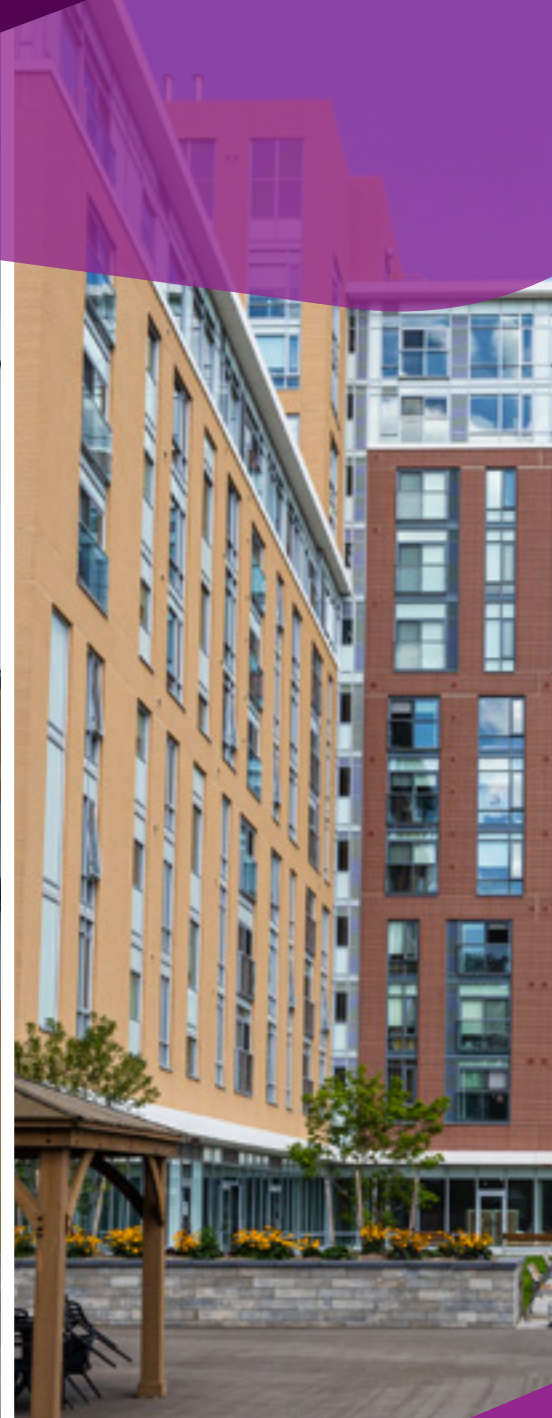


HOUSING SOLUTIONS

A place for everyone

2023 PROGRESS REPORT



Cover images from left to right:

Woodbridge Lane, City of Vaughan
Passage House, Town of East Gwillimbury
Unionville Commons, City of Markham

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



Chairman & CEO
Wayne Emmerson

Like many jurisdictions across Canada, York Region is facing unprecedented housing affordability challenges, including climbing home prices and rents, limited affordable housing options, homelessness and a growing demand for housing stability supports.

Housing Solutions: A place for everyone is the Region's 10-year housing and homelessness plan and serves as our road map for addressing these challenges. Through this plan, York Regional Council remains committed to building complete communities by investing in new community and affordable housing, helping people find and keep housing and ensuring a strong housing and homelessness system to respond to resident needs.

This report summarizes the Region's progress in 2023 to implement this plan and details achievements since 2019. Key results in the fifth year of implementation include an increased supply of purpose-built rental, moving more households off a subsidized housing wait list and into appropriate housing along with delivering housing stability supports to those in need.

While York Region has made great strides over the past five years, challenges continue to exist, including a lack of predictable funding from the federal and provincial governments, shortages in community housing development and needed investment in community housing units to support repairs and preserve supply. Partnerships with local cities and towns, community agencies and senior levels of government will play a crucial role in continued implementation of this plan and in meeting Council's commitment to help residents find and maintain appropriate housing in our communities.



Mayor
Frank Scarpitti
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Michael Chan
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Jim Jones
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Joe Li
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Alan Ho
City of Markham



Mayor
John Taylor
Town of Newmarket



Regional Councillor
Tom Vegh
Town of Newmarket



Mayor
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City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor
Linda Jackson
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Mario Ferri
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Regional Councillor
Gino Rosati
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor
Mario G. Racco
City of Vaughan



Mayor
Margaret Quirk
Town of Georgina



Regional Councillor
Naomi Davison
Town of Georgina



Mayor
David West
City of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor
Godwin Chan
City of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor
Joe DiPaola
City of Richmond Hill



Mayor
Tom Mrakas
Town of Aurora



Mayor
Virginia Hackson
Town of East Gwillimbury



Mayor
Steve Pellegrini
Township of King



Mayor
Iain Lovatt
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2019, York Regional Council endorsed Phase 2 of [Housing Solutions: A Place for Everyone, 2019 to 2023](#). This comprehensive plan outlines three goals and long-term objectives aimed at addressing housing and homelessness challenges within the Region.

HOUSING SOLUTIONS

A place for everyone

PHASE 2 PLAN 2019 TO 2023



HOUSING SERVICES
york.ca/housing



The Bridge,
Town of Georgina



Residents of Unionville Commons,
City of Markham

OUR GOALS

1

Increase the supply of affordable and rental housing

2

Help people find and keep housing

3

Strengthen the housing and homelessness system

This report provides an update on key accomplishments made in 2023 – the final year of the plan – towards the goals and objectives under the plan, during its fifth year of implementation. It also provides a summary of progress made over the past five years and offers an overview of significant achievements from 2019 to 2023.



HIGHLIGHTS

Progress toward the *Housing Solutions* Phase 3 goals in 2023 included:

GOAL 1: Increase the supply of affordable and rental housing

- Through York Region Council:
 - Approved a servicing reserve and development charge deferral policy to encourage affordable purpose-built rental housing construction.
 - Initiated a Housing Affordability Task Force in May 2021 to advise on strategies to address private market affordability challenges.
 - Adopted the *2022 Regional Official Plan*, which was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Regional Official Plan includes enhanced intensification, density and complete community requirements to direct substantial new growth in housing to areas well-served by transit and services.
 - Continued to advocate for evidence-based policies to address housing supply and affordability challenges, including responding to the provincial Housing Affordability Task Force recommendations and new provincial legislation (*Bill 109: More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022* and *Bill 23: More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*).
- Worked alongside N. Barry Lyon Consultants (NBLC) to complete the Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan (AHIP) background work including a Case Study Analysis and stakeholder interviews to inform the preparation of the *Preliminary Directions and Options* which was received by the Housing Affordability Task Force in January 2024.
- Opened Unionville Commons in 2023, Housing York Inc.’s (HYI) newest development, providing 265 market and subsidized rental homes for seniors in the City of Markham. Over the past five years, the Region has built or supported the creation of almost 460 new community housing units.
- Received a direct allocation from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) of \$18.8 million through the Rapid Housing Initiative Cities Stream for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville’s HYI development, Mosaic House and Inn From the Cold’s new emergency and transitional housing development located in the Town of Newmarket.



