, there is no coordinating body focused on the needs of seniors with responsibility to fund, plan, and improve seniors’ services across a continuum of need. Figure 3 above and an illustrative chart – [A York Region Perspective of Government Structures and Services that can Support Seniors](#) – show services that supports for seniors’ health and well-being are the responsibility of many different levels and branches of government, and delivery of programs and services is fragmented across many health care, home and community care, long-term care, and municipal and regional programs.

In contrast, structures like a “service system manager” offer a more cohesive approach for improved coordination and integration of services across the continuum to simplify navigation journeys for those in need. Service system managers are given authority by the Province to work across silos to plan, manage and fund social services like employment and income support, children’s services, social housing, and homelessness programs ensuring they are better integrated, and outcomes driven.²³

The importance of integrating programs and services is described by Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) in their [Human Services Integration in Ontario](#) paper.²⁴

- “In a siloed system, those seeking services have difficulty navigating through a complex web of programs and supports. A person-centred approach to Human Services Integration will improve outcomes, improve efficiencies, and improve the overall client experience in a manner that is flexible meeting local needs” (pg. 2)
- “There are many benefits to health and human services integration. Opportunities to reduce costs, duplication, administration, and reporting exist but the focus should remain on improving outcomes and serving people” (pg. 16)

The Plan recommends a better integrated approach be considered for the overall system supporting seniors.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Collaboration with our community partners and end user-design are essential to successful innovation and integration. In our engagements, community partners noted challenges of a complicated system and continued need for better integration of services. They appreciated the Region's efforts during the pandemic to build collaboration with the community organizations and thought this role should continue. We also heard that seniors want to be more engaged and involved with finding solutions. This means collaborating with a wide range of community members, including York Region residents and partners, to develop and implement solutions to system challenges.

Key highlights from engagements

“If the system actually cared about us, the system wouldn't look the way it does.”
– WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT QUOTING A SENIOR HE WAS WORKING WITH

“Simplification would provide the best relief for caregivers.”
– ONLINE PARTICIPANT

“Where is the cohesive manager that takes in all of these factors and provides money for housing and support?”
– VALIDATION PARTICIPANT

The Region has been advocating to the Province to establish a “service system manager” role or Provincial “coordinating body”, to better plan for and integrate the seniors service sector, including adequate funding and resources. While a coordinating body may not be able to fully integrate services, they would be able to identify and drive system improvements to lessen navigation burden on seniors.

The Region recognizes our own services can be better aligned to address the diverse needs of seniors, including those who may be at elevated risk of or experiencing crisis. The Region is exploring how best to assist some of our most vulnerable seniors through a Vulnerable Seniors Network (VSN) to address the needs of those at elevated risk of experiencing crisis including homelessness.

Aligning actions with need

To collaborate on and support strategic improvements for the overall system supporting seniors, in the Fall 2022, the Region launched the York Region Integrated Response for Vulnerable Seniors Network (VSN) pilot. This pilot is aimed at supporting vulnerable seniors, aged 50 years or older, in crisis (non-911 calls) facing elevated or immediate safety risks including those related to housing and shelter. By bringing together twelve of the Region's programs, they quickly assess and stabilize a client's immediate needs, make referrals, and collaborate across internal programs to prevent future crisis.

Results from the pilot will be shared to inform other initiatives that align services to meet the diverse needs of seniors.

Vulnerable Seniors Network Case Example*

Mr. Steve lived in his apartment for decades, with rent geared to his government pension. His unit had become dangerously cluttered, unkempt, and presented fire safety breaches, and his landlord was concerned Mr. Steve could no longer safely live in that condition. Community members had, more than once, called 911 because Mr. Steve was confused and wandering in the neighbourhood dressed inappropriately for winter weather.

A social worker from Housing Services was assigned to support Mr. Steve, and because of numerous calls to 911, community paramedics had also begun visiting him. These service providers realized that Mr. Steve required assistance beyond capacity of their individual programs, so a referral was made to VSN. Working in collaboration, VSN intervention team drew on knowledge and expertise of its members, including Access York, community paramedics, the social worker, York Regional Police (YRP) and York Region Transit. The team was concerned that Mr. Steve was experiencing dementia-like symptoms affecting his ability to handle important activities like housekeeping, personal care, and financial decisions. Through advocacy by VSN, Mr. Steve was able to receive critical medical care he required in a moment of crisis and was also supported in his move to a long-term care home where he receives 24-hour medical care he requires, and love and attention he deserves.

