

SUMMER 2021

YORK REGION MATTERS



Connect with us at:
yrmatters@york.ca
1-877-464-9675
york.ca



AURORA | EAST GWILLIMBURY | GEORGINA | KING | MARKHAM | NEWMARKET | RICHMOND HILL | VAUGHAN | WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE



The time is
now to get your
COVID-19 vaccine **P2**

YORK REGION MATTERS

YORK REGION CHAIRMAN AND CEO AND MEMBERS OF REGIONAL COUNCIL

Wayne Emmerson
Chairman & CEO

AURORA aurora.ca

Tom Mrakas
Mayor

EAST GWILLIMBURY eastgwillimbury.ca

Virginia Hackson
Mayor

GEORGINA georgina.ca

Margaret Quirk
Mayor

Robert Grossi
Regional Councillor

KING king.ca

Steve Pellegrini
Mayor

MARKHAM markham.ca

Frank Scarpitti
Mayor

Don Hamilton
Regional Councillor

Jack Heath
Regional Councillor

Joe Li
Regional Councillor

Jim Jones
Regional Councillor

NEWMARKET newmarket.ca

John Taylor
Mayor

Tom Vegh
Regional Councillor

RICHMOND HILL richmondhill.ca

David Barrow
Mayor

Joe DiPaola
Acting Mayor

Carmine Perrelli
Regional Councillor

Godwin Chan
Acting Regional Councillor

VAUGHAN vaughan.ca

Maurizio Bevilacqua
Mayor

Mario Ferri
Regional Councillor

Gino Rosati
Regional Councillor

Linda Jackson
Regional Councillor

WHITCHURCH- STOUFFILLE townofws.com

Iain Lovatt
Mayor

Stay connected! Subscribe to #YRMatters

York Region's e-newsletter helps us connect with our residents. Subscribe at york.ca/enews

MESSAGE FROM YORK REGION CHAIRMAN AND CEO

While we are making great progress in vaccination efforts, we are still seeing cases of COVID-19 in our communities, mainly in unvaccinated individuals. We know vaccinations work and we strongly encourage everyone who is able to access two-dose coverage to keep yourselves and our communities safe.

2021 also marks York Region's 50th anniversary. Although we are 50 years young, the rich, cultural heritage of this area goes back much further to the

ancestors of the modern-day Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Like many events of the past year, ours is a virtual celebration. I encourage you to visit york.ca/yrturms50 for an online tour of the collection in the York Region archives and a decade-by-decade photo exhibit on [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/yorkregion/).



Wayne Emmerson



Wayne Emmerson
York Region Chairman
and CEO

ON THE COVER



All eligible individuals age 12 and older should get their first and second dose as soon as they can. **The sooner most people are vaccinated, the sooner our lives can return to normal.**

It's normal to wonder how COVID-19 vaccines were developed and approved so fast. It's thanks to never-before seen levels of collaboration and funding invested around the world.

Researchers have leveraged existing vaccine research and expedited recruitment and establishment and analysis of clinical trials, while avoiding administrative delays.

COVID-19 vaccines were tested thoroughly. Health Canada only approves vaccines that are safe, effective and meet all safety standards. They are also continually monitored for safety and effectiveness.

The vaccine works by teaching our bodies' cells how to make a specific protein to trigger an immune response without using the live virus that causes COVID-19. Our body then makes antibodies, which help fight infection if the real virus ever enters our

body. Vaccines may cause some discomfort in your arm or mild flu-like symptoms, but serious side-effects are very rare.

The bottom line is two doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine in Canada will provide sustained, substantial protection against serious illness, hospitalization and death, 14 days after you receive your second dose. Anyone can get COVID-19 and become very sick, even without underlying health conditions or other risk factors. These vaccines are our best shot at keeping ourselves, our loved ones and our communities safe.

Visit york.ca/COVID19Vaccine for a list of clinic locations.

Tell us what you think

We always look for ways to enhance our publication and include information you are interested in.

For a chance to win a \$50 gift card, tell us what you think about this edition and what

you would like to see in the future at york.ca/yorkregionmatters



Take the Shop Local YR challenge to support local businesses

Businesses in York Region are an integral part of our communities and are the cornerstone of our local economies.

Many businesses have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 and small businesses have been among the hardest hit during the pandemic. Small businesses make up the largest share (about 84%) of all businesses in York Region and employ approximately 151,000 people.

As we transition through the province's [Roadmap to Reopen](#), local businesses are ready and waiting to see you.

You can support local York Region businesses while remaining safe, as our local

businesses work closely with York Region Public Health to implement and follow strict health and safety protocols.

Showing your support doesn't have to mean spending money as referrals, online reviews and sharing social posts from business vendors can make a big difference to business owners.