First residents moving into
Unionville Commons
City of Markham

GOAL 2: Help people find and keep housing

- A total of 976 households from the subsidized housing wait list accepted offers of housing in 2023 — the highest number of households housed in a single year since the Region became responsible for housing in the early 2000s — including enrolling 527 households in the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit program. Over five years, the Region has cumulatively housed 2,765 households from the wait list through community housing providers, rent supplement landlords and portable housing benefits.
- Delivered programming to community residents to promote eviction prevention and housing stability including community events and workshops. Programming focused on food insecurity, financial stability, income supports, social connections, physical, psychological and emotional health.
- York Region provided 7,190¹ total people over five years with homelessness prevention supports through the Region’s Homelessness Prevention Program and the Housing Stability Program.
- Supported 240 unique individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness with their application for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit.
- 671² total people over five years were diverted from emergency housing to safe housing with friends and family.
- Transitioned 1,294¹ total people successfully from emergency housing to stable housing over five years.

1. This number may not be unique as clients/households may be supported in more than one year.

2. This number may not be unique as people may have been diverted in more than one year between 2019 and 2023.

GOAL 3: Strengthen the housing and homelessness system

- Made a number of improvements to the subsidized housing wait list to provide applicants with more information about housing options and improve efficiency for housing providers. This included fully implementing the online housing offer process in 2023 to all housing providers.
- Continued to engage and support housing providers through training sessions on using the online offer system and workshops and one-on-one meetings on end of mortgages. Staff continued to provide coaching to housing providers, on topics relating to governance, financial management, capital reserve planning, budgeting, property management support and rent-geared-to-income administration.
- Successfully implemented temporary measures to support people experiencing homelessness through the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2020 to 2022 the Region provided expanded emergency and transitional housing to 1,372 people through the Transitional Shelter, helped 166 people safely self-isolate through the Self-Isolation Shelter and provided 362 people with prevention supports. These measures were supported by the Province’s Social Services Relief Fund.
- Opened two new transitional housing sites in the Towns of Georgina and East Gwillimbury and began funding one additional transitional housing program in the Town of Newmarket, adding 33 new transitional housing beds to York Region’s emergency and transitional housing system. These beds will help people on their journey to finding stable housing.
- Partnered with Inn From the Cold to provide annual funding for Inn From the Cold’s emergency housing and homelessness services and supports to year-round operations. This added 25 emergency housing beds in York Region’s emergency housing system.
- Built on the success of the Community Paramedicine Outreach Response Team (CPORT) by expanding the team so more people at risk of or experiencing homelessness have access to primary care and mental health and addictions supports. Since its inception, CPORT has provided medical care to 891 unique people, as of December 31, 2023.
- Successfully piloted the Emergency Housing Central Intake Line which helps make homelessness services and supports more accessible.
- Implemented extreme weather response plans through the Cold Weather Response Plan and Heat Relief Strategy, providing people with shelter, supports and services during extreme temperatures and weather events.
- Began developing York Region’s first Homelessness Service System Plan which will address emerging community needs and guide longer-term planning and development to support York Region residents at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- Allocated an average of approximately \$1.5 million per year through the Community Investment Fund to community projects aimed at delivering housing stability supports for residents.
- Established Community Action Tables in 2021 to support the [2022 to 2026 Community Safety and Well-Being Plan for York Region](#). Through the Community Action Tables, 33 actions were completed or are underway supporting the Housing Stability priority area. Community Action Tables also launched several important initiatives, including H.O.M.E., a community-driven initiative promoting housing stability, Neighbourhood Tenant Support Service project offering trauma-informed services to prevent wrongful evictions and a Housing Summit to identify solutions-based strategies around housing stability.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Increase the supply of affordable and rental housing	Percentage of new housing built in centres and corridors	39% (1825 units)	30% (1740 units)	43% (4,660 of 10,787 units)	39% (2,748 units of 7,120)	50% (6,047 of 12,022 units)
	New housing built by structure type across the Region year over year	4,692 units, 2,195 units in condo and apartment buildings	5,831 units, 2,258 units in condo and apartment buildings	10,787 units, 4,973 units (46%) in condo and apartment buildings	7,120 units, 3,533 units (50%) in condo and apartment buildings	12,022 units, 8,348 (69%) in condo and apartment buildings
	Number of new private purpose-built rental housing units created year over year	0	36	136	217	670
	Number of private purpose-built rental units that have received Regional financial incentives	0	261	0	390	42
	Number of new community housing units created year over year	162	32	0	0	265
Help people find and keep housing	Number of clients who received support to improve housing stability, year over year	5,107	5,157	5,704	6,007	7,002
	Number of people at risk of homelessness who remain housed for at least six months	1,740	1,429	1,139	1,242	1,640
	Number of people who moved from emergency housing to long-term housing	446	280	174	170	224
	Number of people who are diverted from emergency housing	92	129	218	110	122
	Number and percentage of people experiencing chronic homelessness who remain housed for at least six months	63 (61%)	82 (78%)	102 (74%)	99 (81%)	139 (83%)

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Strengthen the housing and homelessness system	Number of training and capacity building activities delivered for housing providers	6	6	15	17	16
	Number of community housing units that received capital funding to maintain a state of good repair, year over year	1,246	1,923	1,682	2,171	2,489
	Number of affordable rental units administered by York Region	6,940	6,841	6,717	6,717	6,982
	Number of rent-gearred-to-income units in York Region	4,129	4,087	4,098	4,089	3,869
	Number of people referred to Community Collaborative Table	105	N/A	N/A	132	146
	Number of people experiencing homelessness at a point-in-time ¹	N/A	N/A	329	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of Community and Health Services department programs and services included in the inventory (programs that meet Ontario's Call 2-1-1 Inclusion policy criteria)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Percentage of Community Investment Fund organizations included in the 211 inventory	98% (42 agencies)	100% (42 agencies)	100% (42 agencies)	100% (32 agencies)	68% (67 out of 99 funded agencies)
	Number of advocacy activities related to long-term care beds	13	6	21	23	24

1. York Region has completed three federally and provincially mandated Point-in-Time Counts, in 2016, 2018 and 2021. Point-in-Time Counts are not mandated every year.

2023 ACTION PLAN OUTCOMES

GOAL 1: Increase the supply of affordable and rental housing

Goal 1 includes three objectives. In 2023, 16 actions were planned to meet the objectives.