*Names and relationships have been altered to protect privacy



WHAT WE WILL DO

We plan to improve our own systems serving seniors, assist where we can in building capacity of our community partners and advocate for better coordination.

The Region will continue to engage with seniors and organizations serving seniors including community agencies and Ontario Health Teams, to develop, design, and implement actions and advocacy in the Plan. We will continue to advocate for an integrative role to improve system navigation across the health and social care continuum.

To advance this Priority Area we will:

ACTIONS	OUTCOME
Implement York Region Integrated Response for Vulnerable Seniors Network (VSN)	Stabilized vulnerable seniors in immediate crisis, including those experiencing homelessness, with needs-based solutions, wrap-around care and harm-reduction approaches to minimize potential for future crises
Evaluate VSN and share learnings York Region wide	Regional services aligned with client needs
Develop tools and products that allow sector stakeholders access to current evidence and data on York Region seniors to inform program planning	Supported evidence-based decision making
Provide education and training opportunities to long-term care home staff and community partners in York Region serving seniors and caregivers	Staff serving seniors and caregivers feel more equipped to support their needs
Strengthen and modernize the way we work with, and deliver services to seniors in the Region’s two long-term care homes and Adult Day Programs	Modernized operations and care planning leading to improved care for seniors
Advocate to the Province to establish a service system manager for seniors programs and services	Improved coordination of currently fragmented seniors services sector

The Way Forward

The actions and advocacy agenda outlined in the Plan to Support Seniors set a path for current and future seniors and caregivers to remain active in their community throughout their aging journey – living their lives to the fullest with independence, health and dignity.

The Plan is designed to be flexible so that changes in needs of seniors can be accommodated while we continue to work toward the goal of a more sustainable and resilient system that supports seniors to age in the right place in their own homes and local communities.

The Region will update the Plan every four years at the start of each term of Council by reviewing and confirming priority areas and objectives for each, aligning with directions in the broader Corporate Strategic Plan and other departmental/program plans. Achievements of the previous Plan will inform and set the foundation for the next four years, noting that some actions may take longer than others to complete or will continue.

Monitoring and reporting for this Plan will take place throughout the four-year implementation cycle, with bi-annual progress reports to Council in Spring 2026 and Spring 2028. An updated Plan will be presented to Council for consideration in 2028.

The Region is well positioned to continue to work collaboratively with other levels of government, including local municipalities, and community organizations to wrap care and supports around seniors, that improves health and well-being, keeps them connected to their communities, and able to age in the right place. The 2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors provides opportunity for seniors in York Region to receive the best possible supports and services through ongoing adjustments and quality improvements to our own programs and services and a strong and defined advocacy agenda to improve the broader system.



Appendix A

Priority Areas and Actions for the 2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors: Navigating Forward Together

Monitoring and reporting for the 2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors will take place throughout the four-year implementation cycle. Bi-annual progress reports to Council will begin Spring 2026 and Spring 2028, reporting on activities as identified in tables below. Some targets remain under development (identified as TBD) as new baselines are established or actions evolve over time and will be included in bi-annual reports as appropriate.

Priority Area 1: Keeping Seniors Healthier, Longer

Objective: Provide seniors, caregivers and staff supporting seniors information to help them improve physical activity and social connectedness, and slow decline of or prevent chronic disease



ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINES			
			2024	2025	2026	2027
1. Communicate information on healthy aging to raise awareness with seniors, caregivers and staff to help seniors stay healthy and connected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of program resources updated or revised Target: 2 resources updated or revised annually # of engagement opportunities (e.g., Health Fairs and displays) attended Target: 5 engagements planned and delivered annually # of awareness raising media initiatives (e.g., social media, campaigns, etc.) Target: 5 initiatives planned and delivered annually 	1.1. Promote healthy aging, fall prevention, physical activity, increasing strength and balance, healthy eating and social connectedness to improve and maintain health and by working with partners to engage in health promotion strategies for older adults in the community	●	●	●	●
2. Communicate information on York Region Public Works services to raise awareness with seniors, caregivers and staff to help seniors stay healthy and connected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of campaigns in fiscal year Target: 2 senior focused Public Works campaigns annually # of other campaigns that were assisted by Public Works Target: TBD based on other Regional campaigns 	2.1. Public Works communication campaigns targeted towards seniors	●	●	●	●
3. Advocate to the Province for annual health professional in-home or supported virtual visits for seniors 75 years of age and over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors Cluster Table and clients engaged Target: 1 engagement held annually Human Services Planning Board engaged Target: 1 engagement held # of Council endorsed submissions and advocacy Target: TBD 	3.1. Jurisdictional scan and research of advocacy agendas for other municipalities, community partners and sector associations 3.2. Advocacy Toolkit created awareness and navigation	●	●	●	●