York Region is so fortunate to have generous and compassionate citizens who so often help others in times of need. We're encouraging all York Region citizens to buy and show support with the Shop Local YR challenge.

By shopping in our very own neighbourhoods, we contribute to our successful and vibrant communities.

For more information on how you can support local businesses in York Region, visit york.ca/shoplocal

Take the YR Shop Local Challenge in three easy steps:

1. Purchase a good or service from a local small business
2. Share your support on social media using the **#ShopLocalYR** and tag **your municipality and the local business** for some extra love
3. Enjoy your purchase and feel good about supporting local businesses and our communities

Future home to new York University campus

Construction is ongoing for York University's long-awaited Markham Campus, which will welcome its first students in September 2023.

Once open, this new campus will accommodate up to 4,200 students with flexibility to expand in response to future growth.

It will also enable a significant contribution to the teaching and research mission of York University, and will lead to many social and economic benefits across York Region, the Greater Toronto Area and beyond.

In 2014, York Regional Council committed up to \$25 million in funding to support the development of the Markham Campus.

This new campus will provide innovative, relevant

and job-ready academic programming and research opportunities, focused on Digital Media Arts, Engineering and Technology, Entrepreneurship, Management, New Media and Communications.

York Region continues to facilitate engagement with the business community to shape the curriculum development process.

For further details, visit york.ca/yorkumarkham



Yonge North Subway Expansion

Construction of the Yonge North Subway Extension is a go! The extension will connect Finch subway station to the City of Richmond Hill. When fully operational, it will allow riders to travel from Richmond Hill to downtown Toronto in just over 30 minutes. On top of that, the Yonge North Subway Extension is expected to

reduce traffic congestion, decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 4,800 tons per year, lead to the creation of 52,000 jobs, encourage business and housing development and support the post-pandemic recovery efforts.

For more information, visit vivanext.com/YongeSubwayExt

CELEBRATING



STRONG, CARING, SAFE COMMUNITIES

Although York Region turned 50 this year, Indigenous Peoples have called this land home for centuries. We honour Indigenous Peoples, ancestors and future generations on this land that we share with reverence and humility.

From our official start on January 1, 1971 to today, we've grown from a population of 169,200 in 1971 to 1.2 million residents – and into one of Canada's most diverse communities. With that growth came services and infrastructure to make York Region the destination of choice to live, work and play.



LOOKING BACK WITH 50 FACTS ABOUT YORK REGION

- 1. 1970: Plans approved for the creation of a Regional government that would dissolve York County
- 2. 1970: The Act to establish The Regional Municipality of York that was passed effective January 1, 1971

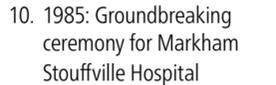


- 3. 1971: Fourteen municipal departments and the York County Security Police amalgamate to form York Regional Police
- 4. 1971: York Region hires first Chief Administrative Officer, Alexander J. Rettie
- 5. 1971: York Regional Council adopts a new crest



- 6. 1973: York Region publishes first annual report
- 7. 1974: York Region celebrates York Regional Forest's 50th anniversary

- 8. 1977: Construction of Highway 404 between Steeles Avenue and Highway 7 begins
- 9. 1984: The York-Durham Sewer System (Stage II) opens to service the Town of Aurora and Town of Newmarket



- 10. 1985: Groundbreaking ceremony for Markham Stouffville Hospital
- 11. 1987: Groundbreaking ceremony for Highway 407
- 12. 1988: York Region's first non-profit housing corporation is formed
- 13. 1993: Hadley Grange, affordable housing for seniors, opens in the Town of Aurora



- 14. 1994: York Region Administrative Centre and York Regional Police Headquarters opens in the Town of Newmarket
- 15. 1994: York Region launches 911 call centre
- 16. 1994: York Regional Council adopts the first Regional Official Plan



- 17. 1996: York Region celebrates the 200th anniversary of Yonge Street

- 18. 1997: Province of Ontario transfers ownership of the Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant to York and Durham Regions

- 19. 1997: York Region launches its first website
- 20. 1998: York Region launches Water for Tomorrow campaign; this program along with the Long-Term Water Conservation Strategy contributes to saving more than 27 megalitres of water per day

- 21. 1999: York Region takes responsibility for administering Court Services

- 22. 2000: Emergency Medical Services (EMS) amalgamates six ambulance services into one centralized EMS System

- 23. 2000: York Regional Forest becomes the first public forest in Canada to be Forest Stewardship Council certified

- 24. 2000: York Regional Council passes a No-Smoking bylaw

- 25. 2001: Municipal transit amalgamates to form York Region Transit (YRT) and York Region Transit Mobility Plus