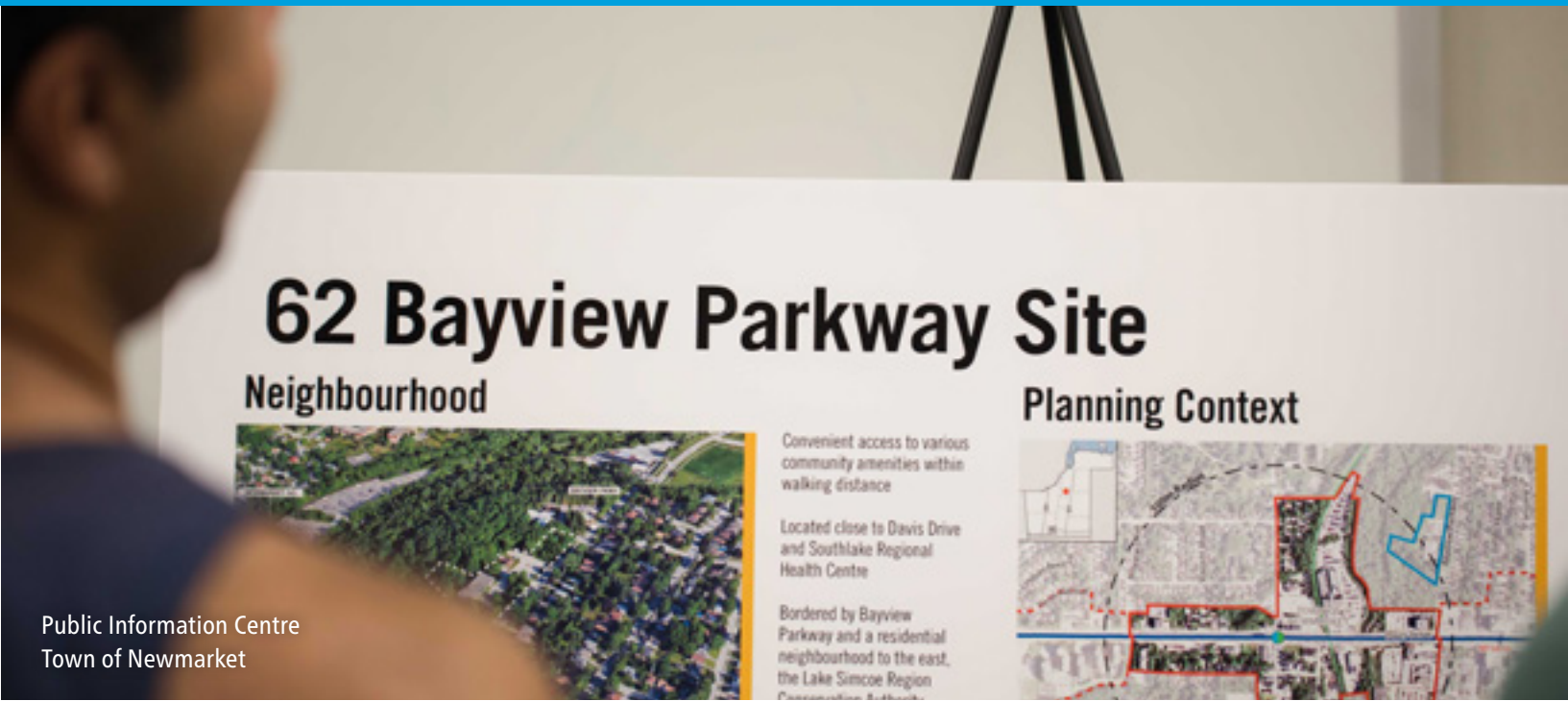
OBJECTIVES	2023 ACTION	OUTCOME
1. Plan for a full mix and range of housing options to support achievement of complete communities and promote economic development	1.1 Continue to support local municipal staff in development of housing related initiatives, including housing strategies and inclusionary zoning.	Engaged local municipal staff through the Local Municipal Housing Working Group to share best practices and local municipal housing initiatives. Continued to communicate with local municipal staff to explore opportunities to advance implementation of inclusionary zoning where appropriate.
	1.2 Research housing gaps to better understand housing demand and inform future solutions and approaches to address housing need.	The Housing Needs Analysis was completed in June 2023 and presented to the Housing Affordability Task Force in September 2023 . The report showed continued high ownership and rental costs in the Region, resulting in a lack of acceptable housing options for many households. This confirmed previous research and monitoring exercises. A summary of market characteristics, income deciles and affordability information is provided for each local municipality and shows that key housing themes and notable trends are generally common across all municipalities. This analysis is informing development of the Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan scheduled to be presented to council in September 2024.
	1.3 Complete background work to support an update to the Affordable Housing Measuring and Monitoring Guidelines.	In June 2023 , York Region Council received the Measuring and Monitoring Report summarizing housing affordability in 2022. Initiated background work to advance an update to the approach to monitoring housing
	1.4 Leverage the Region’s development tracking system (YorkTrax) to support housing supply analytics and visualization.	As reported to Council in February 2023 , York Region has been at the forefront of streamlining the development approval process through automation and transparency. Collecting and managing real-time growth and development application data through YorkTrax, a digital platform for planning applications and improved customer experience.

ACTIONS CARRIED FORWARD INTO 2024

ACTION 2.1 “Develop an Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan” is ongoing with a proposed Plan targeted to be presented to Council in Q3 2024.

ACTION 3.2 “Seek Council approval of a Community Housing Development Master Plan” is ongoing with a proposed Plan targeted to be presented to Council in Q3 2024.

ACTION 3.6 “Establish a Municipal Land Contribution Program” is targeted for consideration through the Community Housing Development Master Plan in Q3 2024.



OBJECTIVES	2023 ACTION	OUTCOME
2. Implement tools and policies to increase the affordable housing supply	2.1 Develop an Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan (AHIP) to identify and fund action, advocacy and partnership approaches to increase the supply of private market affordable housing.	Completed AHIP background work including a Case Study Analysis and stakeholder interviews to inform the preparation of the Preliminary Directions and Options which was received by the Housing Affordability Task Force in January 2024.
	2.2 Through a report to Council, continue to advocate to the Province that the Region be made whole financially as a result of Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 , and that housing services be reinstated as eligible for funding under the Development Charges Act, 1997 .	Council continued to advocate to the province that the Region be made whole financially due to shortfalls for housing enabling infrastructure as a result of Bill 23, including as part of the 2024 Ontario Budget Consultation . To date, confirmation has not been received by the Region. Council also continues to advocate to the province that housing services be reinstated as Development Charges-eligible, including as part of an April 2024 report.
	2.3 Continue to work with stakeholders, local municipalities, senior levels of government, the development industry and community partners to explore approaches to increase the supply of affordable housing.	Continued to collaborate with local municipal and private sector partners which included hosting two Local Municipal Housing Working Group meetings and two Housing Affordability Task Force meetings in March and September 2023 .
	2.4 Seek Council endorsement to defer consideration of a potential Vacant Home Tax to 2024 to allow for additional analysis of emergent Provincial and Federal regulations, economic conditions, opportunities to streamline administration and collaboration with other Ontario municipalities.	In May 2023 , Council directed staff to defer consideration of a potential Vacant Home Tax pending additional analysis of program impacts of economic and legislative conditions. In November 2023 , Council received an updated analysis including more recent data demonstrating that the Vacant Home Tax would not be financially self-sustaining. As a result, Council directed staff to not proceed with the Tax, with the opportunity to revisit the decision through the AHIP.

OBJECTIVES	2023 ACTION	OUTCOME
3. Build community housing and encourage affordable rental housing to meet the housing needs of low and moderate income households	3.1 Complete construction of Unionville Commons.	HYI's Unionville Commons achieved full occupancy permits in June 2023, providing 265 subsidized and market units for seniors in the City of Markham.
	3.2 Seek Council approval of a Community Housing Development Master Plan.	The Community Housing Development Master Plan is targeted to be presented to Council in Q3 2024.
	3.3 Submit planning applications for 62 Bayview Parkway development in the Town of Newmarket.	First Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw Amendment (OPA/ZBA) application was submitted to the Town of Newmarket on December 22, 2023. Initial proposal targets up to 250 units, including mix of affordable and market units, indoor and outdoor amenity space and underground parking.
	3.4 Design and launch a pilot program to support housing providers to develop new community housing in response to Council's decision in February 2023 to dedicate additional funding to critical social infrastructure.	Launched the Community Housing Supply Grant Pilot Program in September 2023. Application submissions closed in November and funding has been conditionally awarded.
	3.5 Explore funding opportunities to move from planning to construction at Box Grove (14th Avenue in the City of Markham) and 62 Bayview Parkway in the Town of Newmarket.	As part of the 2024 budget, Council approved Regional funding to advance planning and development for both projects until senior government funding is secured, as communicated to council in November 2023. The Region's planning application for Box Grove was resubmitted to the City of Markham in December 2023 and was approved by Markham Council in March 2024.
	3.6 Establish a Municipal Land Contribution Program by finalizing the land transfer criteria and protocol, the municipal land donation guidelines, and identifying the first sites for donation, in response to Council's February 2021 motion for local municipalities to donate land for affordable housing purposes.	Three sites were reviewed (two in the City of Richmond Hill and one in the Town of Georgina) and three concept plans were created. Council will receive an update on the approach to the land contribution program as part of the Community Housing Development Master Plan in Q3 2024.
	3.7 Submit investment plan/applications for Rapid Housing Initiative Round 3 funding.	The Region received a direct allocation of \$18.8 million through the Rapid Housing Initiative Cities Stream. HYI's development in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and Inn From the Cold's new emergency and transitional housing development in the Town of Newmarket were approved through this funding. The Region also applied for the Rapid Housing Initiative Projects Stream funding for HYI's Box Grove project in the City of Markham's in March 2023, but was unsuccessful.
	3.8 Continue advocating for federal/provincial capital funding to advance community housing projects identified in the 10-year capital plan.	In June 2023, Council received the 2022 Housing Solutions Progress Report and endorsed advocacy recommendations to senior levels of government requesting capital funding. Over the course of 2023, the Region also participated in meetings with Members of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliament requesting support to address community housing priorities.