Priority Area 2: Supporting Seniors to Live in Age-Friendly Complete Communities

Objective: Better integrate services for seniors

ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINES			
			2024	2025	2026	2027
4. Complete design and construction and operationalize the seniors hub and community centre located in Unionville Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of stakeholders and residents engaged for needs assessment Target: Feedback provided by 190 residents and 19 different partner organizations for the needs assessment (Completed) Advisory Group membership reflects diversity as identified in terms of reference Target: Advisory Group recruitment completed 	4.1. Complete an updated needs assessment 4.2. Establish Advisory Group to provide input and advice on programming 4.3. Establish partnerships and programming based on findings of needs assessment 4.4. Complete seniors hub and community centre design and construction 4.5. Open hub and community centre and oversee the provision of services to residents 4.6. Evaluate programming	●			
5. Develop policies and programs that link the built environment to healthy aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of municipalities supported Target: 3 municipalities supported annually # of networks and advisory committees supported Target: 2 networks and advisory committees supported annually 	5.1. Public health will engage in health promotion activities and support the inclusion of health outcomes for all ages (including seniors) in Regional and municipal community and transportation planning connecting built environment and healthy aging	●	●	●	●
6. Deliver innovative paramedic and community paramedicine services to support seniors in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of seniors served in palliative care program Target: TBD based on patient population needs # of seniors served by community paramedicine Target: 3,000 seniors to be supported annually # of paramedics that received palliative care training during annual recruitments Target: TBD based on annual Paramedic Service recruitment intake # of external partner and collaboration networks attended Target: 10+ collaboration meetings annually 	6.1. Implement and report on the Paramedic Palliative Care Program 6.2. Offer new or enhanced services to help seniors as funding permits 6.3. Deliver training to paramedics on how to support seniors in the community 6.4. Participation in Regional working groups and/or tables that support seniors within the community	●	●	●	●
7. Engage seniors' networks to inform development of the Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan (AHIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors Cluster Table engaged in the development of the proposed AHIP Report Target: 1 Seniors Cluster Table engagement for input Target: 1 Seniors Cluster Table update 	7.1. Preliminary AHIP Directions and Options presented to Housing Affordability Task Force (HATF) 7.2. Proposed AHIP staff report	●			
8. Explore opportunities to enhance and continue programs that support seniors' access to York Region Transit (YRT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis completed by end of 2024 Target: Review of Transit Assistance Program (TAP) program conducted MOR 65+ adopted as a permanent program Target: Adopted # of annual trips taken by seniors in York Region Target: Review through the service plan and consultation process annually 	8.1. Complete analysis on the possible expansion of the TAP to those 65+ years of age 8.2. YRT to provide Mobility On-Request 65+ service for senior residents	●			
9. Advocate for improved policy planning and funding across a supportive seniors continuum of health and social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors Cluster Table and clients engaged Target: 1 engagement held annually Human Services Planning Board engaged Target: 1 engagement held # of Council endorsed submissions and advocacy Target: TBD 	9.1. Jurisdictional scan and research of advocacy agendas for other municipalities, community partners and sector associations 9.2. Advocacy Toolkit created	●	●	●	●
10. Advocate to the Province for sustainable funding to expand Community Paramedicine programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors Cluster Table and clients engaged Target: 1 engagement held annually Human Services Planning Board engaged Target: 1 engagement held # of Council endorsed submissions and advocacy Target: TBD 	10.1. Jurisdictional scan and research of advocacy agendas for other municipalities, community partners and sector associations 10.2. Advocacy Toolkit created	●	●	●	●

Priority Area 3: Connecting Seniors and Caregivers to Right Programs and Services at Right Times