- 26. 2005: New Material Recovery Facility opens in the Town of East Gwillimbury

- 27. 2005: York Region launches Viva Rapid Transit

- 28. 2006: Sutton Youth Services opens its doors to provide emergency and transitional housing for youth (16 to 26 years old) in the Town of Georgina



- 29. 2008: York Region begins three-stream waste management system (blue box, organic waste and garbage)



- 30. 2009: York Region opens its first Community Environmental Centre; McCleary Court in the City of Vaughan

- 31. 2009: York Region's first family shelter, Leeder Place, opens in the Town of East Gwillimbury



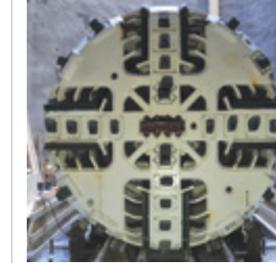
- 32. 2010: York Region's first accessible trail opens in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

- 33. 2011: Construction of King City municipal sewer system is mainly complete

- 34. 2011: York Regional Council approves the Immigration Settlement Strategy

- 35. 2013: York Region's first roundabout opens in the City of Markham

- 36. 2014: York Regional Council endorses the Archaeological Management Plan to ensure the protection of First Nations, Métis and European archeological resources



- 37. 2014: York Region completes 15-kilometre tunnel for Southeast Collector trunk sewer

- 38. 2015: Belinda's Place Women's Shelter opens in the Town of Newmarket

- 39. 2015: York University campus in the City of Markham is announced

- 40. 2016: Richmond Hill HUB Youth Shelter opens in the City of Richmond Hill

- 41. 2017: The first subway pulls into York Region at the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

- 42. 2017: Launch of YorkNet, a Region-owned corporation that builds and operates a high-speed, dark-fibre network across the Region

- 43. 2017: York Region celebrates the 40th anniversary of Early Intervention Services

- 44. 2018: The Bill Fisch Forest Stewardship and Education Centre was the first building in Canada and 21st building world-wide to successfully become Living Building Challenge Certified for its innovative features

- 45. 2018: York Region affirms its commitment to diversity and inclusion by adopting its first Inclusion Charter

- 46. 2019: York Region continues to rank first for highest diversion rate in the large urban municipality category and diverted 94% of its waste from landfill



- 47. 2020: The new environmentally sustainable York Region office at 17150 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket brings key Regional services to one location

- 48. 2020: For the first time, York Region declares a State of Emergency on March 23 due to the COVID-19 global pandemic



- 49. 2020: York Region Transit launches its first electric buses from Newmarket Terminal

- 50. 2021: Opening of the Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital in the City of Vaughan

Learn more about York Region over the past 50 years by scanning the QR code on your smartphone or visit york.ca/YRturns50



#YRturns50

Have your say on a growing and vibrant York Region

York Region is growing. By 2051, York Region is anticipated to grow to more than two million people and close to one million jobs. Our goal is to ensure we are building healthy, complete communities where residents of all abilities and ages can live, work and play. This includes revisiting and revising plans on how we will support growing communities, including where communities can grow and planning the appropriate services required such as water, wastewater and road infrastructure.

Our Regional Official Plan is the overall blueprint for how York Region will grow and develop over the next 30 years. The Region is currently reviewing and updating its Regional Official Plan and seeking input from the public through a process called the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). Visit york.ca/mcr to learn more and provide input to futurityork@york.ca

The Water and Wastewater Master Plan outlines how we plan to provide water and wastewater services, and the Transportation Master Plan which does the same for future Regional transportation needs.

To date, we heard input on the need for affordable

housing, the value of protecting greenspace, convenience of walkable communities and mitigation of climate change effects. A draft updated Regional Official Plan will be released in late 2021 for consultation.

In June, the Region held a Water and Wastewater Master Plan Online Open House to present recommended servicing strategies and supporting infrastructure projects that will meet the needs of our growing communities. Get caught up and stay connected at york.ca/waterplan

The Regional road and transit system we travel on continues to evolve and plans need to be regularly revisited to ensure they are meeting evolving needs and technology. By providing your input and sharing your experience on the update to the Transportation Master Plan, you can play a role and influence building a network for the future.

Whether you walk, bike, drive or take transit, tell us what you think by visiting york.ca/TMP to find information about virtual information sessions, answers to common questions and how the Transportation Master Plan will serve communities to 2051 and beyond.





Transportation options for all travellers

York Region continues to make investments to further build a safe, efficient and reliable Regional transportation network to accommodate for our growing communities. Improvements coming to Rutherford Road in the City of Vaughan will support future economic and urban growth in the area, ease heavy traffic congestion and give vitality to the community.