Passage House,
Town of East Gwillimbury

2023 ACTION PLAN OUTCOMES

GOAL 2: Help people find and keep housing

Goal 2 includes four objectives. In 2023, 17 actions were planned to meet the objectives.



OBJECTIVES	2023 ACTION	OUTCOME
1. Deliver programs that help residents with low and moderate income living in private market housing keep their homes	1.1 Implement Year 4 of the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB).	Supported 527 households from the subsidized housing wait list to access COHB, including 269 newcomers and households experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
	1.2 Implement new Housing Services Act, 2011 regulatory amendments, including Council approval of a service agreement framework, and reviewing and updating programs and policies to ensure compliance.	Deferred Council's consideration of the proposed Service Agreement Framework to Q2 2024 to allow additional time to consult with housing providers and other Service Managers. The framework will address the Region's future funding and administrative relationship with Part VII housing providers as their mortgages end. Minor amendments were made to the Region's subsidized housing policies and communications to wait list applicants to meet regulatory requirements.
	1.3 Continue to implement the consolidated Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program Plan and further enhance data collection through the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) to provide greater insight into program outcomes and areas that require further development.	Completed the 2023-2024 Investment Plan for the Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program. Continued to increase the number of community partners entering data into HIFIS to ensure consistent system wide data collection.
	1.4 Expand the Region's Rapid Rehousing Program by working with emergency housing operators to provide rent assistance to people moving from emergency or transitional housing to longer-term housing and to help people retain their market housing.	Partnered with emergency and transitional housing service providers to administer rent assistance programs helping more people move from emergency or transitional housing into longer-term housing.

ACTIONS CARRIED FORWARD INTO 2024

ACTION 1.2 "Implement new [Housing Services Act, 2011](#) regulatory amendments, including council approval of a Service Agreement Framework" was carried forward into 2024 to allow for additional consultation with housing providers and other Service Managers. Council endorsed the Service Agreement Framework in May 2024.

ACTION 4.1 "Continue to develop a service delivery model for the new men's multi-service emergency and transitional housing program" is ongoing as work continues to identify a site for a new facility.

ACTION 4.5 "Monitor Provincial supportive housing system review" is ongoing as the province Has not released the findings from its review.



Residents at an ice cream social event, Heritage East, Town of Newmarket

OBJECTIVES	2023 ACTION	OUTCOME
2. Support long-term housing stability by strengthening individuals and communities	2.1 Connect subsidized housing wait list applicants, including seniors, to available programs and resources while they wait for housing.	Hosted a series of four virtual and in-person workshops for wait list applicants focused on financial empowerment.
	2.2 Deliver programming and services that support residents' housing stability and wellness.	Delivered programming to community residents to promote eviction prevention and housing stability including community events, workshops and newsletters. Programming focused on food insecurity, financial stability, income supports, social connections, physical, psychological and emotional health.
	2.3 Continue planning and construction for seniors focused hub and community centre at Unionville Commons.	Continued to advance plans for the seniors hub and community centre at Unionville Commons in the City of Markham by completing an updated needs assessment and drafting an Expression of Interest to secure Anchor Tenants and Community Centre operator.
	2.4 Continue to explore opportunities to locate Community and Health Services programs and services and/or establish hubs in new Housing York Inc. (HYI) builds.	Work began to place select Community and Health Services programs at Mosaic House, HYI's new building in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. An Access York Customer Care Associate will work at this location to provide information, intake and referral services.
3. Advance prevention programs through continuous improvements to help people at risk of homelessness remain stably housed	3.1 Continue to strengthen prevention and early intervention activities by incorporating best practices from York Region's COVID-19 response. Enhance diversion from emergency housing and explore opportunities to improve financial supports for households, including those in arrears.	Continued to deliver homelessness prevention and diversion supports to people entering York Region's homelessness service system, helping people remain stably housed. The Region's Diversion Program has diverted 671 people ¹ over five years from emergency housing to safe housing with friends and family.

1 This number may not be unique as people may have been diverted in more than one year between 2019 and 2023.

OBJECTIVES	2023 ACTION	OUTCOME
4. Strengthen homelessness and housing stability services to help people experiencing homelessness to find and keep housing	4.1 Continue to develop a service delivery model for the new men's multi-service emergency and transitional housing program informed by consultations with service providers, people with lived experience and community stakeholders. A Request for Proposal process will be used to select an operator.	Staff conducted best practice research to support development of a new service delivery model and will refine and further develop the model while work continues to identify a site for a new facility. An operator will be selected through a Request for Proposal process when timing for the new development is confirmed.
	4.2 Continue to enhance integration of the seasonal shelter programs into the broader homelessness prevention and housing stability system.	Partnered with Inn From the Cold to transition from a seasonal shelter model to year-round operation in the Town of Newmarket, adding 25 ongoing emergency housing beds and five transitional housing beds to the Region's emergency and transitional housing system. Continued partnering with Out of the Cold, which opened an additional location in the Town of East Gwillimbury, providing 20 additional seasonal shelter beds in York Region.
	4.3 Provide additional supports for people experiencing homelessness during extreme weather events, including developing and implementing a Heat Relief Strategy.	Developed and implemented York Region's first Heat Relief Strategy for people experiencing homelessness to expand supports and services during the hot weather season. In 2023, 450 cooling kits were distributed to people experiencing homelessness to help mitigate the effects of extreme heat. Expanded supports and services for people experiencing homelessness during the cold weather season through York Region's 2023-2024 Cold Weather Response Plan, by temporarily expanding emergency housing system capacity during the cold weather season.
	4.4 Enhance compliance to operational standards for emergency and transitional housing and explore opportunities to increase access to all programs and services.	Continued to update operational standards for housing stability and homelessness services to improve service delivery for clients and strengthen quality assurance. The Region continues to review and improve its housing stability procedures.



OBJECTIVES	2023 ACTION	OUTCOME
	4.5 Monitor Provincial supportive housing system review and analyze the implications on York Region's Housing with Supports program.	As the province has not released findings, staff will continue to monitor for potential future impacts.
	4.6 Build on the successes of the Community Paramedicine Outreach Response Team (CPORT) by expanding primary care and mental health and addictions supports to more people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.	CPORT referred 118 clients to local walk-in clinics and 125 referred to their primary care physician. CPORT also facilitated 64 joint visits and referred 46 clients with the partner addictions medicine physician. 91 clients were referred to community organizations for mental health and addictions support.
	4.7 Continue to pilot the Emergency Housing Centralized Intake Line and use best practices to inform the development of a permanent service.	The Emergency Housing Centralized Intake Line pilot was extended and data continues to be collected and analyzed. The Emergency Housing Centralized Intake Line received over 10,800 calls in 2023.
	4.8 Fund community services that help residents find and keep housing through the Community Investment Fund.	The Community Investment Fund allocated approximately \$1.4 million in funding to 16 community projects, delivered by 13 agencies to help residents find and keep housing.