Objective: Improve system navigation for seniors

ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINES			
			2024	2025	2026	2027
11. Promote Access York to seniors and caregivers as a central access point for York Region and community resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of new communication campaigns/ways used to promote Access York Target: 1 new campaign planned and developed annually 	11.1. Establish plan to promote Access York 11.2. Develop communication material 11.3. Implement the plan 11.4. Evaluate and enhance based on feedback	●			
12. Advance accessible seniors focused self-serve tools on York Region website to search for York Region and community resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of seniors and caregiver services available in self-serve tools Target: TBD as to be implemented in 2025 	12.1. Explore available community resource tools 12.2. Assess appropriate tools to promote for seniors and caregivers 12.3. Consult on usability and ease of access with Seniors Cluster Table and other existing seniors/caregivers-focused tables 12.4. Work with partners to share self-serve tools for senior and caregiver services linked on york.ca 12.5. Evaluate and enhance based on feedback	●			
13. Share knowledge and training on seniors specific resources on York Region navigation tools with regional staff and local municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of York Region staff that have received training on service navigation tools Target: All Access York staff offered training # of local municipal partners that have received training on service navigation tools Target: All 9 local municipal partners trained and resources provided by plan's completion 	13.1. Develop knowledge and training resources 13.2. Share resources with regional staff 13.3. Evaluate and enhance training resources based on feedback 13.4. Share resources with local municipal partners		●		
14. Collaborate with Ontario Health Team Partners to develop an access and navigation model for a seamless approach to senior specific customer information and referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of referrals by Access York Target: TBD as targets to be developed with OHT partners 	14.1. Collaborate on the Eastern York Region North Durham Access and Navigation model development with Ontario Health Team partners	●			
15. Develop a York Region specific navigation guide for seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In design and/or engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors Cluster Table engaged Target: 1 engagement held Ontario Health Teams engaged (where applicable) Target: TBD Local municipalities engaged Target: 1 engagement held Piloted engaging place-based initiatives as defined by Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (where applicable) Target: 1 engagement held In distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario Health Teams engaged (where applicable) Target: TBD 	15.1. Stakeholder working group (internal and external) established for content development and vetting 15.2. Printable paper-based navigation guide developed and promoted 15.3. Paper-based guide printed and distributed	●	●		

ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINES			
			2024	2025	2026	2027
16. Help connect subsidized housing wait list applicants, including seniors, to available programs and resources while they wait for housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of pilot workshop sessions Target: 5+ workshop sessions # of eligible households on housing wait list notified of pilot sessions Target: 1,000+ eligible households notified 	16.1. Methodology and work plan developed for piloting tools and/or processes to connect applicants to resources 16.2. Tracking tools developed to measure pilot process 16.3. Pilot implemented	●			
17. Review Regional Low-Income Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Tax Relief program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and assessment complete Target: Analysis completed Recommendations offered Target: TBD based on analysis and financial implications 	17.1. Jurisdictional review of Ontario municipalities 17.2. Identification of scope for improvement 17.3. Assessment of financial implications for program options	●			
18. Incorporate a seniors lens to support development and implementation of the proposed York Region 2024 to 2027 Plan for Newcomer Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of seniors serving organizations that participate in collective planning Target: TBD 	18.1. Collective action planning will include community organizations whose clients include newcomer seniors	●	●	●	
19. Expand broadband infrastructure in York Region to enable access to high-speed internet in underserved communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YorkNet’s electronic newsletter Connecting Digital Communities shared with seniors organizations to provide updates on construction and the project expansion Target: Bi-annual newsletter and relevant communications shared with seniors organizations Seniors organizations serving clients in communities where active construction is taking place share YorkNet communications Target: TBD 	19.1. Connect with underserved communities and residents to provide timely and relevant updates about the dark fibre network expansion 19.2. Engage in communities where active construction is taking place to provide updates on project status using a variety of communications methods	●	●	●	●
20. Promote and collaborate with organizations that provide digital access/technology and technology training for seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jurisdictional scan completed Target: Scan completed # of technology groups identified and explored Target: TBD # of technology focused programs and agencies engaged Target: TBD 	20.1. Conduct jurisdictional scan to identify initiatives locally to nationally 20.2. Connect with organizations that provide technology assistance 20.3. Promote relevant programs/organizations to seniors 20.4. Include technology section in navigation guide	●			
21. Advocate for Provincial investments to sustain, scale and spread programs and supports that enhance seniors access to digital technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors Cluster Table and clients engaged Target: 1 engagement held annually Human Services Planning Board engaged Target: 1 engagement held # of Council endorsed submissions and advocacy Target: TBD 	21.1. Jurisdictional scan and research of advocacy agendas for other municipalities, community partners and sector associations 21.2. Advocacy Toolkit created	●	●	●	●

Priority Area 4: Improving Coordination, Organization and Planning of Services for Seniors

Objective: Collaborate on and support strategic improvements for the overall system supporting seniors

ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINES			
			2024	2025	2026	2027
22. Implement the York Region Integrated Response for Vulnerable Seniors Network (VSN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of general referrals of seniors and pre-seniors (50 years and over) served Target: increased # of general referrals served annually From a harm reduction perspective, % of clients whose crises have stabilized/ addressed as a result of VSN intervention Target: 85% of clients crises stabilized/addressed annually 	22.1. Implement program 22.2. Develop reporting system 22.3. Deliver capacity building sessions with staff	●			
23. Evaluate VSN and share learnings York Region wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of recommendations explored for service improvements and impact Target: 2 service improvements and impact explored annually % of practices updated or enhanced Target: 10% of practices enhanced annually 	23.1. Complete report on VSN evaluation and share learnings for continuous improvement 23.2. Develop knowledge transfer and exchange opportunities 23.3. Explore options for scaling pilot	●	●		
24. Develop tools and products that allow sector stakeholders access to current evidence and data on York Region seniors to inform program planning	For Deliverables 24.1 to 24.4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census profiles and online maps reflect socio-economic and demographic information on York Region Seniors Target: 1 Census Profile and 1 online map completed % of products developed that meet specific information needs of Seniors Cluster Table and stakeholders Target: TBD based on consultation results For Deliverable 24.5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community organizations engaged on toolkit Target: Toolkit to 20+ organizations Users' assessment of toolkit Target: Assessment Completed 	24.1. Develop a comprehensive socio-economic, demographic profile of seniors (65 and over) in York Region based on 2021 Census data 24.2. Develop an online map with data of York Region Seniors based on 2021 Census data 24.3. Develop additional research & data products based on 2021 Census data to meet specific information needs of Seniors Cluster Table and seniors serving stakeholders 24.4. Complete stakeholder assessment of products created 24.5. Distribute and evaluate York Region Seniors Target Groups Toolkit with partner organizations	●	●	●	●
25. Provide education and training opportunities to long-term care home staff and community partners in York Region serving seniors and caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of staff in long-term care homes and community organizations receiving York Region Psychogeriatric Resource Consultants (PRC) consultation, coaching, and training Target: increased # of staff received York Region PRC support annually # of staff reporting enhanced understanding and ability to support people with dementia and mental health needs through York Region PRC consultation, coaching and training Target: increased # of staff received York Region PRC support annually 	25.1. Deliver capacity building opportunities in Long-Term Care Homes and Ministry of Health funded community organizations across the Region through York Region Psychogeriatric Resource Consultants (PRC) 25.2. Provide education and training within York Region programs through York Region Psychogeriatric Resource Consultants	●	●	●	●
26. Strengthen and modernize the way we work with and deliver services to seniors in the Region's two Long-Term Care Homes and Adult Day Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of York Region long-term care residents (Newmarket and Maple Health Centres) whose overall rating of the home is either good or better (Long-Term Care Resident Survey) Target: overall rating of the home is either good or better annually ADP annual evaluations Target: Over 80% Caregiver and Client satisfaction reported in ADP annually PRC annual evaluations Target: Over 80% of staff report applying new knowledge received through PRCs annually 	26.1. Achieve reaccreditation (2027) from an Accreditation body 26.2. Exploration of emotion-focused care models		●	●	●
27. Advocate to the Province to establish a service system manager for seniors programs and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors Cluster Table and clients engaged Target: 1 engagement held annually Human Services Planning Board engaged Target: 1 engagement held # of Council endorsed submissions and advocacy Target: TBD 	27.1. Jurisdictional scan and research of advocacy agendas for other municipalities, community partners and sector associations 27.2. Advocacy Toolkit created	●	●	●	●

Appendix B

YORK REGION'S PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR SENIORS

York Region offers a range of services to help seniors stay healthy, safe, and independent. Programs and services for seniors include:



Access York

- **Access York Contact Centre:** for more information about York Region programs and services and how to access them, visit york.ca, call 1-877-464-9675 (interpreter services available), TTY 1-866-512-6228 (for deaf and hard of hearing) or email accessyork@york.ca



Seniors Services

- **Long Term Care:** York Region's two long-term care homes – Newmarket Health Centre and Maple Health Centre – provide nursing and personal care services for adults who are no longer able to live in their own homes. Visit <https://healthcareathome.ca/region/central/> to learn about eligibility, how to apply and costs. Telephone: 1-888-470-2222
- **Adult Day Programs:** provide meaningful and stimulating daily activities, exercises and food to meet social, physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of our clients in a secure environment. Visit <https://healthcareathome.ca/region/central/> to learn about eligibility, how to apply and costs. Telephone: 1-888-470-2222