Improvements from Highway 400 to Westburne Drive will add two new lanes to relieve traffic, plus new boulevard bike lanes, road repaving, intersection upgrades and bridge and culvert work.

Once complete, residents can look forward to:

- Safer commutes on rehabilitated roads, upgraded traffic signals that meet *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* standards and enhanced street lighting
- Connected transportation network for commuter and leisure cyclists
- Reduced traffic congestion with two extra lanes of roadway

Construction is expected to be complete by summer 2023.

Learn more about this project by visiting york.ca/rutherfordroad



Fun and safe cycling

To celebrate summer, residents can plan a cycling adventure close to home on one of York Region's cycling routes. The 121-kilometre Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail connects Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario.

Two additional trail segments were completed last year:

- Bayview Avenue between Bloomington Road and Vandorf Sideroad in the Town of Aurora
- Leslie Street between 16th Avenue and Elgin Mills Road in the City of Richmond Hill

Cycling is a great way to get outside and be active. But before you head out, in addition to a helmet, please remember

Ontario Law requires bicycles be equipped with:

- Working bell or horn
- White reflective tape on the front fenders and red reflective tape on the rear fenders
- White front light and a red rear light or reflector if you ride between 30 minutes before sunset and 30 minutes after sunrise

York Region is also home to many locally owned specialty and repair shops for all your cycling needs, so be sure to shop local.

Visit york.ca/cycling to check out the York Region Cycling Map to enter the Get Moving Photo Contest and receive updates on the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail. #BikeYorkRegion

Oops! That doesn't go in the blue box

Items placed in the blue box that are not part of the blue box program have negative impacts on the waste management system and the environment.

Problematic blue box contaminants include:

Disposable, single-use face masks and gloves

Face masks are not recyclable and should be placed in the garbage. When put in the blue box, there is a risk these items could blow out of the bins and become litter. They are also a health and safety risk for workers sorting items. Use reusable, washable face masks or coverings instead of disposable masks.

Plastic bags (bagged recyclables and newspapers left in plastic sleeves)

Place recyclables directly in the blue box, not in plastic bags. Avoid single-use plastic bags by using reusable bags, food storage containers or reusable food wraps.

Food left in containers

Food scraps and liquids left inside containers can spill onto the paper recyclables, making them difficult to recycle. Empty and scrape food out of containers into the green bin before putting in the blue box.

Small Items

Small items like bottle caps and shredded paper may contaminate other recyclables during the recycling process. Leave plastic bottle caps on bottles and put shredded paper in your green bin.

Household Items (toys, small appliances, dinnerware, textiles)

If items are reusable and in good condition you can share, donate or sell them

online. These items do not go in the blue box.

Paper towels and facial tissues

Paper towels and facial tissues are at the end of their life cycle and do not go in the blue box. However, they are compostable and can go in the green bin.

Use our waste search tool at york.ca/bindicator



New! Ontario enhancing blue box program

Following extensive consultations, the Ontario government released regulations on June 3, 2021 making producers of products and packaging fully responsible for the cost and operation of the blue box program, by December 31, 2025. This will improve recycling by standardizing the list of materials that can be recycled across the province, making it easier for everyone to recycle.

Learn more at ontario.ca

Did you know?

York Region's contamination rate was approximately 19% in 2020, meaning 19% of what was put in the blue box was not recyclable.

Five outdoor watering tips

Outdoor activities such as watering lawns and gardens usually doubles water demand during the summer. This demand can put our water quality and supply at risk.

To help ensure your town or city has enough water for emergency services, here are five tips for keeping a healthy lawn or garden without using a lot of water:

1



Know your Outdoor Water-Use Bylaw

Your municipality's Outdoor Water-Use Bylaw dictates the day and time of day residents can use municipal water for outdoor activities. Before reaching for the hose, visit york.ca/outdoorwateruse

2



Water your lawn only once a week

Even if there hasn't been a significant amount of rainfall, water only once a week to encourage deep, strong root growth and ensure your lawn can better cope with the hot, dry summer weather. Water grass in the early morning when the sun is lowest to ensure water gets to the roots instead of evaporating.

3



Recycle rainwater

Install a rain barrel, rain chain or rain garden to direct rainwater to your garden or store for later use – saving money on your water bill! Visit fusiongardening.ca for more gardening tips and ideas.

4



Add a layer of mulch

Adding a five to 10-centimetre layer of mulch to your garden beds will help moisture stay in the ground and keep the weeds out.

5



Maintain your irrigation system

If you have an underground sprinkler system, consider hiring a Water Smart irrigation professional to ensure it's in good condition and not wasting water.

For more information, visit watersmartirrigation-professional.ca