Residents participate with March of Dimes staff during onsite programming at Heritage East Town Newmarket

2023 ACTION PLAN OUTCOMES

GOAL 3: Strengthen the housing and homelessness system

Goal 3 includes four objectives. In 2023, 13 actions were planned to meet the objectives.



OBJECTIVES	2023 ACTION	OUTCOME
1. Sustain the existing stock of community housing	1.1 Expand the online housing offer process to remaining community housing sites.	The online housing offer process was expanded to all community housing providers that use the wait list in Q2 2023, providing applicants with more information about available units and resulting in fewer applicant refusals.
	1.2 Build on the upgraded subsidized housing applicant portal to improve the annual update process and increase the proportion of applicants using the portal to approximately 80%.	About 78% of applicants use the online portal to manage their applications. Of the individuals who do not use the online portal, 41% are over the age of 60. These applicants receive support from Housing Access to access information about available housing vacancies and programs.
	1.3 Complete investment plan to allocate Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) and Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) funding for years 2023-24 and 2024-25, with a focus on Regional housing priorities.	The Province approved the Region's 2023-2025 OPHI-COCHI investment plan, with \$15,912,405 allocated to new supply and \$11,240,875 allocated to housing provider capital repairs in October 2023.
	1.4 Provide training for community housing providers to support strong board governance and operations	The Housing Programs unit continued to provide direct training and coaching to supported six housing providers on governance, financial management, capital reserve planning, budgeting, property management support and Rent-Geared-to-Income administration. 20 housing providers participated in a consultation session on end of mortgage and the Region met with five providers whose mortgages matured in 2023 and 2024 to provide information on the end of mortgage process. Training was also provided to housing providers on the new online housing offer system.



York Region staff and residents at an ice cream social event, Hadley Grange, Town of Aurora

OBJECTIVES	2023 ACTION	OUTCOME
2. Build an integrated system to plan and deliver homelessness and housing stability services	2.1 Increase community service provider participation on the By-Name List Community Collaborative Table to enhance client access to appropriate housing options and other supports across the Region.	Established new partnerships to increase access to available housing resources. The scope of the By-Name List Community Collaborative Table expanded to include referrals to a new housing resource (The Bridge, a transitional housing facility in the Town of Georgina). The By-Name List Community Collaborative Table successfully matched 86 unique individuals to available and appropriate housing options and other supports. Collaborated with United Way Greater Toronto to develop a Coordinated Access Framework and Implementation Plan, resulting in the launch of a Coordinated Access Leadership Group. It is comprised of representatives from 14 organizations serving people experiencing homelessness and will govern the Coordinated Access system in York Region, further increasing service provider participation in building an integrated system.
	2.2 Develop directions/priorities for a Homelessness Service System Plan to address emerging community needs, prioritize resources to focus on early intervention and prevention, and forecast investments and ongoing resources needed for longer-term planning to support York Region residents at risk of or experiencing homelessness.	During a Special Meeting of York Regional Council in November 2023, staff presented on the development of the Homelessness Service System Plan and introduced two aspirational goals: 1. End Chronic Homelessness 2. Strengthen Human-Rights Based Approach Staff also introduced three priority areas: 1. Prevention and Diversion 2. Intervention and Housing Stability 3. Systems Response The Special Council Meeting also signalled the start of broader engagements including members of Council, local municipalities, community agencies and people with lived experience.



Unionville Commons,
City of Markham

OBJECTIVES	2023 ACTION	OUTCOME
3. Conduct research, engagement and knowledge sharing to identify service system gaps and build community capacity in the homelessness and housing stability service system	3.1 Continue to implement lessons learned and best practices gleaned throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure prevention, diversion and emergency housing programs continue to meet the emerging needs of the community.	Continued to offer and improve homelessness prevention and early intervention activities based on best practices learned through the COVID-19 pandemic.
	3.2 Increase diversion from emergency housing and strengthen supports for youth experiencing homelessness. Continue to implement initiatives identified through the Youth Homelessness Prevention and Housing Stabilization Committee.	Diverted 16 youth from entering emergency housing in 2023. Continued to participate on the Youth Homelessness Prevention and Housing Stabilization Committee.
	3.3 Support the Community Action Tables in the implementation of actions related to housing stability in the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.	Community Action Tables (CATs) organized workshops to inform tenants and landlords about their rights and responsibilities, provided tenant education for residents with history of displacement and illegal evictions and delivered insights on effective advocacy techniques to address housing issues. CATs also developed a housing system navigation tool combining resources and supports in one location and provided a designated housing support worker to deliver workshops and provide referrals to residents in focus-areas.

OBJECTIVES	2023 ACTION	OUTCOME
4. Encourage and facilitate expansion of long-term care to help residents age in their communities	4.1 Seek Council approval of the proposed 2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors and begin implementation.	A Special Council Meeting was held on October 5, 2023 , to discuss the proposed directions for Plan to Support Seniors. Council adopted the 2024 to 2027 Plan to Support Seniors in March 2024 . Impacts of the implementation of the Plan will be included in the next reporting cycle (2026).
	4.2 Expand CP@Clinic to six additional seniors' community housing sites. Community Paramedicine will continue to explore opportunities to support seniors within the community.	CP@Clinic launched seven new clinics at seniors' community housing sites for a total of nine for the year and served 231 new clients for a total of 289 clients. 842 visits were conducted and 100 referrals were made on behalf of clients to community organizations for further supports. This resulted in greater access to health services for equity deserving groups and diverted calls to emergency services.
	4.3 Influence the proposed amendments to the regulations under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 by providing feedback.	Continued to provide input on regulations under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 . In April 2023, a letter to Minister of Long-Term Care and Minister of Health was sent on consultations for amendments to O. Regulation 264/22 . Input was also provided towards AdvantAge Ontario Consultations including (Phase 2 and 3 regulatory changes).
	4.4 Share insights and expertise on, and advocate for the needs of, seniors as part of Regional membership on local Ontario Health Teams.	As a member of two York Region OHTs and close partner of the third, the Region continues to collaborate and/or advocate for health system efficiencies and improvements together with sector and health system partners. Work continues to leverage synergies with all three OHTs to improve system navigation, break down silos across health and social care sectors, enhance access to services and support seniors to age in the right place. The Improving Patient Access to Care in the Community (IMPACC) patient care model is one example of an innovation that York Region Paramedic Services is working to scale through a recent application to the Ministry of Health. This innovation redesigns core paramedicine systems into a new and larger, community-based, geographically dispersed, interprofessional and integrated resource.



Maple Health Centre,
City of Vaughan

Where the Housing and Homelessness System Stood in 2023

SYSTEM INDICATORS

MARKET RENTAL HOUSING

Benchmark: Minimum 3% is considered a healthy vacancy rate
In 2023, the maximum affordable rent for a household at the sixth income decile for renter households (those who earn \$95,625 per year) in York Region was \$2,391.



VACANCY RATE

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Purpose-built All unit types	1.2%	1.9%	1.8%	1%	1.9%
Rental condo All unit types	0.3%	0.9%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rental Market Survey Data Tables, 2018-2023.