Paramedic Services

- **Paramedic Services:** provide emergency and non-emergency medical response to patients. Community paramedicine programs like CP@LTC support seniors to stay at home and avoid premature placement in LTC, avoid emergency calls or a return to hospital
- **Personal Medical Information Kits:** can help seniors organize their important medical and personal information. The kit is designed to be visible and easily accessible by paramedics or other emergency services



Public Health

- **Healthy Aging and Fall Prevention:** provides consultations, workshops, and displays on fall prevention and healthy aging targeting adults 55 years and older living in York Region
- **Seniors Dental Program:** provides services at five clinic locations across York Region for eligible Ontario residents as part of Ontario Senior Dental Care Program (OSDCP). Visit ontario.ca/seniorsdental to learn more about services, eligibility and to enroll
- **Food Safety for Older Adults:** explains the importance of reducing the risk of food-borne illness
- **Air Quality Health Index:** explains how air pollution affects your health and especially for seniors
- **Extreme Heat:** provides warnings about extreme heat events and precautions to prevent related health impacts (seniors are at increased risk)
- **Outbreak Management:** prevents and decreases illness in long-term care facilities and retirement homes and other congregate care settings where seniors may live
- **Immunizations:** provides COVID-19 and Flu immunization at community clinics for seniors and others and supports COVID-19 and Flu immunization in long-term care facilities, retirement homes and other congregate care settings where seniors live
- **Healthy Built Environment:** provides support to planners on how community planning can promote health, including development of Age Friendly Communities



Housing Services

- **Community Housing:** offers market rent and subsidized housing to residents in York Region through housing providers including Housing York Inc. and non-profit and co-operative organizations
- **Subsidized Housing Wait List:** York Region manages a centralized waiting list to allocate subsidized units in community housing, rent supplement units with private market landlords, and portable housing benefits to help pay market rent
- **Client Intervention and Support Services (CISS):** provides in-home assessments, case management, counselling, referrals, psychoeducation and support advocating for senior client's needs



Social Services

- **Housing with Supports Program:** offers daily supports, including lodging, meals, etc., to low-income residents who have a mental health diagnosis or are elderly and frail and are unable to live independently
- **Homemakers and Nurses Services Program:** provides homemaking services and foot care to low-income residents so they can remain in their homes when they have a temporary or permanent illness or disability
- **Emergency and Transitional Housing:** York Region provides oversight and operational funding for nine emergency and transitional housing facilities delivered by community agencies that offer temporary housing, drop-in/drop-by services, case management, life stabilization support, and assistance to develop individual housing plans



Public Works

- **Accessible Transit Services:** York Region Transit (includes conventional, bus rapid transit, and Mobility On-Request paratransit) provides accessible transit services in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Some accessible features include kneeling buses with ramp or lift for easy boarding, slip resistant floors, automated next stops announcements, and priority seating close to the operator
- **Support Person Assistance Card:** permits a support person to travel on YRT with the eligible customer (cardholder) at no additional cost
- **Discounted YRT Seniors Fare:** seniors aged 65+ are eligible for the senior fare when paying with PRESTO or YRT Pay/Transit App. Starting January 1, 2024, senior travellers can ride YRT for free after 28 trips in a calendar month, using PRESTO
- **Mobility On-Request Transit Services 65+:** provides on-request transit service for seniors 65 years and older, within 5 km of their home. This service is offered throughout York Region for seniors who want to try taking public transit using a smaller vehicle that picks seniors up at home
- **MyRide Travel Training:** provides travel training for customers of all ages and abilities who need additional knowledge and skills to use YRT independently
- **Outdoor Education for 55+:** programs designed to connect people with nature and inspire action



- **York Regional Forest Accessible Trails:** four trails accessible to wheelchairs, strollers and other assistive devices that are wider, clear of large obstructions and graded for ease-of-movement



York Regional Police

- **Community Safety Officers:** provide information on programs and services for seniors, deliver educational presentations and are there to support seniors in our community
- **Vulnerable Persons Registry:** allows residents to register with York Regional Police to allow for an improved police response for those who may require emergency assistance due to their condition
- **Project Lifesaver Program:** combines radio technology with a coordinated police response to locate wandering people and/or disoriented persons due to Alzheimer's or other conditions or disorders

For more information about these services please contact Access York at 1-877-464-9675 (interpreter services available), TTY 1-866-512-6228 (for deaf and hard of hearing) or email accessyork@york.ca

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