AVERAGE RENT

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Purpose-built All unit types	\$1,368	\$1,465	\$1,442	\$1,489	\$1,664	UP 21.6% from 2019
Rental condo All unit types	\$2,071	\$2,200	\$2,214	\$2,605	\$2,617	UP 26.4% from 2019

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rental Market Survey Data Tables, 2018-2023.
Note: Refer to the 2023 Housing Supply and Affordability Update Report for comparison of the purpose-built rental average market rent in occupied and vacant units.

OWNERSHIP HOUSING

Benchmark: Affordable housing thresholds identify the highest price a household at the sixth decile of the income distribution (those who earn \$155,535 per year) can afford. In York Region, the threshold was \$536,706 in 2023, and the maximum affordable monthly carrying cost for a home purchased in 2023 was \$3,888.



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Average price New single-detached home	\$1.39M	\$1.36M	\$1.40M	\$1.53M	\$1.63M	UP 17% from 2019

Source: CMHC Market Absorption Survey

Average resale price All housing types	\$0.94M	\$1.07M	\$1.29M	\$1.39M*	\$1.34M	UP 43% from 2019
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Source: Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB) Market Watch Report

Estimated monthly carrying cost for a resale townhouse (includes mortgage, mortgage insurance and property tax)	\$4,725	\$5,125	\$6,083	\$7,289	\$7,823	UP 66% from 2019
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Source: TRREB Market Watch Report/York Region Measuring and Monitoring Report

Percentage of new ownership housing that is affordable to households at the sixth income decile	11%	5%	0.15%	0.75%	0%	
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Source: York Region Measuring and Monitoring Report

Note: System Indicators that use the sixth income decile should be interpreted with some caution. The income level for the sixth income decile has risen faster in the past two years than what is typical. The 2023 income level is calculated based on 2020 numbers which were skewed higher due to COVID-19 income supports. Further, the 2023 income level is multiplied by the Bank of Canada's Consume Price Index which has seen substantive growth in the past two years due to record inflation. The impact of these two factors has led to a substantial increase in the sixth income decile which is likely inflated. As such, affordability measures will have appeared to improve while the reality is likely different.

* This number was revised to be more accurate based on updated information.

COMMUNITY HOUSING

AVERAGE WAIT TIME FOR SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

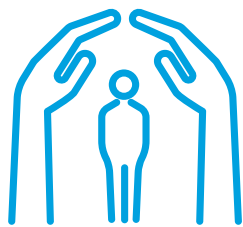
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
 Seniors	8.7 years	10.1 years	9.0 years	8.2 years	7.9 years
 Non-senior Single Adults	11.5 years	11.5 years	7.5 years	6.6 years	2.6 years
 Families	9.2 years	10.7 years	9.9 years	6.4 years	2.5 years

Source: York Region Housing Services, 2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of households on the Wait List as of December 31 st	17,457	15,810	15,679	14,867	15,716
Net change in Wait List applicants	1,220	-1,647	-133	-812	849
Number of households on the Wait List housed	245	584	329	629	978

Source: York Region Housing Services, 2023

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of unique individuals accessing emergency and transitional housing	1,257	1,027	1,336	1,239	1,460

Source: Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and program data

Average length of stay in emergency housing (in days)	26.5	23.6	28.3	35.7	49.3
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Source: HIFIS

Number of unique individuals experiencing chronic homelessness	124	165	174	202	473*
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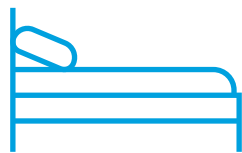
Source: HIFIS and program data

Number of households accessing homelessness prevention services	1,998	1,606	1,852	1,979	1,878
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Source: HIFIS and program data

*The increase in chronic homelessness in 2023 is due in part to the integration of additional services into the Region's Homelessness database, capturing more people who were experiencing chronic homelessness in the data.

LONG-TERM CARE



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of individuals waiting for a York Region Municipal Long-Term Care bed	1,617	1,749	1,594	1,647	N/A**

Source: Program data

**This information is no longer available as Home and Community Care – Central has discontinued its public facing long-term care wait list.



Mosaic House,
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

SYSTEM INDICATOR ANALYSIS

MARKET RENTAL AND OWNERSHIP HOUSING

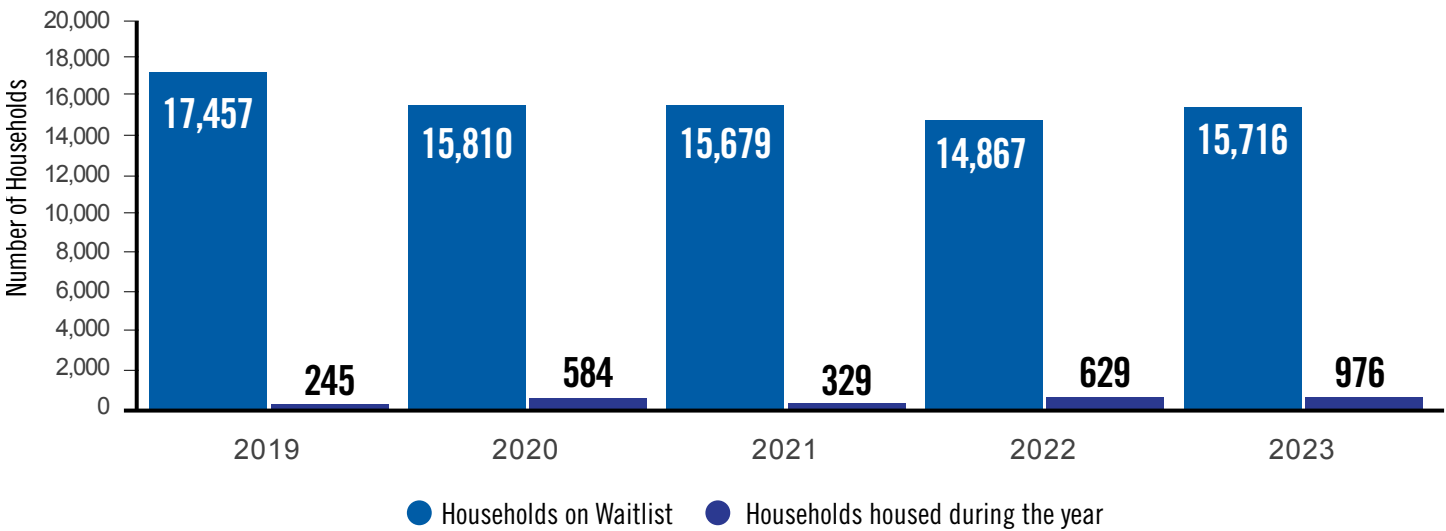
York Region saw continued housing affordability challenges in 2023. Vacancy rates for purpose-built rentals increased from 1% to 1.9%, which remains below the 3% (and above) generally considered to indicate a healthy rental market. Purpose-built unit rents have increased on average across York Region by 22% since 2019 and condominium unit rents have increased by 26% over the same period. The percentage of new ownership housing that is affordable to households at the sixth income decile slightly decreased from 0.75% in 2022 to 0% in 2023. Since York Region began measuring housing affordability, this is the sixth year in a row that Regional affordability targets have not been met. Limited affordable ownership and rental housing options continue to affect the Region’s long-term growth and sustainability.

Looking forward, 670 private purpose-built rental units were completed in 2023 which confirms there is growing interest from the development industry in building purpose-built rental housing. Per data gathered as part of this year’s Regional Centres and Corridors update, a total of 34 developments, representing approximately 8,200 purpose-built rental units, are currently proposed across the Region. To help address the need to continue to increase affordable and private purpose-built rental housing options, an [Affordable Private Market Housing Implementation Plan](#) will be brought forward in 2024 to identify actions, advocacy and partnership approaches to help address housing affordability in the private market. This will inform the next 10-year housing and homelessness plan.

COMMUNITY HOUSING AND HOUSING SUBSIDIES

In 2023, the Region provided housing assistance to 976 households from the subsidized housing wait list, a 55% increase from 2022 when 629 households were housed (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Households on the Subsidized Housing Wait List and Households Housed

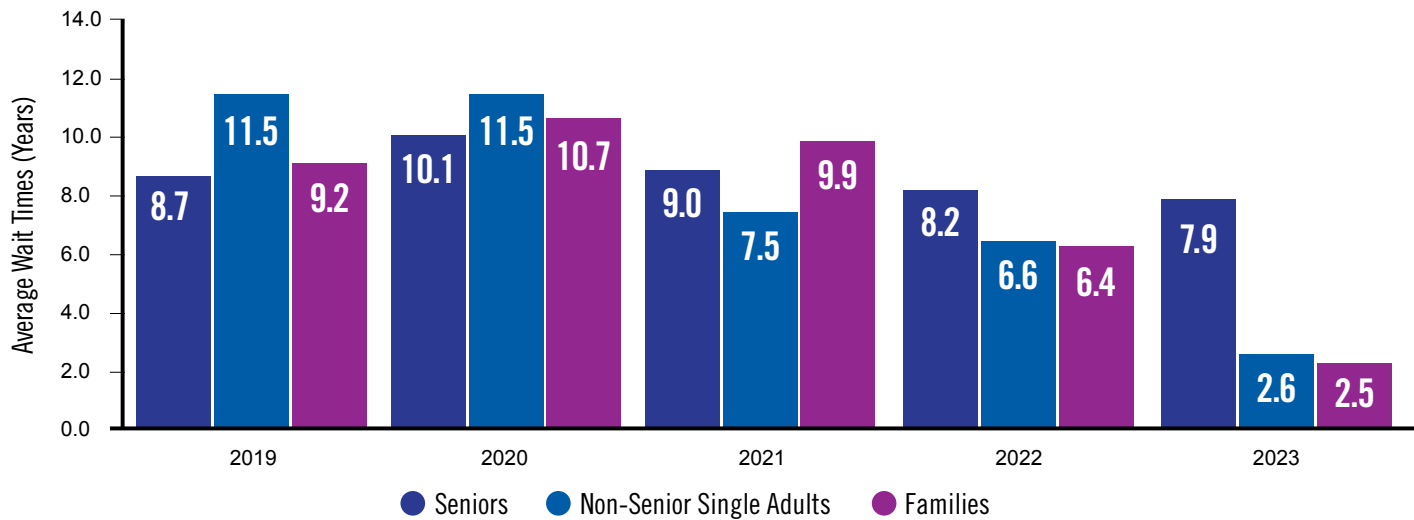


This marks the highest number of households housed in a single year since the Region began managing the centralized wait list in the early 2000s and is largely attributable to the number of spaces allocated to the Region by the Province for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB). Of the 976 households housed in 2023, 547 (56%) received COHB or the York Region Portable Housing Benefit. Portable benefits help with the cost of renting a market rental unit and provide an effective alternative for some households compared to waiting for a community housing unit to become available. The remaining 429 households housed accepted units at community housing sites or a rent supplement with a private landlord. On average, between 2008 and 2023, just over 400 applicants were housed annually (including through COHB, introduced in 2020), while the wait list grew by an average of 659 applicants each year. The Region’s ability to continue to address the needs of a high number of wait list households depends on increased and sustained investments from the federal and provincial governments in new supply and in programs like COHB. Without it, our ability to help applicants remains limited.

Figure 1 also shows the overall size of the wait list increased for the first time since 2020 to 15,716, representing a net increase of 849 applicants compared to 2022. The Region received and approved nearly 3,700 new applications. Reasons for the increase include economic factors such as stagnant wages and rising living costs, rising housing costs and the lack of affordable market housing supply in York Region. The wait list had previously decreased from 2020 to 2022 due to the implementation of Council-approved income and asset limits and active management of applications through the new online portal, which has required applicants to re-confirm their interest in subsidized housing.

The data for 2023 also shows a significant decrease in average wait times for those who accepted a housing offer across all three applicant categories – seniors, non-senior single applicants with no dependents and families. These wait times represent the lowest wait times all applicant categories have experienced in the past five years (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Average Wait Time for Subsidized Housing



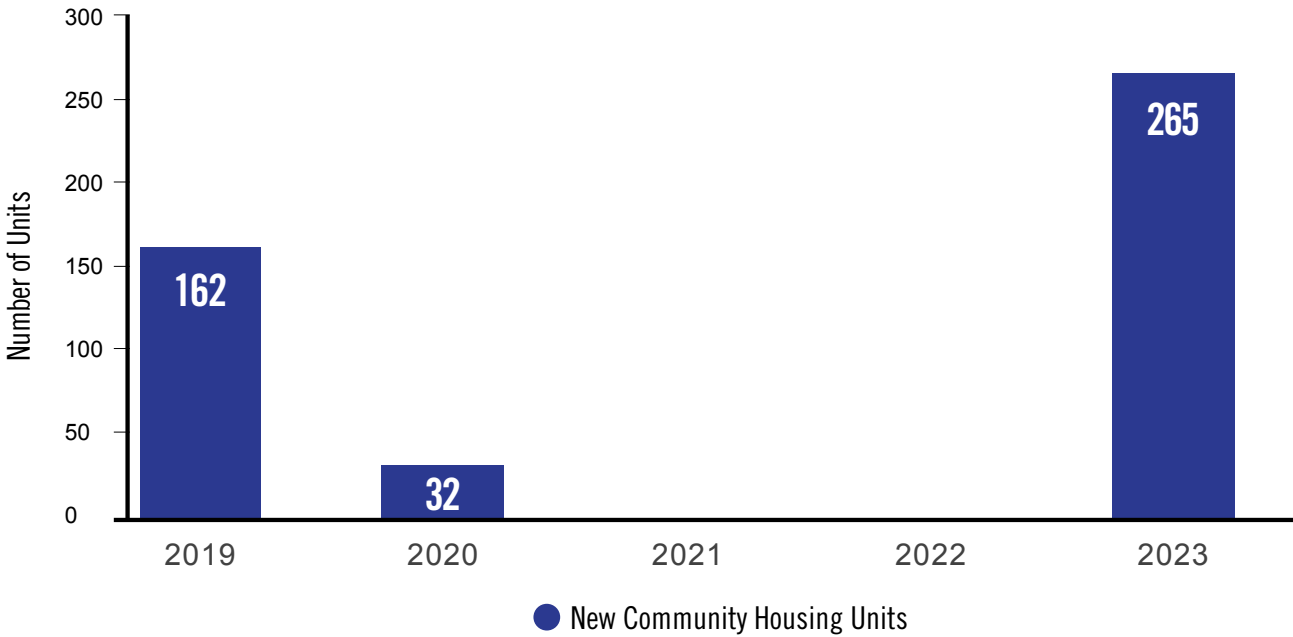
This is primarily a result of COHB driving down the average wait time. As indicated above, 56% of households housed in 2023, accepted a portable housing benefit. These applicants waited on average 2.4 years for housing. Since COHB launched in 2020, the Region has offered the benefit to all wait list households in order of priority status and application date. Over time, as applicants with older application dates are not accepting offers for COHB, staff are able to offer the benefit to those who applied more recently in order of their application date and priority, as they are likely to need more immediate financial assistance to stabilize or find housing. COHB refusals are largely because applicants with older application dates closer to the top of the wait list are often waiting for a specific community housing location. Some applicants have refused COHB because



they do not want to accept a portable benefit currently funded to March 31, 2029, where they may need to find their own unit in the rental market. COHB’s success depends on availability of affordable rental options in the private market, which can pose a challenge for applicants needing to find housing. An allocation has also been provided to support people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, including eligible asylum seekers through referrals from Homelessness Community Programs.

While those applicants who accept a portable housing benefit are removed from the wait list, applicants who are either ineligible for portable benefits or who refuse the benefit are still seeing lengthy wait times for a subsidized unit. Those who accepted a unit offer in 2023 waited on average 9.6 years. As demand on the wait list steadily increases, the addition of new units will be able to accommodate a greater number of applicants. In 2023, Housing York Inc. opened Unionville Commons, providing 265 market and subsidized rental homes for seniors in the City of Markham. Over the past five years, the Region has built or supported almost 460 new community housing units (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Number of New Community Housing Units Built, 2019-2023



Continued advocacy for increased federal and provincial funding to expand the supply of affordable and community housing is needed. Collaboration with higher levels of government remains essential for ensuring residents living with low and moderate incomes can access affordable housing options.

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING STABILITY SERVICES

From 2019 to 2023, several environmental factors have significantly impacted the landscape of homelessness. The COVID-19 pandemic, the subsequent increase in the cost of living, the lack of housing affordability, an increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugee claimants, and the growing complex needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness have had substantial impacts on York Region’s homelessness service system.

The number of unique individuals accessing emergency housing has increased by 5% from 2019 to 2023, while the average length of stay in emergency housing has doubled from 26.5 days in 2019 to 49.3 days in 2023. The total number of unique people who experienced chronic homelessness during the year increased by approximately 120% from 2019 to 2023, from 124 to 473.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, York Region reduced bed availability to allow for physical distancing, drop-in programs were put on hold and seasonal shelters were extended beyond the cold weather season. The provincial Social Services Relief Fund increased the funding to and accessibility of York Region’s homelessness prevention measures. With the end of the provincial Social Services Relief Fund, the Region’s temporary shelter programs have been decommissioned which means there are fewer emergency housing beds for people at risk of homelessness. The Region continues to see an increase in demand for homelessness services and supports and extended lengths of stay in emergency and transitional housing. Additionally, the Region continues to see an increase in people experiencing chronic homelessness, increasing lengths of stay in emergency housing and increasing numbers of people living in unsheltered locations (e.g., encampments) and provisional accommodations (e.g., hotels). York Region is developing forecasts for homelessness for the Region. The current trajectory projects significant increases in the number of people experiencing homelessness, with estimates ranging from 2,100 to 2,300 individuals in the next five years.



Belinda’s Place, Town of Newmarket

York Region operated a Self-Isolation Shelter and a temporary Transitional Shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 166 people were supported at the Self-Isolation Shelter and 1,372 total people were supported at the temporary Transitional Shelter. The CPORT pilot initially provided primary medical care and addictions and mental health support to people staying at the temporary Transitional Shelter. The success of this program resulted in its expansion in 2023, which now provides low-barrier mobile primary care and addictions and mental health support to centrally located sites around York Region.

The Region has also increased the number of emergency and transitional housing beds in the Region by extending funding to Inn From the Cold in the Town of Newmarket to operate 365 days per year including a transitional housing program and developing two new HYI-owned transitional housing sites (The Bridge in the Town of Georgina and Passage House in the Town of East Gwillimbury). These actions added 25 emergency housing beds operating year-round, expanding emergency housing capacity in the spring and summer months and adding 33 transitional housing beds to the transitional housing system.

Both the Regional Homelessness Prevention Program and Housing Stability Program have had successes in keeping eligible residents housed, with housing retention after six months at 58% for the Homelessness Prevention Program and 98% for the Housing Stability Program, in 2023. The Region’s Diversion Program has diverted 671¹ people over five years from emergency housing to safe housing, such as with friends and family. York Region will explore opportunities to continue expanding on the success of the Diversion Program.



1. This number may not be unique as people may have been diverted in more than one year between 2019 and 2023.

Emergency and transitional housing is intended to be short term for people experiencing homelessness. It is designed to offer temporary accommodation while people receive a range of life stabilization supports and resources so they can recover from crisis and transition to permanent housing. Although additional capacity was added in 2023, the Region’s 183 emergency and 66 transitional housing beds are regularly at or near capacity. York Region has far fewer emergency beds than its peer municipalities, estimated to be approximately 21 beds/100,000 population. Compared to similar sized Service Managers in Ontario, York Region does not have adequate bed capacity to address current needs or forecasted future growth requirements. In comparison, the Region of Waterloo, with a population of 587,165 people has a total of 629 emergency and transitional housing beds, or 107 beds/100,000 population; the Region of Peel, with a population of 1,451,022 people, has a total of 514 emergency and transitional housing beds or 35 beds/100,000 population. Figure 4 shows emergency and transitional housing capacity in York Region.

Figure 4: Emergency and Transitional Housing Capacity in York Region, 2023

SERVICE PROVIDER	BUILDINGS	BED CAPACITY	
		EMERGENCY HOUSING	TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
	Belinda’s Place* (Women) Newmarket	28	9
	Sutton Youth Services* (Youth) Georgina	16	10
	The Bridge* (Families, Couples, Youth) Georgina	-	10
	Porter Place* (Men) East Gwillimbury	30	-
	Kevin’s Place (Men) Newmarket	10	-
	Leeder Place* (Family) East Gwillimbury	60	3
	Passage House* (Men) East Gwillimbury	-	18
	The Youth Hub* (Youth) Richmond Hill	14	11
	Inn From the Cold (Anyone 16+) Newmarket	25	5

As the Region and its partners continue to address the growing and complex needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, it is imperative to understand the underlying causes and implications of the current state to work toward solutions. With rising housing costs, a scarcity of deeply affordable housing options and the far-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for immediate attention to homelessness has reached critical levels. York Region’s Homelessness Service System Plan will respond to the immediate and longer-term needs of York Region residents. The system plan will be developed using a data-informed approach to guide the Region’s homelessness investment in the coming years.

LONG-TERM CARE

Long-term care wait times continue to rise. According to the provincial government, more than 43,000 people were on the wait list for a long-term care bed in Ontario as of September 2023. According to a [report](#) by the Ontario Long Term Care Association, the wait list has nearly doubled over the past 10 years and it is expected to grow, adding 1,000 people per year and reaching 48,000 by 2029. Staff estimate there are 4,042 long-term care beds in the Region. The Ministry of Long-Term Care has announced agreements for an additional 3,474 new beds and 354 upgraded beds. This falls significantly short of the 14,954 long-term care beds needed across the Region by 2041, as communicated to Council in [November 2020](#). This will mean seniors will continue to wait for longer periods of time for a long-term care bed in the Region.

On March 21, 2024, Regional Council endorsed the [2024 to 2027 York Region Plan to Support Seniors: Navigating Forward Together](#) (the Plan) which aims to enhance the health and well-being of our aging population and support their ability to age in the right place for their personal preferences, circumstances and care needs.

Advocacy activities for long-term care continue to rise as staff look for opportunities to collaborate with government and improve policy, planning and decision-making for long-term care at provincial and federal levels. As part of the Plan’s advocacy agenda, there is opportunity to encourage the province to provide municipalities with flexibility on their role in long-term care delivery and important investments to support individuals across a broader health and social care continuum.



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

COMMUNITY HOUSING

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